

The Book of Matthew 1-14

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Matthew 1

New Beginnings (Matthew 1:1-16)

Video – Author of Life

What Really Happened 2000 Years Ago / Author of Life Came – The King has Come

What really happened 2000 years ago? For these weeks to come, we will look into what happened. The Author of Life came into our world, to give us the life we long for, even though we may not know it. He came that we may have life and that more abundant; he came so that we may eternal life. That life only comes through His life. The King has come!

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

He was Born – Lived – Died / Resurrected – Power of Gospel / Lives to Make Intercession

The Author of Life, Jesus Christ, was born, lived, and died just like every man before Him, and every man after Him. However, what sets Him apart from every other man, is His resurrection, and therein lies the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for any man can die, but only Jesus Christ had the power over sin and death to raise again on the third day, and now has ascended into heaven and is seated on His throne, and He lives to make intercession for us. He intercedes for us now, and that is why He came 2000 years, to intercede on our behalf because we were separated from the Holy God:

(Hebrews 7:24 NKJV) But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

(Hebrews 7:25 NKJV) Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

(1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

(1 Timothy 2:6 NKJV) who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Introduction:

Skip first 17 / Birth of Jesus – Good Stuff / Miss Out

When we turn to the Book of Matthew how often do we quickly skip over the first 17 verses, these genealogies, so we can get to Matthew chapter 1:18, *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows.* Verse 18, the good stuff, our savior is born. However by doing so, we miss out on an important message from God:

(Matthew 1:18 NKJV) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Bridge OT to NT / Old Covenant to New Covenant / Man's Ability – God's Ability

For you see the book of Matthew is the bridge from the Old Testament, to the New Testament. If you recall the word testament means covenant. The Old covenant to the New covenant. The Old Covenant was based on man's ability to be perfect before the Holy and pure God, we failed. The New Covenant is based on God's ability to make us perfect before Him, which He did through Jesus Christ for all who will receive Him.

God Writes / From the Beginning / Old Passed Away – I'm Doing Something New

And as God writes this book to us, right from the beginning He is saying, The old things have passed away, behold all things are made new:

*(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; **behold, all things have become new.***

Starting New Work / Trust In – Excuses – Misconceptions / Wiped Out

In these 17 verses, He is saying, I'm starting a New Work,

- *Trust* - all the things you trusted in before I am going to wipe out,
- *Excuses* - any and every excuse you may have for not following me, wiped out.
- *Misconceptions* - your misconceptions I can't and won't use you, wiped out,

We All Fall in 1 of 3 Areas

I believe each and every person here at one time or another falls into one of these three groups.

5 woman Mentioned / Major No-No – Especially Gentile / God – Starting New Work

There are 5 women mentioned in this genealogy, the first 4 all gentiles. This would be a major no-no for Jewish genealogy; you just didn't mention a woman, or a gentile. But God does, and He does it for a reason, to make a clear and defined statement....I am starting a New Work here, and here's proof, by the first 4 women mentioned in these passages. Let me show you something here He says to us today.

- 1.) Tamar: Dispels Your Families Past
- 2.) Rahab: Dispels Your Past Reputation
- 3.) Ruth: Dispels Your Religious Background
- 4.) Bathsheba Dispels Your Past Sins

Matthew:

Now speaking of being used by God, Before we study these 4 women it is import to note, who wrote this book.....Matthew.

Matt – Tax Collector / Quota – Backed by Army / Greedy – Corrupted - Hated

Matthew was a tax collector...Rome would set quotas then the tax collector would levy additional tax on top of that for his share. If Rome wanted 10% then the tax collector would add another 10 for himself. They were backed by the roman army, tax collectors were rich, greedy, corrupted, and they were hated.

But Met Jesus – Follow Me / Opened Heart – Then Home – then Hand / Write New Record

But Matthew met Jesus. Jesus said follow me, and he did, Matthew opened his heart, then he opened his home and invited the other tax collectors to meet Jesus, after this he opened his hand. Matthew was a record keeper, the records of who paid taxes, it was only natural for him to grab a pen and start writing down a new record, the teachings and deeds of Jesus Christ.

Be Encouraged / God Uses what in Hand / Moses – David – Peter & James -Matthew

This encourages me, cause I see the Lord will use whatever is in our hands presently to do His work in the ministry. Whatever your thing is, that's what he will use.

- As God called *Moses* in the wilderness, He said, *Moses* what's that in your hand...a rod...great I'll use that.....lets go talk to pharaoh.
- *David* what's that in your hand...a rock and a sling...great I'll use that...lets go kill a giant
- *Peter, James, John* what's that in your...a net...great I'll use that...lets go catch some men
- *Matthew* what's that in your hand...a pen...great I'll use that...write this down

God Uses anyone Willing / Doesn't Matter Opinion of World – Matthew Hated

God uses anyone that is willing...doesn't matter what the opinion was of the world around them, Matthew was a tax collector, he was hated, yet he got to write down the greatest events to happen in this world

Jesus Asks Us – What is in Your Hand / hammer – Guitar – Keys

Jesus says to you and me today, what's that in your hand. This? It is a hammer, I'm a carpenter...God says great I'll use that. What's that in your hand, a guitar...great I'll use that...what that in your hand, car keys...great I'll use that...

Think Can't Be Used – Past or Present / Wrong – Proves it with 4 Woman

If you think you can't be used because of your past or present....God says wrong....I'll use that. And He proves it with these 4 women.

(Matthew 1:1 NKJV) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

Every Jew Knew Messiah through David / Proud of Lineage from Abraham

Every Jew knew the Messiah would come through David; and every Jew proudly boasted of their lineage from Abraham.

Glorious Bridge OT to NT / Gen 5 – He Died / Birth of Jesus / Romans 6:23 / New Work

And here we see the glorious bridge from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant. The first genealogy in the Old Testament is Genesis 5, it starts with *“This is the book of the genealogy of Adam”*. In Genesis 5 it reads so and so begot so and so, and he died, and so and so begot so and so, and he died. But here in Matthew 1, so and so begot so and so, all the way up to verse 18... *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows”*. The comparison of the 2 genealogies is simply Romans 6:23. The wages of sin is death...Old covenant, but the gift of God is eternal life, New Covenant. Matthew chapter 1, God is starting something New here:

(Romans 6:23 NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Written so Knew Jesus is King

This book was written so we/Jews/everybody will know Jesus is the King of kings. That is why he starts with genealogies. It proves that Jesus had the right to the throne because his lineage came through David-a king forever:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

God Starts Tearing Down Walls

But as soon as God gets into it, he starts tearing down the walls:

- *Trust* - all the things you trusted in before I am going to wipe out,
- *Excuses* - any and every excuse you may have for not following me, wiped out.
- *Misconceptions* - your misconceptions I can't and won't use you, wiped out,

1st Wall

Matthew 1:3 Here goes the first wall

1.) Tamar: Dispels Your Families Past

(Matthew 1:2 NKJV) Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

(Matthew 1:3 NKJV) Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.

Tamar – Sons of Judah – Custom / Black Widow / Withholds 3rd Son / Prostitute - Perez

The story of Tamar is told in Genesis 38. If you recall Judah's firstborn son married Tamar, but he died. So the custom was the next brother would marry her to carry on the other brothers name, so the 2nd son married her and he died. So now Judah is a little concerned thinking there is something wrong with the girl, the black widow story or something. So he says my 3rd son is still a youth, wait until he matures, and then he will marry you, but Judah had no intention of ever giving his last son to her. Tamar waited, but finally figured it out herself. So she heard Judah was on his way to town one day, she dressed like a prostitute, covered her face with a veil, and stood by the way waiting for him. Judah sees her, has relations, Tamar becomes pregnant with child – Perez, who is King David's great times 8 grandfather.

Bible Reports the Truth

This is a strange story, but I appreciate this about the Bible, it tells the story in its entirety, in full truth, not trying to hide or cover anything. These are real stories about real people, and we read about them and can relate to them. We see that if God forgives them, then He will forgive us.

Proud of Family Purity Lineage / Blemish to Skip Over / God Lists Her

The Jews were proud, trusted in “Family Purity”, the ability to trace their family purity, and tell who is in their lineage. Tamar takes care of that, they can’t say they are perfect now, Tamar is a blemish everyone would rather skip over...but God lists her in the genealogy of the Messiah.....and God says to you.

Let These Words Never / Family Messed Up

Let these Word’s never past from your lips again: God won’t receive me, God can’t use me because.....

- my family’s past is so messed up

All Believers / Family Messed Up / God Can’t Use Me

For all you who are believers, you may say I’m a little embarrassed with my families past, stuff went on that wasn’t normal. God can’t use me; He can’t restore me because of my families past.

Past Marriage – Relationships – Ashamed / No One Want Me /

Some of you who are from divorced families or divorced yourself, may say I will never be able to have another relationship, things happened in my past marriage that I am ashamed of...no one will ever want me. I’ve talked to so many people who said they were in abusive marriages, now have kids, they think no one would want to be with them, ...God says wrong...he proves it here with Tamar...messed up family past and everything, yet she is in the lineage of the Messiah.

God Will Use You – Godly Marriage / Can Have Godly Relationship / Don’t Settle for Less

God can and will use you to be that godly husband or wife that has a marriage that brings glory to God, and children who grow up knowing and loving him. So many people are deceived into believing that they can never have a godly relationship because their past family was messed up. And sadly, they settle for 2nd best, robbing themselves of all that God would have for them.

Let these Words Never

Let these Word’s never past from your lips again: God won’t receive me, God can’t use me because.....my family’s past is so messed up.

2nd Wall

Matthew 1:5 Here goes the second wall

2.) Rahab: Dispels Your Past Reputation

(Matthew 1:4 NKJV) Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.

(Matthew 1:5 NKJV) Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

Rahab – Card Carrying Prostitute / Joshua 2 / People Spoke about Her

Rahab was a prostitute a card carrying prostitute, everybody knew her. Her story is in Joshua chapter 2. If you recall she was the woman who hid the 2 spies as they scoped out Jericho for invasion and destruction. I need not go into the details of prostitution, but simply to say with every experience she would lose a piece of herself, become void and empty inside, and everywhere she went she knew what people where saying about her.

Jewish Pride – Sexual Purity / Adultery Stoned in Manure Pit / King David Great Great

The Jews were so proud, took such trust, in their “Sexual Purity”. If someone was caught in adultery or pregnant out of wedlock they would take them to the town square, put them in a pit filled with manure up to their knees and then stone them to death so they would fall into the manure. The story of Rahab takes care of that... Her son is the great-great granddad of King David. She was a prostitute, yet she is in the lineage of the Messiah.. And God says to you today,

Let These Words / Past Reputation

Let these Word’s never past from your lips again: God won’t receive me, God can’t use me because.....

- my past reputation is so bad

God Cant Use Me / Rahab Hall of Faith / Risked Everything for God

You may say my reputation is so low, God can't use me. Rahab is listed in the Hall of Faith in Hebrews 11. A prostitute in the hall of faith, there is room for you and me. A tremendous women, not because she was a harlot, but even with her limited knowledge and understanding she risked everything, believing the God of Israel was the True and Living God.

(Hebrews 11:31 NKJV) By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace.

Maybe You Say That / Promiscuous – Drugs - Alcohol

Maybe you say, my reputation is so low God will never use me in the ministry. See I was promiscuous before I was saved, I did drugs, alcohol, an adulterer. God can give you a new reputation.

15 Year Class Reunion / No Preaching

My 15 year class reunion I went. I woke that morning saying Lord I don't want to go see people I haven't seen in 15 years and say, you're going to hell. I just didn't feel like preaching. God said your testimony will be your witness. I said ok, not sure what that means, but ok. So I get up there, and they are giving out these nominations. My friend Bobby was voted most unlikely career profession. Bob was a great menace to the teachers, they hated him, and today he is a principle of a high school. I was picked greatest changed life. When I went up, I was asked to explain...I got to tell them about Jesus. God gave me a new reputation. Rahab's new reputation is a woman of faith, she was a prostitute, yet she is in the lineage of the Messiah.

Let These Words

Let these Word's never past from your lips again: God won't receive me, God can't use me because..... my past reputation is so bad

3rd Wall

Matthew 1:5 Here goes the third wall

3.) Ruth: Dispels Your Religious Background

(Matthew 1:5 NKJV) Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,

Ruth – Gentile / Toilet bowl / Can't enter Temple

Ruth: was a Moabite, a gentile, and Moab was God' toilet bowl. At Ruth's time there was a law which said a no Moabite or Ammonite could enter into the temple of God because they came against the children of Israel after they left Egypt.

Jews Proud – Racial Purity – No Gentiles / Unclean – Burn Clothes / Ruth takes Care of that

The Jews were so proud, took such trust in their "Racial Purity", free of pollution, gentile free. Not only would a Jew not relate to a gentile, but if they accidentally touched a gentile they would go home and burn their clothes. Jews would say look at my lineage...Jew begets Jew. Paul talks about being a Hebrew of Hebrews in Philippians 3:5. Ruth takes care of that, Her son Obed is King David's granddad, she was from God's toilet bowl, banned from the temple, yet she is in the lineage of the Messiah.... and God says to you:

Let These Words / Religious Background

Let these Word's never past from your lips again: God won't receive me, God can't use me because.....

- I have no religious background

You May Say / Not Raised in Church – Saved Late In Life / No Formal Training

You may say my background is terrible, I wasn't raised in the church, or I went to church but didn't understand it. God can't use me, he can only use people who were saved since they were three, or I have no Formal Training. Ruth takes care of that. She came from Moab, only thing she knew of God she learned from her mother in-law Naomi, yet it was enough to make her follow. She said your God will be my God:

(Ruth 1:16 NKJV) But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.

Not Lifetime of Church / Don't Let past Wipe out Future

It is not a lifetime of church, God says now is the acceptable time, today is the day of salvation (2 Cor 6:2) Don't let your past wipe out your future:

(2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV) For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

I Didn't Know / Job – Malachi / God still uses Me

I didn't know anything about the bible and I went to church my whole life. Job was a job. Malachi the great Italian prophet. Never heard of Psalms pronounced. Thought Paul the apostle was the same man King Saul. Yet God chooses to use me. God used Ruth, no background, yet she is in the lineage of the Messiah.... and God says to you.

Let These Words Never

Let these Word's never past from your lips again: God won't receive me, God can't use me because..... I have no religious background

4th Wall

Matthew 1:6 Here goes the fourth wall

4.) Bathsheba Dispels Your Past Sins

(Matthew 1:6 NKJV) and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

Bathsheba / Adultery / Played Role of Fall of David / 10K to hiding in Caves

Bathsheba: was Uriah the Hittites wife, and adulteress. She played a role in the bringing down of the great leader of the great nation Israel. King David the giant slayer, Saul killed his 1000 and David his 10,000. He goes from a king to a fugitive on the run, almost overnight. The enemies of God had reason to mock God:

(2 Samuel 12:14 NKJV) "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."

Jews Proud of Royal Purity / King David / Bathsheba takes Care of That

The Jews were so proud, took such trust in their "Royal Purity". Our king is the king...King David, he is the royal lineage forever. To the Jews so proud of their history and their great King David, Bathsheba takes care of that, this reminder of his affair with Bathsheba and then the murder of her husband must have been a particularly painful one, yet she is in the lineage of the Messiah. And God says to you.

Let These Words / My Past Sins Terrible

Let these Word's never past from your lips again: God won't receive me, God can't use me because.....

- my past sins are so terrible

Abortion / Drug Dealer – Addicted / Brent & Allen

Maybe you have had an abortion, sold drugs to someone who is now addicted, or just turned them on to them. Whatever it is God says he can still use you. Me, Brent, and Allen all played HS football together, Brent turned AL onto booze, and Allen has never stopped. Brent says he still has sorrow for that, but he won't allow it to stop him from preaching the gospel. Brent told the story of how one day, while playing football for the Penn State Nittney Lions, he was in the stadium with 80,000 fans, and as he stood on the sideline he received a vision of a man on standing on a wooden platform preaching the gospel to 10's of thousands, as the vision was closing in on the platform he said Lord who is that, and then the vision faded. Although he couldn't see the face, he knew in his heart it was him, and he said Lord if that is to be me, then it will have to be all you. And one day 5 years later he shows up at my house with a videotape, of him in Africa preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ to 100,000 people.

Let These Words Never

Christian, Let these Word's never past from your lips again: the God won't receive me, God can't use me because..... my past sins are so terrible.

God shows us from the beginning, He is starting something new, He is giving us "A New Beginning".

1.) Tamar: Dispels Your Families Past

2.) Rahab: Dispels Your Past Reputation

3.) Ruth: Dispels Your Religious Background

4.) Bathsheba Dispels Your Past Sins

The Author of Life has Come

The Author of Life has come, to give us new life! Verses 7-15 are genealogies of life, the New Covenant:
(Matthew 1:16 NKJV) And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

(Matthew 1:7 NKJV) Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa.

(Matthew 1:8 NKJV) Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah.

(Matthew 1:9 NKJV) Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah.

(Matthew 1:10 NKJV) Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah.

(Matthew 1:11 NKJV) Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

(Matthew 1:12 NKJV) And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

(Matthew 1:13 NKJV) Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor.

(Matthew 1:14 NKJV) Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud.

(Matthew 1:15 NKJV) Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob.

(Matthew 1:16 NKJV) And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

The Birth of Jesus Christ (1:16-25)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Luke – Gentiles – Son of Man

Now Luke was written to the Gentiles, portrays Jesus as the Son of Man, Thus the genealogy in Luke goes all the way back to Adam. Adam the first man, Jesus the Second Adam.

(Luke 3:38 NKJV) the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Mark – Romans - Servants

Mark was written to the Romans and portrays Jesus as the servant. Servants and slaves had no genealogies and interestingly enough neither does the book of Mark. There was an estimated 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire.

(Mark 1:1 NKJV) The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

John – Deity – Eternal

John was written to bring to light the deity of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, and this is the genealogy given in John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, He was with God in the beginning. Jesus is eternal, He was in the beginning:

(John 1:1 NKJV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

(John 1:2 NKJV) He was in the beginning with God.

(Matthew 1:16 NKJV) And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

Jeconiah cursed from Throne / Luke goes through Mary

This is significant because as we get into this genealogy of Joseph and we read in verse 16, And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary. Notice it doesn't say the father of Jesus. It goes on to say "of whom was born, [not of Joseph but of Mary] Jesus, who is called the Messiah (Christ) (1:16). As we look at this genealogy that comes from David, we find in verse 12, *And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconias begat Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel (1:12)*. Jeconias was a wicked king, so wicked that God placed a curse upon him in Jeremiah 22; and this curse that was placed upon Jeconiah in the last verse of chapter 22 verse 30, "Thus saith the Lord, write ye this man Coniah [who was Jeconiah], write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days for no man of his seed shall prosper sitting upon the throne of David and ruling anymore in Judah." The curse was that none of his children would sit on the throne. So if Christ were the son of Joseph, he could not be a rightful heir to the throne of David because of Jeconias and the curse that was upon him by the Lord--none of his seed shall prosper sitting on the throne of David. That's why Luke gave to us the genealogy of Mary and coming through Nathan we skipped this fellow Jeconias. And we come down to Joseph who was the son-in-law of Eli, or Eli was Mary's father. So they both of them were from the tribe of Judah, they both of them were of the seed of David. I love how perfect the Scriptures are, how they never contradict themselves, passages like this increase my faith as I say there is no way someone could ever make this story up, it is too perfect, and it would be impossible to not get tripped-up at some point:

(Jeremiah 22:30 NKJV) Thus says the LORD: 'Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, And ruling anymore in Judah.'

(Luke 3:23 NKJV) Now Jesus Himself began His ministry at about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli,

(Matthew 1:17 NKJV) So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

Why Groups of 14

Why groups of 14, because that is how they would teach little Jewish kids genealogies, they would teach them in groups so they wouldn't have to try to memorize a string of 42 all at once. It's a great principle for memorizing Scriptures by the way, break the verse or verses into groups, and learn the groups, and then put the groups together to learn the whole verse or verses.

Matthew is Levi / Parents Keeping Training-up

I might also point out that Matthew's name was given to Him by Jesus. His original name is Levi, so we see his Jewish heritage coming through here. Most likely he comes from the tribe of Levi. So Matthew's Jewish upbringing is shining through here. Parents, train-up a child in the way they should go, keep sowing, keep watering, and those things will wear off on them, Matthew is a wonderful example of that: *(Mark 2:14 NKJV) As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.*

(Matthew 1:18 NKJV) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 1:19 NKJV) Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

(Matthew 1:20 NKJV) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Mary 14-16 yrs Old / Arranged – Espoused / Divorce Certificate / Consummated after Ceremony

In those days the girls usually got married by the time they were fifteen or sixteen years old. But they were often engaged when they were two or three years old because marriage was by arrangement. There would be families that would be friends, did a lot of budding around together and they'd have children around the same time and they'd say, when your little boy grows up why don't we make arrangements and he can marry our little girl. So because the parents had set them aside and marriage was by arrangement, a child could be engaged when they were in kindergarten. (picture a 5yr old - I'm engaged to her, you know). A year before they were actually married, they got serious and they entered into a second stage that was known as the espousal. There was actually a ceremony for this and it was a year of waiting and courting and keeping themselves for each other. This espousal period was sacred, it was to be kept pure, you had to get a divorce from being espoused, it was a time of full commitment unto each other; but the marriage was not consummated until after the marriage ceremony. And it was after the ceremony and you would go into the tent and the marriage was consummated and then you were fully married. But this espousal was more than an engagement, it was a complete commitment to each other, legally bound to each other but yet the marriage was not consummated until the actual ceremony. So that during this time that they were espoused, Mary showed up pregnant. "She was found with child by the Holy Spirit" (1:18b).

Mary considered Adultery / Joseph Heartbroken / Holy Spirit brings Assurance / Seek Him First

So Mary would be considered an adulterer and the Law in Leviticus 20:10 says she was to be stoned to death. Joseph obviously loves her and didn't want to see her die. Can you imagine the pain going through his heart? Heart broken I am sure, but the Holy Spirit comes upon Him to bring the words of assurance to Him, May I say this to all who may be heart broken over a relationship, or remember this story for a yet future heart break you young ones who will be dating; when the heartbreak comes, let the Holy Spirit bring you words of assurance. Don't run off to hear the words of man, seek the Holy Spirit to

minister to your broken heart. Then let your friends and godly counsel minister to you. If you go to them first, you may miss what the Holy Spirit has to say to you. Imagine if Joseph went to man first, how differently this story would have been written.

(Leviticus 20:10 NKJV) "The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death."

Spirit Didn't tell Him First / Singles / All our Circumstances

May I also make this note, the Spirit didn't tell Joseph first. The Spirit told Joseph after the fact. Singles often say after a break up, why did God allow me to enter into this relationship if He knew it was going to fail. Why didn't He tell me first? (I always ask if God had told you beforehand, did you at the time have ears to hear, or were you caught up in the emotions). But please remember this story, God didn't even tell Joseph the Messiah was coming through his bride, through the virgin miracle. God in His infinite wisdom determined to tell Joseph after the conception. God has Joseph's attention, and Joseph had ears to hear. We can apply this story to many, many circumstances we experience in our lives, from dating to employment, the list is endless. God in His infinite wisdom will sometime let us walk through doors, that may be difficult to accept, and then speak to us once we are through them. The key, God will speak, let us have ears to hear.

Notice what Angel says to Convince Him

God had his attention, Joseph had ears to hear, and the word was in his heart. Notice what the angel goes on to say to Joseph to convince Joseph that this was the working of God.

(Matthew 1:21 NKJV) "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

(Matthew 1:22 NKJV) So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

(Matthew 1:23 NKJV) "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

(Matthew 1:24 NKJV) Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

1st - Back in Verse 20 – Son of David

Notice back in verse 20 the angel appears and calls him son of David, not son of Jacob. The angel is bringing his memory that the Messiah would come through the lineage of David:

(Matthew 1:20 NKJV) But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."

2nd – Virgin Birth

Secondly the angel quickens his memory to the virgin birth, Isaiah 7:14:

(Isaiah 7:14 NKJV) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."

3rd – Messiah save Sinners

Thirdly, that the Messiah would save people from their sins (Genesis 3:15), which also speaks of the virgin birth because woman don't have the seed, the male does, yet Genesis 15 says between her Seed:

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

Joseph stood on the Word / You Stand – No Matter Pressure of World / Jesus the Solid Rock

Joseph stood on the word of God, in spite of all that would come upon him. I think of the cruel things that have been said to me, the mocking, the ridicule for being a follower of Jesus Christ, imagine all that would come with saying I am the Step-father of the Messiah (oh really they would say). My family thinks I'm crazy when I tell them I read the Bible everyday; imagine dropping this bomb on them. Joseph stood upon the word, he didn't waver. Beloved, may that be you! No matter the pressure from the world is (for you can be sure there were those (friends and family) saying stone her, she has disgraced you), may you (like Joseph) stand upon this Word, and never waver no matter how you may be challenged. Let them laugh, let them mock, let them ridicule, let them ostracize you, but never waver from what you know is the

truth. Stand on His promises, stay away from where He says to stay away, go where He tells you to go. Jesus Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand

(Matthew 1:25 NKJV) and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Disagree with Virgin Birth – Don't say not in the Bible

Verse 25 - and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son - You can disagree with the virgin birth, but please don't try to tell us that the scriptures don't teach it. Virgin means untouched, that is all it can mean regardless of what man wants to try to make it mean. Verse 25 says Joseph didn't know her, which is a phrase used in the Bible for sexual relationship. Just at face value, what else could it mean, that Joseph didn't know her?

Mary and her Virginit

Some people want to try to say that Mary remained a virgin all through her life, and that is a contradiction to Scriptures. When it says that Jesus' brothers and sisters came to Him, they say that word really means "cousins". In Luke 1, John the Baptist is identified as Jesus' cousin. In Mark 6:3, it says is this not the brother of James, Judea, Simon? The Bible uses the word cousin when it wants to speak of a cousin (John Baptist) and it uses the word brother when it wants to speak about brothers. So Mary did marry Joseph and have a family together.

*(Luke 1:36 KJV) And, behold, thy **cousin** Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.*

4773. suggesens, soong-ghen-ace'; from G4862 and G1085; a relative (by blood); by extens. a fellow countryman:--cousin, kin (-folk, -sman).

*(Mark 6:3 KJV) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the **brother** of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.*

80. adelphos, ad-el-fos'; from G1 (as a connective particle) and delphus (the womb); a brother (lit. or fig.) near or remote [much like H1]:--brother.

What a Woman / Anything out of Nazareth / Flower in the Desert

Now what a woman Mary was, a virgin in Nazareth. History books say the Roman soldiers loved to go to Nazareth because of all the prostitutes that lived there. Remember, can anything good come out of Nazareth? You girls who may one day think well everybody is doing it, no they are not. Mary did not even when she was surrounded by it. Mary was a flower in the desert. Read the Book of Luke sometime and see how well-versed she was in the Word. What a godly woman, a woman of the word, and a woman who set herself apart from the world.

(John 1:46 NKJV) And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

It will be Fun to Talk to Her

It will be fun in heaven to ask Mary, what was Jesus like as a baby, did He potty train early? Did he ever get His head stuck in bucket, I can picture Jesus will look over like every kid does, ohh I hate it when mom tells embarrassing stories about me. I took a video of little Camden at the hospital, his mommy changing his diaper, and she wasn't quick enough, it was so funny, it was cute, I watch it every night before I go to bed. But something tells me he won't want me showing it to his girlfriends when they come over. Heaven will be anything but boring. This Mary, what a woman, you young girls, study her life, what an example, what a standard to seek after,

Lost Count / Thinking of Heavenly Father – Birth of Jesus

I've lost count now how many times I live the passage of scripture I am teaching on that week. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. I couldn't help but think of the heavenly Father this week. I could not help but think of the birth of Jesus Christ as I was in the delivery room with my wife and child.

(Matthew 1:18 NKJV) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Look at My Baby so Tiny – That God make Self Vulnerable / To come into Hostile World

I look at my little baby, so tiny, so needy and to think that God would make Himself that vulnerable. To come as a babe into what He knew would be a hostile world as the Evil One would seek to destroy Him.

Think of Heavenly Father – To be Separated from Son / Leave Throne / Future the Cross

I thought more so about the Heavenly Father. What it must have been like for Him to be separated from His only begotten Son, for the first time ever. To watch Him leave the throne of heaven, be born the immaculate conception, knowing all along the cross was His future. Six hours on a hill in Palestine was His future

Been in Some Situations / Never more Helpless – Grunting to Breath / Could only Watch

I have been in some situations in my life, had a gun pulled on me, a knife, jumped by 3 men, went under the water 3 times nearly drowning in Cheat Lake West Virginia, But never have I ever felt helplessness like I did this Monday. I got to go to the ICU one hour after birth and tears flooded my eyes and heart as I watched my son gasp for each breath, a continual grunt with each birth he took. I never feared losing him that day, but my heart broke as there was nothing I could do for him physically except watch. I could not intervene or I would make matters worse. Of course as every parent in this room feels, wishing I could trade places with him.

Thinking of the Father – Breaking His Heart / Void in Heart – Not filled Until Camden Home

I think of the Heavenly Father the day Jesus was born, I think of those 6 hours Jesus was on the cross. How it must have broke the Father's heart. What did the distance between Him and the Son do to His heart? I know for me personally, my life has a void, life will not feel right again until my son is home in my house. Right now there is a void in my heart, and that something is missing, and it won't be filled until Camden comes home. I doubt the Heavenly Father is any different. I do take great comfort that right now my "helper" (my helpmate – Renee) is there with him, loving and ministering to him, what a beautiful picture of the Holy Spirit's ministry while Jesus was on the earth.

Father couldn't Intervene – Had to Endure – No Other Way – Only the Cross

The Father could not intervene, the Father had to endure the separation, the void, because there was no other way, only through the cross could man be redeemed and the Father counted us worth it, how amazing!

Verse 21 – His Name is Jesus / Yehoshua = God Saves

Verse 21, His name shall be called Jesus for He will save His people from their sin. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew word **Yehowshu'a**, which means "God Saves"

(Matthew 1:21 NKJV) "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name **JESUS**, for He will save His people from their sins."

Hebrew - 3091. Yehowshuwa', yeh-ho-shoo'-ah; or **Yehowshu'a**, yeh-ho-shoo'-ah; from H3068 and H3467; Jehovah-saved; Jehoshua (i.e. Joshua), the Jewish leader:--Jehoshua, Jehoshuah, Joshua. Comp. H1954, H3442.

His Name Represents Him and the Father / Sole Purpose Fellowship with Man / Camden

Jesus name represents not only Him but His Father's heart His name speaks of His sole thought and purpose, and that is to fellowship with man, to provide the way for fellowship, through Jesus. If you are wondering where Camden's name came from, it is the legacy, the heritage, that his mother and I leave Him, Born, (or the birthing began) the final Day of the Franklin and Billy Graham Festival there in Camden Yards. The Festival and the Graham family represent all that his mother and I live for, to know Him, and to make Him known to others, Camden Graham will always have a reminder of his heritage, and we pray that he will one day fulfill his heritage by knowing Him and making Him known as we are commissioned to do. Jesus Christ had a heritage, a legacy, and that was to come one day and save His people from their sins. Jesus fulfilled His heritage. Children are the heritage of their parents:

(Psalms 16:6 KJV) *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.*

(Psalms 16:7 KJV) *I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons.*

(Psalms 127:3 KJV) *Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.*

Jesus Endured His Heritage

Jesus fulfilled His heritage, fulfilled His name, He endured the cross and saved His people from their sins. All the Father could do was looked on, and could only watch.

Father and Son in Alaska

I heard a story this week about a Father, his 12 year old son, and two other friends. They had gone to Alaska to go fishing together. One of them was a pilot so they took a sea plane to fly them into where the fishing was good. They landed in a remote area, spent several hours fishing for the day in various places along the water. When they returned to the plane, they found it high and dry for the tide had gone out. They could do nothing else except camp out there for the night. In the morning the tide had come back in, they loaded back in the plane to head home, but what no one realized was that one of the planes pontoons had a crack in it and took on water. When the plane took off the weight of the water in the one pontoon caused the plane to do flip over and they crashed into the chilly Alaskan waters. The plane began to sink, it was not equipped with a emergency boat, and they had no choice but to swim for sure. The two men were strong swimmers and they were able to make it to shore, barely. The father and son made their swim but got caught in a rip-tide that pushed them further out to sea. The father could have made it to shore, but not carrying his son, and the cold of the Artic waters left them little time of survival in the water. One of the men that had made it shore said he watched the father turn back form shore and swim out to his son. The next day, the search and rescue team found their dead bodies together; the medical examiner concluded that the son would have died first of hypothermia because of lower body weight. As I heard that story, as I heard the father not willing to leave his son to die alone, choosing to die himself, together with his son; I wondered to myself, what was their last conversation, what did the father say to the son, what did the son say to the father, knowing that death was waiting at the door. I don't tell you this story to arouse your emotions, but to ask you to consider what that last conversation between the Father and the Son was before Jesus would step out of eternity, into the fallen world, where death was the future. What did they say? Did they say anything at all? Were there tears? How long was the embrace? Questions without answers, but whether they talked or not, I know what was in there mind based on the Scriptures.....you and I.

(Hebrews 12:2 NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

They Counted us Worth

Whether they spoke, or the Father and Son just looked into each others eyes, I don't know, but one thing they were in agreement on, one thing that was on their mind, was you and I and they would say to one another at some point, they are worth it. Lets go get our kids.....

(John 3:16 NKJV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Don't know your Situation

I don't know your situation today. I don't know how you marriage is, how your health is, your finances are, or your family and kids, but this I do know, God loves you! God loves every person in this room, and when He looked upon you He said worth it!

Matthew 2

The Travels of the Babe of Bethlehem

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

The Travels of the Babe of Bethlehem

- Jesus in Bethlehem: (1:1-11)
- Jesus in Egypt: (1:12-18)
- Jesus in Nazareth: (1:19-23)

Last Study

Well in our last study we saw the birth of Jesus Christ. That the king of the universe would make Himself vulnerable, to come into a world in which His future would be the cross. We talked about what it would be like when it came time for Jesus to step out of eternity into our time domain, and He and the Father would be separated (but not forsaken until those 6 hours on the cross) for 33.5 years, as Jesus would show the way, be the way to the Father. My how God loves you. May you dwell in and on His love today; the love that He has for you. May you would dwell on the fact that He would look upon you and say, "worth it", every last lash, every one of the buffets, every strike of the nail, and He would take it all and say, "worth it". No matter where you have been, and what you have done, He says, "come unto Me, I love you". We come into His word today in remembrance of His love, to set ourselves aside from all the other thoughts we have had to deal with this week, and just think upon Him, His love, and His thoughts for us. I am always ever so thankful for these 40 minutes every Sunday, and the opportunity before and after to worship Him, and let my heart open up, and let out, my love for my King, My Savior, My Jesus.

Jesus in Bethlehem

(Matthew 2:1 NKJV) Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,

(Matthew 2:2 NKJV) saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

1st Question / Daily Question / Vital Question / Wise Men Still Seek Him

The first question in the New Testament, and how fitting - ***Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?*** A wonderful question for us to ask ourselves every morning, oh that Lord that I may draw near to you before anything else comes near to me. That every morning for our sake we will say where is He who has been born King of the Jews, where will He, How will He reign in my heart, and rule over my day? It is a wonderful question for those who have seen the star, have followed the star, and found the Babe of Bethlehem and fell down and worshipped Him and seen Him as the Lamb of God who would take away their sins. But it is also a vital question for anyone here today that has not made that journey, have not followed that star, and has yet to bow down and say I need this Babe of Bethlehem, that would become my Savior, that would bridge the gap between me a sinful man, and the Holy God. ***Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?***, if you are not sure that you have a personal relationship with Jesus

Christ, do not leave this building today until you have asked all the right questions. Wise men came, and wise men still seek Him today.

Doubtful only 3 / Caravan

It is doubtful there were only 3, for men of this stature would likely not have traveled alone. There most likely was a whole train, caravan, along with these men.

Came from East / Star in West

The men were in the East, came from the East, therefore the Star was in the west, and they traveled from the East. Just a little misconception that Hallmark Cards, and some religious organizations have today.

Traveled many Months

These men would have traveled many months to follow this star. Maybe two years for Herod will kill all the children two years and younger.

What is this Star / Numbers 22 / Balak and Balaam / Daniel in Babylon

What is this star, how did they know that this was the star. It was supernatural for sure; it was a supernatural guiding star that these men had followed and were led actually to Bethlehem. Possibly, Genesis 1:14, the lights in the sky were for Signs and seasons. These wise men studied the signs that God had put in the sky. But more likely, this is what is referred to in Numbers 22, Balak the king of Moab was terrified of the children of Israel so he hired Balaam to come curse them. Balaam was a prophet but every time he tried to curse Israel he would instead bless them, which totally upset king Balak. Now on one of Balaam's prophecies he prophesied that a star would arise out of Jacob that would have a scepter, and rule over the world. Balaam was from the area at the Euphrates which is probably where these wise men were from, and they studied ancient writings such as this, and those of Daniel who had been in captivity there in Babylon. Daniel would write of the in the seventh chapter of the book that bears his name, Daniel wrote that "One would come, called the Ancient of Days, to rule and reign upon the earth; and that He would have everlasting dominion." In fact, Daniel gave the very date this One would ride into Jerusalem. So these wise men, these magi, were most likely very familiar with Daniel's writings, prophecies, and teachings. And no doubt they were watching for the Ancient of Days to appear.

(Genesis 1:14 NKJV) Then God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years;

(Numbers 22:1 NKJV) Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho.

(Numbers 22:2 NKJV) Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites.

(Numbers 22:3 NKJV) And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel.

(Numbers 24:15 NKJV) So he took up his oracle and said: "The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor, And the utterance of the man whose eyes are opened;

(Numbers 24:16 NKJV) The utterance of him who hears the words of God, And has the knowledge of the Most High, Who sees the vision of the Almighty, Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

*(Numbers 24:17 NKJV) "I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; **A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,** And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.*

(Daniel 7:13 NKJV) "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

(Daniel 7:14 NKJV) Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Daniels 70 Sevens

Daniel's prophecy was 483 years to the day for His, Jesus, triumphal entry into Jerusalem. These wise men would be putting two and two together. Many Jewish people knew the prophecy of Daniel and were waiting in great anticipation for the Messiah, knowing that His coming was near. It pays to study your Bible, you will see things the rest of the world totally misses, and you will always be blessed. My point, just as they saw the signs, lived a life of excited expectation, prepared themselves for the journey, so too it should be for us who study this word for we see the signs, we know His return is soon, and that makes us live in excited expectations, and we should be preparing ourselves for the journey we shall embark on:

(Daniel 9:24 NKJV) "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

Isn't it Great God Meets People / Keep that in Mind

Isn't it great the way the Lord appears to people wherever they're at? The magi studied the stars, and the Lord said, "Okay, I'll speak to them in the stars and reveal to them the true Star, the Star of Jacob, as Balaam declared Him to be in Numbers 24:17. Because the magi were into astrology, God used the stars to draw them to the Son. Keep that in mind as you go about your everyday life that in everyday life is where you meet people, and God wants to meet those people that you meet. Hey what is that in your hand, a baseball I am on the Company softball team, great I'll use that. What is that in your hand, keys to a Harley, great I'll use that. God puts desires in our hearts, as He designed us in our mothers womb, and then uses those things down the road of life. Whatever you thing is, scrapbooking, fishing, ebay, God will use that as a bridge to build a relationship with those around you, look for them, they are there. Have you ever wondered, how did these 3 or what ever the number is of wise men come together. Did one say to the others in his astronomy club, check it out, and the others checked it out and said you are right, lets go. Who knows, maybe there were 20 in this astronomy club, interpretations of dreams club, study of ancient writings club, and 17 said you guys are crazy, go start your own club you don't fit in here anymore (sound familiar). I don't know, but God met them where they were at and used it.

(Matthew 2:3 NKJV) When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod was a Mad Man

When Herod would be troubled so would all of Jerusalem because no one would know what this mad man would do. Herod feared losing his power, thus he will launch an offensive against the Babe of Bethlehem in hope to hold unto his power.

Herod an Edomite - Esau

Herod was actually an Edomite, and not a Jew at all. The Edomites were the descendants of Esau. Jacob and Esau, who began warring in their mother's womb, continued their battle throughout history. This war began between the sons of Jacob—Israel versus the sons of Esau—the Edomites. And here we find them still at war in Matthew chapter 2 as a son of Esau, Herod, is trying to slaughter a Son of Jacob, Jesus.

Little Man Syndrome / Killed Wife / Imprisoned 100 Leaders

How did Herod become king? He was a conniver who gained political influence through his dealings with Mark Antony of Cleopatra fame. A powerful person in Rome at that time, Mark Antony appointed Herod king of Judaea. This enabled Herod to become the potentate of Judaea, although in actuality, he was a puppet of Rome. It was during this period when Herod was king that the wise men, or magi, came from the East. Herod had the "little man" syndrome. He was maybe 4 foot 6 inches to maybe 4'11" according to historical writings, and he tried to build big things to compensate. Reminds of the king in the movie Shrek. He was a genius, you cannot look at the structures that stand even today that were built by Herod without recognizing the genius of this man; the Herodian Fortress south of Bethlehem, the Masada down at the Dead Sea, the Alexandrian Fortress up the Jordan valley midway between Jericho and the sea of Galilee, the city of Caesarea over on the coast, as well as the remains of the Great Wall of Jerusalem that was built by Herod, that portion of the wall that still stands, the Temple Mount area, the huge stones (45 feet long, 8 feet thick, and 5 feet high)—all testify to the genius of this man., he had many great building projects, thus the name Herod the Great. But he was insanely insecure, so much so that he killed his wife and her 3 brothers because he thought they were trying to overthrow him. It was said that it was safer to be Herods pig than his family. So crazy was this man, knowing that no one loved him, and that

no one would mourn at his death, he imprisoned the top 100 leaders in the region and had given the command that upon his death everyone of them were to be put to death so that there would be mourning in Jerusalem upon his death. Fortunately his son didn't carry out his wish, and after his father's death he released the men. But the son wasn't much better than the father, he too was an evil man.

(Matthew 2:4 NKJV) And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

(Matthew 2:5 NKJV) So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

(Matthew 2:6 NKJV) 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

Scribes Quoted Micah 5

The Scribes knew the scriptures, they knew the prophecy of Micah 5:2

(Micah 5:2 NKJV) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

Insignificant City / Wouldn't make 5 mile Journey / Wise Men – Spent Months – Expense - Energy

These scribes were aware of Micah 5:2, which said that Jesus Christ would be born in an insignificant little city five miles outside of Jerusalem. Yet, it amazes me that they didn't even bother to make the short journey to Bethlehem to see what was happening. The wise men spent months, perhaps years, traveling across the desert—spending much money and expending great energy to seek the Lord. The scribes who knew the Word wouldn't even get on their feet to see what was happening a mere five miles away. Isn't there a warning for you and me in this? Sometimes we think knowing the Scriptures is good enough. But it's doing, not merely knowing the Word, that counts. You and I can easily become like these scribes, saying, "Well, we know what is happening. We know what we should be doing, and that's good enough." No, the blessing is in doing, not just in knowing. And, there are so many people putting off their decision to go the 5 miles and check out the claims of Christ. I was dumbfounded by some of the pathetic excuses I heard from people for not going to the Billy Graham Crusade last week. It was only 5 miles, it was only 2 hours, your eternity is at stake. I got saved because one day (prompting of the Holy Spirit I now see), I said you know I read all kinds of books on airplanes, aerodynamics, jet engines, all to get a job. 4 years of college, but I never read this Bible which is about the God that created me, I think I should at least read this book once. Didn't know much as I read through the OT, but I came to see my sins separated me from a Holy God, and I was ever so glad when I came into the Book of Matthew and saw the God who loves me, take my sin, and give me eternal life. I got saved right here in the book of Matthew.

Bethlehem major Tourist Disappointment

The scribes told Herod he would find the Christ in Bethlehem. Bethlehem today is a major disappointment for tourists because they go expecting to see something special, but when they get there, all they see is a typical Middle Eastern city. They go into the church of the Nativity, assuming it will be awesome. But as they walk in, they see the church itself divided into three sections (Catholic, Eastern, and Russian Orthodox) because these three groups have been fighting for centuries over who should control the site. And there are objects hanging from the ceiling that look like Christmas tree ornaments in a garage sale. With church groups fighting and dusty relics hanging, no wonder Bethlehem appears to be disappointing.

It's Perfect / Born in Stable – Came as Real Man / Bread of Life / Unimpressive City – Most Known

But you know what? It's perfect! You see, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, He was born in a stable, or a cave, which was used as a stable. It wasn't the picturesque setting we often have in our minds. No doubt, it was dirty. There were cow pies on the ground and flies buzzing overhead. It had to be so. Jesus came to a real world as a real Man to help real people. And Bethlehem mirrors reality today. Bethlehem—a very appropriate place for the Bread of Life to be born, for 'Bethlehem' means 'House of Bread.' Bethlehem was an unimpressive little city then and is an unimpressive little city still. But because Jesus was born there, more songs have been sung about, more poetry written about, more photographs taken of, more trips made to this insignificant little city than any other. Bethlehem is one of the best-known places in the world today for only one reason: Jesus was there.

So too Us / Takes Dirty – Unimpressive – Makes Great / Because we are His

And so too with you and me. Jesus comes into little people like us—people who are somewhat dusty and not at all that impressive—and He makes us great, not because of who we are, but because of whose we are. We are His.

(Matthew 2:7 NKJV) Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.

(Matthew 2:8 NKJV) And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

Not to Worship – To Exult Power

"You wise guys, go ahead and find Him, and when you have located Him, come and tell me that I may go and worship Him as well." Herod said this, not because he sincerely desired to worship the Christ, but because he was determined to exalt his own position, to establish his own authority, to eliminate the Babe of Bethlehem.

(Matthew 2:9 NKJV) When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

Young Child – Not Babe

Notice young child, not the babe. The Christmas story of the wise Men coming to the manger are not correct, but it is a nice touch on the Christmas nativity scene

(Matthew 2:10 NKJV) When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

(Matthew 2:11 NKJV) And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Came to House

Notice the magi came into the house, not the stable because Jesus was probably about a year and a half old by the time they made it all the way to Jerusalem. So when you set up your Nativity scene next Christmas, put your wise men four blocks away because it took them a long time to arrive!

Fell Down to Worship / Worship always Costly

They came to worship, and give, expecting nothing in return. Worship is always costly. It might cost you your so-called dignity. It might cost you financially as you learn to tithe and to give. It might cost you your friends or your family. The magi came worshiping with costly gifts. Gold indicates they acknowledged Jesus as King, since gold is a metal associated with kingly rule. By bringing frankincense, the spice used by priests, the wise men not only acknowledged Jesus as a mighty King, but as a Priest. Myrrh being the spice used in burials, the wise men acknowledged Jesus would be a martyred Prophet. The three-fold office of Jesus, the Messiah, is seen in the gifts of the wise men: gold for a Mighty King, frankincense for a Ministering Priest, myrrh for a Martyred Prophet.

Jesus – Will be to you what you Need

Jesus will be to you what you need at that time. Do you need the king, one that you can comfort in that He is on taking care of all your Needs? Do you need a prophet, one telling you the word of God?. Do you need a priest, one that would intercede for you? Jesus will be to you all that you will need.

Camden in Hospital

I must tell, that 2 weeks ago the day Camden was born, my heart was gripped as I watched him struggle to breath. Every breath his little chest would cave in, he was grunting to breath, 2 breaths a second. Chest caving in, stomach expanding out. All I could do was watch, continually pray, but I also found myself just worshipping. I sang worship songs there at his incubator about Him, His glory. I lifted His name on high. I did not worship Him to get Him to heal my son, but I worshipped Him, because He is worthy to be praised, all glory and honor is His. As I did, for hours on end, for the days to come, and

every time I remember back, I worship Him and find myself in a place of peace, in a place of confidence that He is in control. I found fear leaving me, and love filling me. He is my prophet, my priest, and my King. So too is He that to my son.

Jesus in Egypt

(Matthew 2:12 NKJV) Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

(Matthew 2:13 NKJV) Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

God Honors Family Order / Men Assume your Position

Notice how God honors the order of the family? He speaks to Joseph of what to name the child, as that was the father's privilege. He speaks to Joseph of where to lead the family. Joseph had ears to hear what the Lord would say to him. Husbands and fathers the Lord wants to speak to you so you may lead your families; too many men want to be the providers, make the money, supply the family, and then leave the spiritual guiding to the wife. God wants you to lead, and if you have been lacking in that area, I pray this example of Joseph will challenge you to assume the role the Lord has called you to have.

(Matthew 2:14 NKJV) When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,

Used Gifts to Support

The Lord provides for His people, He will meet their needs. Here we see the time in Jerusalem is financed by the gifts of the wise men to the Babe of Bethlehem.

(Matthew 2:15 NKJV) and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

(Matthew 2:16 NKJV) Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

Hosea 11:1 / Matthew Quotes OT more than other 3 Combined

Verse 15 - Out of Egypt I called My Son. – Quoting Hosea 11:1. This book is written to the Jews, and Matthew quotes the OT more than the other 3 gospels combined do:

(Hosea 11:1 NKJV) "When Israel was a child, I loved him, And out of Egypt I called My son."

Satan old Story / Cain – Gen 6 – Moses – Esther / Now Jesus / See it Today

An old story as Satan has been trying to destroy the lineage of the Messiah since the garden; as Cain killed Abel, as the Seed of the woman the Messiah would come. Then Genesis 6 the sons of God entered the daughters of Israel trying to corrupt the line, so bad was it that God has to cleanse the world with a flood. Pharaoh tried killing all the male children of Israel, but Moses survives and leads them out of Egypt. In the book of Esther the decree was given to kill all the Jews, but God used Esther to preserve the nation. And here again is Satan attack on people of Israel in an attempt to kill the Messiah. What you see going on today (23 July 2006) with Israel being attacked by Syria and Lebanon at the same time are just more of Satan trying to destroy Israel. This time Satan feels that if he can destroy Israel, he can stop the prophetic time piece, which is Israel. No Israel, no Second Coming of Jesus to the earth to Redeem them. Satan is just fulfilling prophecy, again, just like he did for Hosea 11, Micah 5. All Satan does is add believers when he does these things, because he confirms the word of God.

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

(Matthew 2:17 NKJV) Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

(Matthew 2:18 NKJV) "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."

NT Reveals OT / Jeremiah 31

I appreciate the New Testament as it reveals some of the Old Testament prophecies because I would have never known that is what it meant in Jeremiah 31:15 had I not been told. We are so blessed as the church of the 21st-century, we have the complete Bible. We have plenty of historical writings to back up the Bible, not to mention all the scientific discoveries. We should be the most Bible literate believers the Church has ever seen. The question is, are you? Are you taking advantage of that has been given to the 21st century church? The sin of Sodom was that they had too much abundance and they became lazy. *(Jeremiah 31:15 NKJV) Thus says the LORD: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more."*

Other side of Christmas Story

After Jesus was born and then taken safely into Egypt, Herod ordered the extermination of all male children two years old and younger. Swords flashed, mothers screamed, blood flowed in the streets, and we see the other side of the Christmas story.

Babylonians 586BC

When the Babylonians invaded Judah in 586 B.C. and carried the Jews captive into Babylon, Jeremiah 40 tells us that the deportation headquarters were in Ramah, a city five miles north of Bethlehem. Inspired by the Spirit, Matthew refers to that event as a picture of its ultimate fulfillment here in the story of the Nativity, six hundred years later. For once again there was weeping in Ramah, as Rachel—the mothers of Israel—wept for the children a crazed Herod had ordered annihilated in his attempt to kill the Christ Child.

Peace on Earth / Little Town Bethlehem – Still we Lie to Deep we Cry

"Peace on earth, goodwill towards men" was sung by the angels in the heavens on the night of Jesus' birth. But there's another side to the Christmas story. No longer, "O Little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie," but "O little town of Bethlehem, how deep we hear thy cry."

Soldiers marching – Replaces Shepherds Running / Piercing Swords – Replace Peace on Earth

Soldiers marching in the streets replaced shepherds running through the streets. And piercing swords replaced "Peace on earth" when a Silent Night became a screaming night.

Picture Yourself Mothers / The Other Side of Christmas

Picture yourself there, mothers. Roman soldiers marching through your town, grabbing your children, piercing swords through their hearts or decapitating them, while you scream and lament without help and without hope. That's the other side of Christmas, for the Babe of Bethlehem brought bloodshed to Bethlehem, fulfilling the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15 concerning weeping and lamentation, sorrow and suffering. If there has ever been anyone who could ask the question, "why God" it would be these mothers and fathers. God how could you allow this, where were you, how could you let this happen to me.

Study this for Hours / Terms of both Life & Death / There are Things we don't Understand

I meditated over this passage for hours, seeking from the Lord a deep spiritual meaning, but I found nothing deeper, than what is already there at the surface. We must look at the Babe of Bethlehem in terms of both life, and death. There are things we can't understand, why is there pain and suffering in this world. How could Jesus come to bring peace yet it result in so much pain and suffering? There are things we can't understand, but we can see that these things are not foreign in the Bible. What we experience today, they experienced then. Remind you, it was the star that led the wise men to Jerusalem to ask where is the King of the Jews, which then set King Herod into his tirade. God allowed it. Jesus said He came not to bring peace, but a sword. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence: *(Matthew 10:34 NKJV) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."* *(Matthew 10:35 NKJV) "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';"* *(Matthew 10:36 NKJV) "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'"* *(Matthew 10:37 NKJV) "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."* *(Matthew 10:38 NKJV) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."*

(Matthew 11:12 NKJV) "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

This life we live on this earth will have both life and death. Things we can't understand, things that hurt us to the very core of who we are. Loss of loved one, persecution, attacks, friends and family turning on us for us turning to Jesus. If you want to be totally confused, totally ask why, then look to the cross, for there looking upon Him hanging there for your sin and my sin, how can't we ask why, how could you, for a sinner like me? We all at some point will have our day of Ramah, our day of Bethlehem in this world, but wait!

The Asterisk – the hope of the Rest of Jeremiah 31

But wait! There's an asterisk, a footnote we must consider. You see, the Jews knew that even as Jeremiah wept over a nation about to be destroyed, he also gave Israel a hope imbedded in chapters 30–33.

(Jeremiah 31:15 NKJV) Thus says the LORD: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted for her children, Because they are no more."

(Jeremiah 31:16 NKJV) Thus says the LORD: "Refrain your voice from weeping, And your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, And they shall come back from the land of the enemy."

(Jeremiah 31:17 NKJV) There is hope in your future, says the LORD, That your children shall come back to their own border.

Refrain from Weeping – See what is Coming – It is far Greater

"Don't cry," says the Lord. "I hear the weeping that is going on in Israel, but you don't see what's coming. Refrain from your crying. Your children shall return—stronger than ever. The nation shall survive, and it shall prosper. The kingdom shall be established. The desert shall blossom. And you will have peace and prosperity unlike any other nation in the history of the world." And I say the same thing to you this day. Yes, sometimes following the Savior means sword, suffering, and sorrow. Yes, there is a cost. Yes, it can mean difficulties. But I also say, "Refrain from your weeping because the blessings to come are even greater."

Jesus in Nazareth

(Matthew 2:19 NKJV) But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

(Matthew 2:20 NKJV) saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the young Child's life are dead."

(Matthew 2:21 NKJV) Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Amplified Bible – Leisurely Journey / Imagine the Journey / But why

The Amplified Bible says it was a leisurely journey. Imagine that journey together, mother, dad and toddler (for Jesus is about 2 here). You know how toddlers are, the continual asking but why, but why, but why. But this is the Messiah and so it was probably Mary and Joseph saying, as Jesus spoke, but why?

Splashing – Sleeping – Holding Hands

Imagine that time, splashing in the river together, enjoying the fields; what a remarkable journey that must have been. Imagine watching Jesus play, to get so worn out and sleep on dad's shoulder as Joseph would have to carry Him, to walk and reach up and grab their hand. Watch a wonderful time that must have been. Parents enjoy your kids today.

Take some Leisurely Journeys with Him

We should purpose to take some leisurely journeys with Him, just a time of walking with Him, enjoying Him, and not worrying about making any appointments, or to-do lists, just walking and enjoying each other.

(Matthew 2:22 NKJV) But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.

Apple doesn't Fall Far

The apple didn't fall far from the tree, as Archelaus was just as wicked as his father history tells us.

Joseph and Dreams

I like this relationship Joseph has with the Lord, here again he is spoken to in a dream. I'm not sure what the Lord wants us to do so I'm going to go take a nap. Joseph are you going change His diaper, I can't Mary I am waiting to hear from the Lord.

Lord Leading Step by Step

Notice the Lord is leading them step by step. First go to Egypt, and then go to Nazareth. The Lord did not give them the whole plan, nor does He do that for us. If God didn't do that for Joseph, who was responsible for God's only Son, could we think we should be lead any other way? Note also, the first move was by circumstance (the census was to be taken, so off to Bethlehem they went), and then from there the Lord spoke to Joseph through dreams..

(Matthew 2:23 NKJV) And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Nazareth – not Picturesque / Sprout Town – Isaiah 11 / Can Relate to us

Nazareth was not the most picturesque or prominent spot. In fact, the word Nazareth literally means "bean town" or "sprout town." We would call it "hick town" today, which is why Nathanael, upon hearing of a Messiah from Nazareth, asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Is it possible that Messiah would actually come from a place like that?" Isaiah writes that Messiah would come forth as "a rod out of the stem of Jesse" (11:1). In other words, Messiah would come as a "sprout" out of the stem of Jesse— from "sprout town," a Sprout. Wherever you're living, or wherever you're from, remember that Jesus can relate to your situation. He chose to be a Nazarene, to be from Sprout Town, to be one of us.

(Isaiah 11:1 NKJV) There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Matthew 3

John the Baptist prepares the Way of the Lord (3:1-12)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

JB Prepares the Way / 400 years of Silence / Put Yourself in the Story

Today we will see John the Baptist coming on the scene to prepare the way of the King, as prophesied in Malachi and Isaiah. For four hundred years, the Jews had not heard a single prophet calling to them in the name of the Lord. Then, seemingly out of nowhere, came John. I want you to put yourself in the story today, imagine what it would have been like for those people in that day; 400 years of silence without hearing from a prophet of God. Lord have you forsaken your people, have we gone too far, what about our sin, what about your promise to send the Messiah. 400 years of silence; the days would turn into weeks, then months, then years, then centuries. From hope to hopelessness, but then, just as the Lord said He would, comes the messenger that would prepare the way of the Lord, the Coming King:

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

(Malachi 3:1 NKJV) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

(Isaiah 40:1 NKJV) "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.

(Isaiah 40:2 NKJV) "Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the Lord's hand Double for all her sins."

(Isaiah 40:3 NKJV) The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.

(Isaiah 40:4 NKJV) Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth;

(Isaiah 40:5 NKJV) The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

(Matthew 3:1 NKJV) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

(Matthew 3:2 NKJV) and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

(Matthew 3:3 NKJV) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"

Jump 28 Years / Luke 3 / 70 Sevens of Daniel

We jump forward about 28 years; Luke gives us the exact time in Luke 3:1. That little golden nugget in Luke 3 is important for in proving out the Daniel chapter 9 prophecy that Jesus would be heralded the Messiah in Jerusalem exactly 483 years to the day from the command going forth to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem during the Babylonian exile. We have covered that prophecy on a few occasion, and if you are not familiar with it, then I say put it on your list of the most important to-do for this week. We have included our past study notes at the end of this chapter:

(Luke 3:1 NKJV) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate."

400 Years / Wilderness – Dry / Lord Meets them – And Will You / He Loves you / Hear those Words

400 years without hearing from the Lord. Here again we see the Lord meeting people where they are at. Israel was in a dry Spiritual place, the Lord meets them in the desert; as will the Lord meet you wherever you are at, that is what love does and He loves you. When I say those words I hope you hear them in their depth. The God of the Universe loves you, cares for you, and desires you. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says.

Jesus speaking of JB / No Greater Prophet / No Miracles –Elijah / No Books – Daniel

Now Jesus, speaking of John the Baptist, would say he was the greatest prophet. Yet we will not read of him performing any miracles, never raised anyone from the dead, nothing like we read of the likes of Elijah, Elisha. He never wrote any books with great prophecies like Daniel or Isaiah, but Jesus calls him the greatest. Why is he called great, because he proclaimed the Coming and the way of the Lord. That is what made him so great.

(Matthew 11:7 NKJV) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(Matthew 11:8 NKJV) "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

(Matthew 11:9 NKJV) "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

(Matthew 11:10 NKJV) "For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

(Matthew 11:11 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

I Want to do Great Things / Want to be Great – Proclaim the Coming King / Point and Proclaim

People tell me all the time they want to do great things for the Lord. Do you want to be great in the Kingdom, tell people, proclaim to people the coming and way of the Lord and you will be great. Take your fingers, point to Jesus and tell people, "behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" and you will be an exact prophet, your prophecy will be 100% on target. Tell your friends and family, tell the check-out girl at 7/11, the coworker. You know what I love, lame excuses why people can't make it to church on Sunday; why? Because it is an open door of opportunity for me. Oh you can't make it, I just happen to have Sunday's message in my car on Cd. We have that rack of tapes, grab a handful, don't worry what week or passage, that is God's part, and then give it to people who say I can't make it on Sunday, ok we will bring it to you. I use to go to the truck stops all the time on a Saturday night because, and say to truckers I know you are going to be on the road tomorrow morning and have to miss church so I brought the good news to you. Now, realize it gets real boring spending 15-16 hours on the road, the odds of them listening are somewhat high. I remember offering it to 2 tuckers one night, and one got load and went on the attack, the other mockingly joined in. They both got in their rigs to pull away, the load one got on the ramp first, the second pulled up, his door swung open, I said oh no he got a bat or something, but he leans out with his hand extended, and said hurry up give one of those. I saw truckers get saved on those Saturday nights, because they are like so many others, lonely, wanting companionship, and they meet God who created them for fellowship with Him.

(John 1:29 NKJV) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

We are More Sure than John

We are even more sure of who the Messiah is than John the Baptist was, because even he would ask Jesus, "are you the one or is there another coming after you?" Do you want to be great in the kingdom, point, tell, proclaim the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world:

(Matthew 11:2 NKJV) And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples

(Matthew 11:3 NKJV) and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

What a Privilege / Born Centuries Earlier – Rain Fire – Raise Dead / Do Something Greater

What a privilege! I feel so honored that God would place us in this era and include us in His kingdom. He could have had us born centuries before Christ and made us great prophets calling down fire from heaven, raising the dead, healing the lepers. Instead, He said, "I'm going to do something greater. They're going to be part of My church." God says we will be greater than John the Baptist. Proclaim the Good News is not burdensome, it is a privilege. Jesus said we will be greater than John the Baptist: *(Matthew 11:11 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."*

(Matthew 3:4 NKJV) And John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Came not in Fine Robe / Torn Levi's / How many would Come Here

He came on the scene wearing not the fine flowing robes of the priests in all their glory, but camel's hair—the equivalent of torn Levi's—big leather belt around his waist, grasshopper legs hanging out of his mouth. How many people would come here today if as I taught I had grasshopper legs between my teeth, and in my beard? If I wore a camel hair leisure suit. Can you picture this scene?

First Hippie / Not how I would have Done It / God Starting a New Work / Matthew 1 – New Begin

John the Baptist, the first hippie. Not how I would have prepared the way of the Savior. John the Baptist is another example that God is doing something new, starting a new work, just as we looked at in our first study. If you missed it, please review it for it is a breath of fresh air from the Lord who desires to blow new life, or refresh you if your walk has seemed to be a little dry. The Lord is saying I am doing a work that defies human wisdom, I will put to shame the wise and the mighty and work through the weak and foolish.

(1 Corinthians 1:26 NKJV) For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.

(1 Corinthians 1:27 NKJV) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;

(1 Corinthians 1:28 NKJV) and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,

(1 Corinthians 1:29 NKJV) that no flesh should glory in His presence.

John Defies Man's Wisdom / Sunday best / Pastors turning People Away – Send them Here

How John defies man's wisdom of how a preacher should look, and how Christians should dress. Got to put on our best for God, we are going to His house today, I know churches and pastors that don't want long hair, or tattooed people, pierced people in their churches, I tell them to send them here, they'll be loved and received here.

Throw away Preconceived Ideas on Religion / I'm working beyond Imagination / Go back Regular

The Lord is saying through John the Baptist, throw away all your preconceived ideas of how religion should be, throw away all the things you have trusted in, all the excuses you may have for not following me, for I am starting a new work, beyond anything you can imagine. I think we all need to come back to this place on a regular basis in our lives, for how we decide how God should work, and what He should do, that we miss what He is doing and wants to do in our lives.

What I see in JB / Crying in Wilderness / Fervent Heart / Not Organizers – but Agonizers

But there is something I do see in John that I want the Lord to take me to, and that is verse 3 - "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'*" John was crying, his heart was fervent about his message. How I want the Lord to put that into my heart, to ignite my heart that I have fervency for sharing the gospel. God isn't looking for organizers, but agonizes. Those whose heart breaks for the lost, and can't sit by without doing something about it.

(Matthew 3:5 NKJV) Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him

(Matthew 3:6 NKJV) and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

No Small Feat / Use Time, Energy, Money / Lord Meets – Man must Come

Coming from all around, this was no small feat in those days; people would come from miles away. Use their money, use their vacation, expend energy, be uncomfortable sleeping under the stars, but they came. The Lord meets everyone where they are at spiritually, but man still has to come and it may require a person to sacrifice. So as the wise men did, so too did these people, so have many of you, and of course I must ask – have you?

All the Region Came / Drawn by the Father

All the region came to him. No television, no radio, no mail, no newspapers. They came. It is all the moving of the Spirit. God drawing people to himself, I never worry myself with church growth, for I know it is all the Lord drawing people, and I know the Lord wishes that none should perish but all seek repentance:

(John 6:44 NKJV) "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

(2 Peter 3:9 NKJV) The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Lord Draws – We Keep the Message / They Came Confessing / Repentance – Change / That's Christianity / I am Changing my Direction – My Mind

The Lord draws the people, but what is important is that we keep His message the message. Notice they came confessing their sins. That is Christianity, changed lives. People coming to Christ and being changed. Repentance means to "change direction". And Christianity is people saying I am going to stop doing things my way, and going my way, for I see the way God is going, and I am going to change my direction and follow His direction, I am changing my mind about these things and agreeing with His Word.

Verse 2 – First Words Repent / Kingdom of Heaven – Will Stand before the King

Notice verse 2, the first words out of John's mouth, which is the heart of his message, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand". He is saying you will be standing before the King of the Universe and have to give an account for your sins and every thought and action.

(Matthew 3:2 NKJV) and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

Repentance not Popular Message / Jesus 1st Words Public Ministry / Peter day of Pentecost

Repentance is not a popular message, it is not a message that people come from all around the region to hear these days. Regardless of popularity, it is the message of God. The first words out of Jesus mouth when He begins His public ministry was Repent, Matthew 4:17. The first message the church preached, (Peter on the day of Pentecost) was Repent. They cried out to Peter what shall we do, and Peter said, Repent:

(Matthew 4:17 NKJV) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

(Acts 2:38 NKJV) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

John Preached the Message / Pulpits Today / Jesus what did you Expect to See

John, as should we, preached in power regardless of how popular it was. Today pulpits all around the country are preaching love, joy, your best day today, but are skipping "The Message". Jesus said what did you expect to see of John the Baptist, a reed ready to break, not so! John would not bend for anyone. His message was pointed and powerful. He came in the Spirit of Elijah, and he was empowered from above. And Jesus said we will be greater than John the Baptist, but we must stick to the message:

(Matthew 11:7 NKJV) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"

(Matthew 11:8 NKJV) "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

(Matthew 11:9 NKJV) "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

(Matthew 3:7 NKJV) But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Pharisees Ritualistic – Sadducees Rationalist

The Pharisees were the ritualistic and the Sadducees were the rationalist. Both types still exist today. The Pharisees were so right about doctrine they were dead right. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection for they could not rationalize that kind of power. They didn't believe in life after this, hence that is why they were "sad-you-see".

**(Matthew 3:8 NKJV) "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,
(Matthew 3:9 NKJV) "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I
say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.
(Matthew 3:10 NKJV) "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree
which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**

Fruits Worthy of Repentance / Words mean Nothing – Prove it Out

Notice again he said fruits worthy of repentance. John said your words and knowledge means nothing, you fool yourself, let the fruit of your life prove out your words, leave your religious club, and see your sin and a need for a Savior. "It's not simply a matter of getting dunked," John warned. "It's a way of living. If your repentance is sincere, fruit will be produced in your life."

Father Abraham / Today I go to Calvary – Catholic - Baptist

We have Abraham as our father. Today he would say don't say to me I go to Calvary Chapel, I go to the Catholic church, the Baptist church. John is saying I do not care who you associate yourself with, bear fruit worthy of repentance. Your life will prove out your words, there will be an evidence of your words.

Trees in PA

Could you imagine the pine tree in a yard saying to you one day, I'm a peach tree. No you are not, you are a pine tree. Nope I am a peach tree. Listen pine tree I have known you for 15 years, you have lived in my yard for 15 years and all you have ever produced are pine cones. Nope, I'm a peach tree. Pine tree you keep that up I'm laying the axe to you, as you walk away. As you walk away he gets the last word in..... I'm a peach tree. I remember a pear tree we had in our yard in Pennsylvania, that tree's trunk was like 1 inch thick, it might have had 4 branches the size of my pinky. My friends would say what is that tree, why do you keep that sad tree in your yard. I'd say it is a pear tree, they go no it is not. I'd say yes it is. But every year that tree would produce a handful of pears, good pears, they would like bend the tree in half, when you would pick the pears you could almost hear the tree say ahhhhh, God bless you. It was a pear tree, it proved itself by its fruit every year.

(Matthew 3:11 NKJV) "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Not Worthy to Carry His Sandal / Must Decrease John 3:30 / Good Word for us Parents

Verse 11 - He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry – John would say I am not even worthy to carry His sandals, John will say in John 3:30 that He must increase and I must decrease. What a good word for us as parents; that we take our kids to that place where we decrease, and Jesus increases. That we live a life that has one goal, and that is to get our children dependant on Jesus Christ, that they stop looking to us for all their needs, but develop a life that seeks Jesus in all things:

(John 3:27 NKJV) John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.

(John 3:28 NKJV) "You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'

(John 3:29 NKJV) "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.

(John 3:30 NKJV) "He must increase, but I must decrease.

(John 3:31 NKJV) "He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.

Can't Carry Sandal / All Power in Jesus /

John said I can't even carry His sandals, and how powerful a statement that is. What you may say, it doesn't sound powerful at all. John is declaring, that all power is in Jesus. If you can bring yourself to this place, then you too will be living in power, you will be living in freedom, for you will see that all power

is in Jesus, and when we see we can't even loosen His sandals, we find ourselves being loosened, freed up, that we see I don't have to do things in my power, the pressure isn't on me, I can cast all my cares upon Jesus and know He has the power to see all my needs through.:

*(1 Peter 5:6 NKJV) Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,
(1 Peter 5:7 NKJV) casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

His Name / I AM – Becoming One

When we see we can't carry His sandals, then He can be our all in all, He can be "I Am that I Am", The definition of this Hebrew word means to exist, be, become. God is the "Becoming One" and He wants to become all we need:

(Exodus 3:14 NKJV) And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

I Can Be all You Need

I can be to you all that you need, I will provide for you (Jehovahjireh), I will be your Healer (Jehovah Rapha), I will be your Banner (Jehovah Nisse) and My Banner flies over and it says Satan you have no claim to this person, they are mine and touching them is a declaration of war. I will be your Peace (Jehovah Shalom), I will lead your life into still waters and green pastures as your Shepherd (Jehovah Ra), I will bring you into right standing before the Father in Heaven (Jehovah Tsedek), and I will never leave you nor forsake you, for I am ever present with you (Jehovah Sham).

- Genesis 22 – The Lord will Provide – Jehovah Jireh
- Exodus 15 – The Lord is Our Healer – Jehovah Rapha
- Exodus 17 – The Lord is Our Banner – Jehovah Nisse
- Judges 6 – The Lord is Our Peace – Jehovah Shalom
- Psalm 23 – The Lord is our Shepherd – Jehovah Ra
- Jeremiah 23 – The Lord is Our Righteousness – Jehovah Tsidkenu
- Ezekiel 48 – The Lord is the Ever Present One – Jehovah Shammah

First must Be Jesus – God Saves

But first you must humble yourself to the point and say I need a Savior. You shall call Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. Jesus is the Greek translation for the Hebrew word, "Yehowshuwa", which is the compound word meaning – God Saves.

(Matthew 1:21 NKJV) "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

(Matthew 3:11 NKJV) "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

(Matthew 3:12 NKJV) "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Meaning of Verse 11 in Verse 12 / Illustration of Agricultural Practice

Verse 11 - He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire - The definition of what that means is given in the next verse (12). God is going to divide the wheat from the chaff. He is giving an illustration by using the agricultural practice of that day on how they would divide the wheat from the chaff.

Wood Sled / Break Wheat from Chaff

The wheat was ground out on the threshing floor. They would take a "tribulum" which was a wooden sled. The "tribulum" was dragged over the wheat to break the wheat grain from the husk (chaff). Tribulum is where we get the word "tribulation". God uses tribulation in people's life to divide the wheat from the chaff. So after the wood sled was dragged over the wheat, they worker, usually on a night with a light breeze moving through, would take a pitch fork and tossing the two in the air. The wheat was heavier than the chaff and would fall back to the ground, but the light chaff would be blown away from the wheat off to the side.

Not talking about Judgment / Baptism – Bringing Into

Now this passage isn't talking about judgment, but baptism, what He wants to do in your life, what the Holy Spirit would do in a believers life once He took up residence within that person who had invited the Lord into his life.

Baptism of Fire / Not just Saved – On Fire / A Vessel of Honor / To be All Things in Your Life

The baptism of fire. Jesus does not just want to see you just saved; He wants to see you on fire. He wants to burn all the impurities out of your life. He want you to be a vessel of honor, and a vessel of power. It is not just power but power and purity, so He can be all the things that He says He wants to be in your life, in my life.

Not just a Vessel – Vessel to Glorify the Master / Easy to be Confused / Light the Fire - Purify

I think for each and every one of us here today, after hearing from the Lord today we see that we need not just the baptism of His Spirit, but His fire, so that we will be refined in the Refiners fire, not just a vessel, but a vessel that brings glory and honor to the Master. It is easy to get confused with today's form of Christianity, it is good to come back to these passages of Scriptures, so that we may be see, and upon seeing we say "Lord light the fire again", purify my life, I want to be holy, as you are holy, I want to go to the depth of knowing you, like never before. I don't want to just be saved, I want to be saved and on-fire.

See your Face

Lord that when you look at me, you see your reflection. Pure gold, no impurities, for your glory.

Supplemental Notes on the 70 Sevens of Daniel chapter 9

(Exodus 12:2 NKJV) “This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.

Jewish Calendar

They made their months according to the lunar calendar. And so, the Passover is related to the third new moon after, or the third full moon after the winter equinox, and thus, differs from ours from year to year. That’s why the Jewish Passover isn’t always related to our Easter. Sometimes, they come about the same time, but they are calculated on a different basis than we calculate Easter Sunday.

So Important – New Calendar / 1445 Years Later – Divides Time / God set the Clock

The Lord says this is so important, that you are to make a new calendar based off of it. This event (the Passover) will be the beginning, first month of the new calendar. 1445 years later, the same thing will happen, when the Final Passover Lamb is birthed, all of mankind will live to a new calendar. Jesus Christ divided time, BC – AD. Whether man realizes it or not, every hour, every day, every month, every year they live, they live in light of Jesus Christ. No matter how much they refuse to recognize and accept Him, each day they live on this earth is calculated from His birth. God set the clock for all of mankind, so they know where they should be investing their time, from which point is the starting point for all man. Man needs to be checking the clock; its been 2005 years, 11 days, 19 hours, and 30 minutes (1/11/06 730pm) since He left the throne and became the God-man so that He might show us the way, and that He still is the way – a person only need look at the calendar. All of man is living on God’s Time.

(Exodus 12:3 NKJV) “Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: ‘On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.

Very Specific / Deviate brought Death / Can’t deviate Day or Sacrifice / No Debate

The instructions for this sacrifice were very specific. Very detailed, and very direct and failure to follow them exactly of to deviate from them resulted in death. Just as then, so too now, there is only one way for death to pass over man, and that way is God’s way, and that way is only through the Lamb. These people could not choose a cow, a bull, a chicken, only the lamb/goat. They couldn’t do it on the 13th, or the 15th, but the 14th only. There would be no council of men to decide if this was acceptable, or if these really were the words of God, or is that really what God meant when He said it, there would be no debate what to call it – Passover or Feel good Feast.

1 Way Only / Yes Narrow – Thankful there is a Way

There was this 1 way only, exactly as God said to do it. Some people say Christianity is too narrow, I say I am glad that there is “even a way”; that a Holy and Awesome God would allow a sinner like me to come before Him, blows me away. Forget how narrow; rejoice that there is a way at all.

(Exodus 12:4 NKJV) ‘And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man’s need you shall make your count for the lamb.

(Exodus 12:5 NKJV) ‘Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.

Spotless – Picture of Jesus

The lamb must have been spotless, without blemish, a type a picture that the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world and allow death o Passover all who where covered by His blood, He too would be spotless, without sin.

*(Luke 23:3 NKJV) Then Pilate asked Him, saying, “Are You the King of the Jews?” He answered him and said, “It is as you say.”
(Luke 23:4 NKJV) So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, “I find no fault in this Man.”*

(Exodus 12:6 NKJV) ‘Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

Jewish Calendar – Night to Night / Blue & Black Thread

The lamb was slain at twilight on the 14th day of that month. In the Jewish calendar the day begins at sundown (when you can not tell the difference between a blue thread and black thread). So the lamb must have been slain between sundown to sundown.

2 Specific Purposes – Protection & Prophecy / 10th Nissan – 14th Nissan / Jesus fulfills Passover

This Passover was given for 2 very specific purposes (just to name a few), for Protection, and for Prophecy. Protection, to provide the way for death to Passover all who would apply the blood to their homes. And secondly, for prophecy for these dates (the 10th and the 14th) would be the exact dates that Jesus would ride into Jerusalem (10th of Nissan) and allow for the first time to be heralded publicly that He was the Messiah (the fulfillment of Genesis 3:15). And then, the 14th of Nissan, He would be crucified there upon the cross. Jesus would fulfill the Passover completely and perfectly.

To Get there – Look at Daniel 9

To get there, to know that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the 10th of Nissan, and was crucified on the 14th of Nissan, we must go to Daniel chapter 9. “Daniel’s prophecy of the seventy ‘sevens’ (weeks) (vv.24 - 27) provides the chronological frame for Messianic prediction from Daniel to the establishment of the kingdom on earth and also a key to its interpretation.”

(Daniel 9:20 NKJV) Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God,

(Daniel 9:21 NKJV) yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering.

(Daniel 9:22 NKJV) And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, “O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

(Daniel 9:23 NKJV) “At the beginning of your supplications the command went out, and I have come to tell you, for you are greatly beloved; therefore consider the matter, and understand the vision:

(Daniel 9:24 NKJV) “Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy, And to anoint the Most Holy.

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) “Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

(Daniel 9:27 NKJV) Then he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; But in the middle of the week He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate, Even until the consummation, which is determined, Is poured out on the desolate.”

Weeks – Shabua – Unit Measure / Daniel reading Jeremiah / 490 years

The Hebrew word for “weeks” used here is shabua meaning “a unit of measure.” “So here, Seventy Weeks means seventy sevens. It could be seventy sevens of anything. It could be units of days or months or years. In the context of this verse it is plain that Daniel had been reading in Jeremiah about years, seventy years. Jeremiah had been preaching and writing that the captivity would be for seventy years). So then seventy sevens would be 70 times 7, equaling 490 years. But we have the blessings of all the Scriptures and all the history books that we know this is talking about years.

24a / Holy City is Jerusalem

Verse 24a – Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city: *We know that Daniel was a Jew, and we know the holy city is a reference to Jerusalem. So this prophecy deals with the nation Israel and God’s prophetic timetable.*

24b / All Verses deal with Jesus / To Finish the Transgression / It is Finished

Verse 24b – *To finish the transgression:* All the verses in verse 24 deal specifically with Jesus Christ. For as we will see only Jesus Christ could fulfill them. *To finish the transgression:* John 19:30 *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.* “As Jesus hung on the cross He took the wrath of God for our sins. After He completely paid the price for our transgression, He dismissed His Spirit.”

(John 19:30 NKJV) So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

24c / Make end of Sin / Only Jesus Could and Did / Reconciled to God

Verse 24c – And to make an end of sins... *Jesus made an end of sin for all those who believe. God says in Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. Jesus put an end to sin once and for all, no one else could have done this. The verse goes on to say, and to make reconciliation for iniquity: Reconciliation means to be made right. Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. It is because of man's sin that man is separated from God. And to be separated from God is to be not right with God, but God has provided a way for every man to be right with Him through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.*

24d / Everlasting Righteousness / End of 490 – Kingdom Established

Verse 24d – and to bring in everlasting righteousness: *"Everlasting righteousness refers to the return of Christ at the end of the 490 years to establish the kingdom." It is obvious that we do not have everlasting righteousness right now because evil is still in the world. But the day is coming when God's grace is over, and God will put an end to all evil. After the millennial kingdom, when God sends Satan and all unbelievers to the Lake of Fire, then will the everlasting Kingdom be established.*

24e / Seal up Prophecy / All will be Fulfilled – including this One

Verse 24e – And to seal up the vision and prophecy: *"This means that all that is said here will be fulfilled, as well as all other prophecies in Scripture." We must remember that at the time Daniel wrote all this it was several hundred years before the prophecy was fulfilled. This prophecy indeed was fulfilled, which is encouraging to me for I know that all will be fulfilled. I am especially encouraged to know that means that Jesus will be coming back to establish His kingdom.*

24f / Jesus the Anointed One

Verse 24f – and to anoint the most Holy. – *This is a reference to Jesus Christ Himself because in verse 26 there is a reference to the Messiah (called anointed) which is clearly Jesus Christ.*

Dan 9:25 / Decree to Rebuild Jerusalem

The 70 "sevens" would begin Gabriel said, with the issuing of the decree to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem.

(Daniel 9:25 NKJV) "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times.

The Years Calculated / Babylonian Calendar – 360 days / Julian 365.25 = 476 yrs

Here in verse 25 we see a total of 69 seven year periods ($7 + 62 = 69$) ($69 \times 7 = 483$ years) (173,880 days) before the Messiah would come. The first 7 (49 yrs) is believed to the end of the prophets, the end of the OT which does line up with the 400 years between the OT and the NT. The last 7-year period will be talked about in verse 27, which deals with the antichrist making a 7 year peace pact with the nation of Israel in what we call the Tribulation period (Rev 6-19). Now these years are based on the Babylonian calendar, which is 360 days in a year. Using the Julian calendar, 365.25/yr, that equals 476 years (also note that 1BC to 1 AD is one year, not 2). Note the Julian calendar was the calendar at the time of Jesus implemented in 45 BC by Julius Caesar – today we use the Gregorian calendar which is a modification of the Julian calendar).

4 Decrees – Persian Rulers / Artaxerxes – March 14, 445BC

This decree was the forth of four decrees made by Persian rulers in reference to the Jews:

- The first was Cyrus' decree in 538 B.C. (2 Chron 36:22—23, Ezra 1:1—4, 5:13).
- The second was the decree of Darius 1 (522—486) in 520 B.C. (Ezra 6:1,6—12). This decree actually was a confirmation of the first decree.
- The third was a decree of Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-424) in 458 B.C. (Ezra 7:11—26). The first two decrees pertain to the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the third relates to the finances for animal sacrifices at the temple. They say nothing about the rebuilding of the city itself. Since an un-walled city was no threat to a military power, a religious temple could be rebuilt without jeopardizing the military authority of those granting permission to rebuild it."

- “The fourth decree was also by Artaxerxes Longimanus, issued on **March 14, 445 B.C.** (Neh 2:1-8). On that occasion Artaxerxes granted the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem’s city walls. This decree is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25.”

Notes on 14 March 445BC

We can derive the year 445 because history supports that he began his reign in 465BC, and Neh 2.1 says in the 20th year – so 445BC (Nisan being March).

(Nehemiah 2:1 NKJV) And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before.

Here is an excerpt from the 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica:

ARTAXERXES I., surnamed Macrocheir, Longimanus, Longad, because his right hand was longer than his left (Plut. ~ax.i.). He was the younger son of Xerxes, and was raised to throne in 465 by the vizier Artabanus

Now, the March 14th is not actually recorded, in all cases in my research it just records March 445 BC. March 445 BC in the Julian calendar was the month Nisan in the Jewish. So simply take the 1st day of the month of Nisan, do the mathematical calculation (Jewish calendar to Julian), and it comes out on the Julian calendar to March 14, 445 BC. If I was to attack this prophecy, this is where I would attack; however the best you are going to be off is 14 days, and 14 days divided by 173,880 days is so minute, that in probability and statistics you would consider the variance – a non factor. However prophecy must be exact, but I would hate to miss the Messiah by 14 days. 1% error would be 1,700 days, ½ % 850 days, ¼ % is 425 days, a 1/10 of 1 percent is 17 days. So that is quite a gamble to cast off this prophecy.

History Tells Date / Countdown Begins – 483/476

“So history tells us the order was given on 14 March 445 BC in our calendar we use today. So the countdown began, and 483 Babylonian years / 476 years using our current calendar, from that day the Messiah would come.

Golden Nugget / Tiberius Caesar – Luke 3 / 15 there for Us / Written by God

Now here is a golden nugget in the Scriptures, which at first reading means little to us, but when we place it in the big picture, it becomes golden, The Baptism of Jesus. The baptism of Jesus Christ happened in the 15 year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. The Lord intentionally placed the “15” there for our sake – this book is so amazing, if one would just study it, they could only come to one conclusion, written by God, all about God, the God who loves us so deeply that He would trade places with us. I’ll become sin, so you can become a son.

(Luke 3:1 NKJV) Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,

(Luke 3:21 NKJV) When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened.

Romans Impeccable Account / 19 August 14AD

Tiberius Caesar was a Roman Emperor and the Romans kept impeccable historical accounts of their empire. We use their secular history writings to tell us that Tiberius began his reign 19 August 14AD. So Jesus began His public ministry (baptism) between 19 August 28AD and 18 August 29AD, and we need this nugget to unlock this prophecy. I believe it was sometime after April 29AD, because the timeline fits more properly when we see Scriptures relating to the Passovers that Jesus celebrated. The fact that Jesus’ public ministry was 3 and half years, does line up with a 29 AD assumption. Here would be a place of challenge for the skeptic, but if Jesus wasn’t the Messiah, then someone who was crucified a year earlier would have to be the Messiah, and.....not a bone would be broken, born a virgin birth, born in Bethlehem, from the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and King David, betrayed for 30 pieces of silver, along with the other 300 prophecies the Jesus fulfilled.

14th of Month – The Passovers

The Jewish Passover was always celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, that month is called Nissian which falls in our March/April calendar.

(Exodus 12:6 NKJV) 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight.

(Leviticus 23:5 NKJV) 'On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover.

Jesus Celebrated 3 Passovers / Based on Baptism 29AD / First 30AD

Jesus celebrated 3 Passovers: John 2:23, John 6:4, John 11:55. Based on His baptism in 29AD (15th year of Tiberius Caesar), Jesus first Passover would have been in 30AD, second in 31AD, and His final Passover would have been 32AD.

32AD – Jesus rides Donkey into Jerusalem

In that year 32 AD Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover, He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on the first day of the week, that day was the 10th of Nisan, for our Julian calendar that comes out to April 6, 32 AD. And on that very day Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was heralded the Messiah.” Thus also fulfilling:

(Psalms 118:24 NKJV) *This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.*

(Psalms 118:25 NKJV) *Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.*

(Psalms 118:26 NKJV) *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.*

Jesus never Received Public Worship / Luke 19:39-40 / Lamb brought into the Home

“Prior to this day Jesus had never allowed public worship of Himself. Every time they tried to make Him King He would slip away from them, but the day He rode into Jerusalem on the donkey He actually promoted it.” The Lamb is being brought into the home, on the 10th of Nissan, just as required.

(Luke 19:39 NKJV) *And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."*

(Luke 19:40 NKJV) *But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."*

Exactly 173,880 Days

How many days was it from March 14, 445 BC, to April 6, 32AD – **173,880**.

476 years X 365 days..... = 173,740 days
14 March to 06 April (both inclusive).....= 24 days
Add for Leap Years.....= 116 days
173, 880 days

*Note on Leap years: if one were to divide 476 by 4 they would get 119 days. That would throw this calculation of 3 days. However, calculating leap years is much deeper than a divided by 4. The following is an extract from Wikipedia Encyclopedia on the Julian calendar in respect to leap years – The [Revised Julian calendar](#) adds an extra day to February in years divisible by 4, except for years divisible by 100 that do not leave a remainder of 200 or 600 when divided by 900. In easier to understand, 3 days must be subtracted from 119 because centennial years are not leap years, though every 4000th year is a leap year. So 116 is what the mathematicians have calculated would have been the number of leap years over this period.

Messiah Cutoff

“For seventy years Daniel had longed for the restoration of the city and temple of God. Now that it was about to take place his attention was directed to a more distant and loftier peak in the history of redemption. Even a new temple in a rebuilt city made by human hands could be destroyed; Daniel’s eyes were therefore to be fixed on a temple (John 2:19), on one that could not be destroyed (Rev 21:22-27) Daniel was receiving the prophecy of the coming Messiah. But verse 26 starts off with that He would be cut off. “Jesus was crucified that week and rejected by man. Jesus did not receive the kingdom at that time.

(Daniel 9:26 NKJV) *“And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

Prince to Come – Destroys Temple 70AD

The prophecy continues with a description of the judgment that would come on the generation that rejected the Messiah. "The prince to come refers to 70 AD when Titus and the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple. Just as Jesus prophesied in Luke 19:43-44.

Jews Dispersed – But Kept Nationality / May 14th 1948

"The Jewish people were then dispersed throughout the world. But Israel is the only nation who kept a nationality without a homeland, for almost 2,000 years they had no place to call home. But May 14, 1948 the Jews were gathered back together into their homeland." This is a miracle, and God has a reason for it; and that is for final prophetic events leading up to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

To the Day / As Sure Came First Time – Will Come Second Time

It would be a mistake to read the Bible as dry history and miss all that God has for us. Reading this prophecy gives me a deep desire to share the gospel with the lost. As I study prophecy it becomes clearer and clearer that the return of Christ is soon. To the day, to the day He came, and what does that mean to you? As sure as the Prince of Peace came the first time, He will come again the second time.

3 Days in Grave

Now, to see this all the way through; Jesus had to spend three days in the grave:

(Matthew 12:40 NKJV) "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

He Rose on the 17th

So Jesus would have rose again on the 17th.

Timeline – Jewish Calander

10th (Nissan) – Sunday – First Day of Week

- Jesus Rides into Jerusalem

11th – Monday

12th – Tuesday

13th – Wednesday

14th – Thursday – Passover Sacrifice – Jesus on the Cross

- 14th/after sunset – Jesus eats with the disciples
- 14th/ after sunset – Jesus in garden and arrested
- 14th/before 9am – Jesus sentenced to crucifixion
- 14th/9am to 3pm – Jesus hangs on the cross
- 14th/3pm He dies. (Matt 27:45)
- New day begins at sunset, Jesus put in the grave before sunset (around 6pm).

15th – Friday – Unleavened Celebration

- 15th/6pm to 6am = 1 night in grave (Feast of Unleavened all day)

16th – Saturday – Sabbath

- 16th/6pm to 6am = 2 nights in the grave (Sabbath Day)

17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

- 17th/6pm to 6am = 3 nights in the grave
- 17th/ early morning Mary sees Jesus at the Garden Tomb
- The Feast of Firstfruits all day.

Same Day Ark Rested – 17th of Month

The same day the Ark rested, symbolizing in advance that Christ would be our rest, and our escape from judgment of God, our ark of salvation, our new beginning. The 7th month, would become the first month right here after God says this month is now the first month.

(Genesis 8:4 NKJV) Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

Protection & Prophecy

What a wonderful, glorious study of His Word. You can be sure of His Word, every last word of it will come to pass. My, my how Awesome He is – Give Him glory for He is worthy of all Praise and Glory.

The Baptism of Jesus Christ (3:13-17)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

JB Prepares the Way / People Coming Out / Prepare Roads for King / Message not Changed

Last study we saw John the Baptist preparing the way for the Coming King. He was out in the wilderness preaching, and people were coming out to him, confessing their sins and making themselves ready for the promised Messiah, the Coming King. It was common in those days, as it is in our day, that before the king would come into a region, representatives would go before him months and years in advance to tell the people, the king is coming, get ready for him. Fix the roads, clean-up the trash on the street, paint those buildings, take off those old clothes and make yourself ready for your king. John's message has not changed in 2,000 years, as his words still go forth today, make yourself ready, for the King is Coming.

(Matthew 3:1 NKJV) In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

(Matthew 3:2 NKJV) and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

(Matthew 3:3 NKJV) For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"

(Matthew 3:13 NKJV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

(Matthew 3:14 NKJV) And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

(Matthew 3:15 NKJV) But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

(Matthew 3:16 NKJV) When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

(Matthew 3:17 NKJV) And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

(Matthew 3:13 NKJV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

Then Cometh Jesus / Think back on My Life – Emptiness & Void / 27 Years then Cometh Jesus

(Matthew 3:13 KJV) Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him - I love this phrase in the OKJV, "then cometh Jesus". I think back on my life, before Jesus was in my life, and I think of the emptiness, the void, the depression, and saying there has to be more to this life than this.

Years of emptiness trying to fill a void only to grow deeper in my emptiness. But then after 27 years of living the vanity of this world - then cometh Jesus. He came not to be immersed in water, but to immerse Himself in Me and I in Him. I love my Lord, I remember where I was when He came, and celebrate my life that He came.

Don't Pastor think Something of Self / Pastor because Live in that Light

I don't pastor because I think something of myself, far from that, I think far less of myself every year I love, because it is another year of seeing more Him, and in that light I see how little I am. I pastor because I can't stop thinking about Him, talking about Him, because He did not leave me there in that dry wilderness I lived, dead in my trespasses and sin, but He came to me, He stretched forth His hand to me

and said "take it", let me pull you up. There was no greater day than that day, when Jesus cometh unto me.

Video - Visual Bible

May Phrase Dwell With You – Celebration / If He has not Cometh / Can't Guarantee Tomorrow

May this phrase dwell with you today, go back and remember the day He came into your life, let it bring you to worship and a place of celebration. If Jesus has not cometh into your life, do not leave here today, do not risk that you have tomorrow to take His hand, as a minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ I can not guarantee you that tomorrow, but I can guarantee you right Now.

28 years Passed / Still Qualified / Answers in Chp 3

Some 28 years has passed since we seen the Babe in Bethlehem, and now the time has come for Jesus to begin His public ministry which would culminate at the cross. Was he still qualified to be King? Had anything taken place that would disqualify Him from being King, the perfect sinless Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. Chapter 3 answers all those questions.

What Doing from Babe / Age 12

What was He doing from the last time we saw Him in that house? We know at the age of 12 He was in the temple listening and asking questions and the people were amazed at His understanding and answering:

(Luke 2:46 NKJV) Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

(Luke 2:47 NKJV) And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

18 Years of Silence / God says Well Pleased / No Miracles – Teaching – Healing / Getting Sweaty

So we don't hear what He is doing for another 18 years. God will say I am well pleased with Him. We read not that He was preaching, healing, or doing miracles; do you know what He was doing, He was getting sweaty and dirty in the carpenter shop. In Mark it says is this not the carpenter.

(Mark 6:3 NKJV) "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him.

Luke 4 – As His Custom – Synagogue / Worked – Sabbath / Tempted - Sinless

Luke 4:16, as was His custom, routine of life, Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath. There goes anyone who said they don't need church, Jesus is always the example. So we do not know much, but we see Jesus was known for His working and His studying. Jesus got up, worked in the carpenter shop to provide for His family (as it appears Joseph died early in His life). Jesus worked hard, got dirty, got sweaty and then on the Sabbath lay it all down and go to the synagogue. Jesus was tempted in every way as we would be, yet He lived above the temptation, He lived the sinless life.

(Luke 4:16 NKJV) So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

Well Pleased / Peoples Misconception – Common Task / No Common Tasks – Live Above

God would say this is my Son in whom I am well pleased. People have a misconception that there is such a thing as a common task, nothing is common to God, for His He is no common God, nor are His people. Christian live apart from the common. Live above the common life, don't live your life as if life is just another day?

3 Years Public Ministry / Vast Majority – Pulling Splinters

Jesus only had 3 years of public ministry; the vast majority of His life was spent sweating, pulling splinters, suffering the blisters.

Nothing more Sacred then Doing / Live Listening / Whether Ditches or Grandpa – Live Above

There is nothing more sacred than what you are doing right now. Henry Ford said you can't build a reputation off what you are going to do tomorrow, don't live looking for tomorrow, live listening for today, "this is my son, this is my daughter with whom I am well pleased". Whether you dig ditches or launch

rockets, you are a brother or a sister, a mother or father, a grand ma or grand pa, a husband or a wife, live your life today above the common, live it today as sacred, it will change your everyday life.

Jesus Content with Father's Plan

Jesus was content where the Father had Him. He was submitted to God's plan, whether that be in the workshop, in the desert, in the ministry, or the cross.

(Matthew 3:14 NKJV) And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

(Matthew 3:15 NKJV) But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

(Matthew 3:16 NKJV) When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

(Matthew 3:17 NKJV) And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Recognizes His Unworthiness

John recognizes his own sin, and being Jesus' cousin He knew Jesus' sinless life, he said you should baptize me, not I you. But Jesus said we must so it fulfill all righteousness. Why was Jesus coming to be baptized where people were being baptized for their sin, and Jesus was sinless.

Why Was Jesus Baptized?

- 1.. Jesus' Baptism Was an Affirmation of John's Ministry
- 2.. Jesus' Baptism Is an Identification with Us Personally
- 3.. Jesus' Baptism Was a Declaration to His Father Prophetically
- 4.. Jesus' Baptism Is an Illustration of the Trinity

1.. Jesus' Baptism Was an Affirmation of John's Ministry

Jesus Approves John's Message / Message of Forgiveness and Repentance

In joining the masses and coming to the Jordan to be baptized, Jesus was saying, "Even though John knows he's a sinner, even though John is aware of his inadequacies, I approve of his service for Me. And his message of repentance is a valid one." When Jesus began His public preaching, repentance was His message as well. In coming to the Jordan, Jesus was affirming John's ministry—both the man and the message.

Matthew 3:11 / Spirit & Fire / Lord and Savior / Forgiveness - Repentance

John said the One who comes after me, will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Baptism of the Holy Spirit is God Himself taking up residence within a believer who receives Him for the forgiveness of sin. The baptism of fire is God's purifying process in a person to conform them into His image. Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior; and that is the message of the gospel, and the message John preached. Jesus is the Savior who came to take away the sins of the world. The Savior is the forgiveness for sin, and the Holy Spirit taking up residence with in the believer. But, He is Lord also, and the Lord part is repentance. The Lord, the King, requires all his people to submit to the King, to follow the ways of the King, the edicts of the King, and that means the removal of impurities from the life of the follower of the King. The gospel has been confused today to just be Jesus the Savior, the One who takes away my sins, but John's message is the message, and it must be Lord and Savior.

(Matthew 3:11 NKJV) "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Socrates

There's a story about a proud young man who came to Socrates asking for knowledge. He walked up to the philosopher and said, "O great Socrates, I come to you for knowledge." Socrates led the young man through the streets, to the sea, and chest deep into water. Then he asked, "What do you want?"

"Knowledge, O wise Socrates," said the young man with a smile. Socrates put his strong hands on the

man's shoulders and pushed him under. Thirty seconds later Socrates let him up. "What do you want?" he asked again. "Wisdom," the young man sputtered, "O great and wise Socrates." Socrates crunched him under again. Thirty seconds passed, thirty-five. Forty. Socrates let him up. The man was gasping. "What do you want, young man?" Between heavy, heaving breaths the fellow wheezed, "Knowledge, O wise and wonderful..." Socrates jammed him under again. Forty seconds passed. Fifty. "What do you want?" "Air!" the young man screeched. "I need air!" "When you desire knowledge as you have just desired air, then you will have knowledge."

Desire for Holiness – Degree of Holiness

So too it is with desire for personal holiness, to be pleasing to the King. Your desire for holiness will be equivalent to degree of holiness you obtain. Jesus came to be baptized to affirm the message of John the Baptist. He will baptize with the Spirit and with fire. Christian, what is your degree of desire for holiness today? May the Lord search us try us.....

2.. Jesus' Baptism Is an Identification with Us Personally

Jesus Trading Places / Numbered with the Transgressors

Jesus would ask us to be baptized. He would tell the disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:18-20). He who knew no sin took our sin, died for us, and identifies with us in baptism. Jesus would be numbered with the transgressors (Isa 53:12). He (Jesus) who knew no sin, became sin for us, so that the righteousness of God may be fulfilled (2 Cor 5:21). Jesus is demonstrating that He is trading places with us:

(Matthew 28:18 NKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

(Matthew 28:19 NKJV) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

(Matthew 28:20 NKJV) "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

(Isaiah 53:12 NKJV) Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

(2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

3.. Jesus' Baptism Was a Declaration to His Father Prophetically

Submission to the Father / Death – Burial – Resurrection / I am Submitted to your Plan

In submission to the Father's plan, Jesus came to die. Romans 6 teaches that baptism is a picture of death and burial. In baptism, Jesus was saying, "I know I have come to die. And, Father, I am submitted to that plan of death and burial." But because baptism doesn't end in the water, because He was pulled out again, which speaks of resurrection, Jesus also declared this to His Father, "Yes, I am submitted to Your plan—I will die. But I will also rise again through Your power."

(Romans 6:3 NKJV) Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?

(Romans 6:4 NKJV) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

(Ephesians 1:19 NKJV) and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

(Ephesians 1:20 NKJV) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

4.. Jesus' Baptism Is an Illustration of the Trinity

Picture of Trinity / Trinity hinted in OT

After Jesus came out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove, and the voice of the Father was heard from the heavens. In this passage, we see a perfect picture of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit descending upon the Son, while the voice of the Father is heard. The Trinity had been hinted at throughout the Old Testament, beginning with the first verse.

(Genesis 1:26 NKJV) Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Elohim – El / All 3 Active in Baptism

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Elohim.” “El” is the singular form of the word; “Elohim” is the plural form. We see it again in Deuteronomy 6, in what is called the “Shema’, the Lord our God is One. Here in the baptism of Jesus, the Trinity is not only alluded to linguistically, but illustrated physically—the Son baptized, the Spirit descending, and the Father speaking. We see it, yet it is a great mystery. There are not three Gods. There is one God, one God in three Persons. How can this be?

(Deuteronomy 6:4 NKJV) "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!"

Shamrock – Man – Water / Augustine / 1 Times 1

People have tried to explain the trinity:

- Saint Patrick was one who tried to illustrate this idea in nature. He used the shamrock as a picture of the Trinity—three leaves, but one shamrock.
- Others have said, “Look at man—body, soul, and spirit. One man can be father, son, and brother, yet he is still just one person.”
- Still others have said, “Look at water. It can be liquid, solid, or gas.” And scientists tell us that at absolute zero degrees, for a split second, water can be all three at once.
- Nice attempts, but I like what Augustine said, “trying to explain the Trinity would be like trying to pour the Atlantic ocean into a bucket.”
- People ask how can 1+1+1+1, it isn’t addition, it is 1x1x1+1.

Dwelt together in Eternity Past / Perfect and Complete and Content Together

In recent years, however, I have come into an understanding of the Trinity, which for me personally has made all the difference. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit dwelled together in ages past—a billion years before years even began—perfectly content. The Father loved the Son. The Son honored the Father. The three of Them dwelled together in complete harmony, in total satisfaction. They are, and always will be, family. But they’re only One.

God doesn’t need Us / He wants Us / That is Great Love

What does this mean? Contrary to much of today’s teaching, it means God didn’t need us, but He wants us. God went through billions and zillions of years without man. And you know what? He got along just fine. He doesn’t need us, folks. So great is God’s love that He gave His only Son to die and plunge into hell in order to redeem you. He’s in love with you to be sure, but He doesn’t need you. And that takes all of the pressure off because when love is demanding, it isn’t love.

When not Trinitarian Love

When love is not “trinitarian” in nature, it becomes smothering and restrictive. It causes tension and anxieties, and you feel caged in and cooped up:

- “I need you. I must have you.”
- “Where have you been? Who were you talking to?”
- “Where are you going? Who are you going with? Can I come?”

Love my Wife

I love my wife, with all my heart, but you know what, and ask anyone that knew me before I was married, I was perfectly content and at rest when I was single. I did not marry my wife because I needed her, I married her because I wanted her. I was single for 38 years, and was walking in purity, and totally at peace. What does this do for her, it frees her. There is no pressure on her to please me or perform for me, I do not look to her for fulfillment, because I was perfectly complete, and content with my Jesus. My wife is just free to enjoy our relationship, as am I.

God Content / Not Demand – but Invitation / Relieves all Pressure

God is very happy, totally fulfilled, and perfectly content. Yet He is so magnanimous and expansive that He has chosen to create us, love us, and walk with us. It’s not a demand. It’s not a need. It’s an invitation.

How this blesses me, how this frees me, how this relieves any pressure off me to perform ! “You didn’t need me, Lord. You don’t need me now. But You still love me. You still want me to live with You forever. Wow!”

The Mystery of the Trinity Gives me Rest in Relationship with Him

There is One who loves you, who is not uptight about you, or burdensome upon you. He is meek and lowly. And the mystery of the Trinity gives me rest in my love relationship with Him.

The Beautiful Picture/Promise of Baptism

Recap the 4

The baptism of Jesus was an affirmation of John’s ministry, an identification with us personally, a declaration to the Father prophetically, and an illustration of the Trinity practically.

Close with this Blessing / Freedom you Have been Missing

Can I close with something that is going to bring you more freedom, bless you in the depth of your heart, and hopefully give you a freedom you have been missing for your years, and give us a deeper understanding of baptism.

Noah

1 Peter 3:21

In 1 Peter 3:21, Peter writes that Noah and the Flood are a picture of baptism;

(1 Peter 3:20 NKJV) who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

(1 Peter 3:21 NKJV) There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Back 2300 yrs / Noah – Comforter / Corrupt World – Cleanse It / 40Days Rain / Dove Lands

Lets go back about 2300 years earlier to the story of a man whose name means “Comforter.” You know him by the name of Noah. Noah was surrounded by a world that was corrupt and defiled. But Scripture tells us that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. And God told Noah, “I’m going to drown this corrupt, wicked world. I’m going to be merciful.” Merciful? Yes. In sending the Flood, God was doing quickly and mercifully what man was doing slowly and painfully. Noah’s society, immersed in the occult and caught up in perversion, was destroying itself. So God sent the Flood. For forty days it rained, and the world was drowned. At the end of forty days, the rain stopped, and Noah let out a raven and a dove. The raven, a scavenger, had plenty to pick on. Carcasses were everywhere, so the raven didn’t come back. But the dove, a bird of purity, circled, and finding no place to set her foot, came back and landed on Noah.

Incredible Picture / Dying to World Around – Starting a New Life

The picture is incredible to me. A man called Comfort, surrounded by water, in which the polluted world has been drowned, and the dove comes upon him. Could this have registered in the minds of those who observed the baptism of Jesus? It certainly does for me, and through it, I understand something of the significance of baptism—a dying to the world around us and a resurrection to newness of life as Paul declared in Romans 6:4.

Jonah

Another Picture / Jonah – Submerged / Name means Dove / Rebelled / 3 days – then Resurrected

But wait—there was another man who was submerged in water, baptized radically, whose name literally means “dove.” You know him by his more familiar name of Jonah. Jonah was rebelling against the Lord when he went through a most interesting baptism. God told Jonah to preach the good news to the people of Ninevah, to repent and they would escape God’s wrath, but Jonah hated them so much he refused to heed to God’s word, and caught a ship going the opposite direction. He wasn’t only immersed in water. He was thrown in! For three days, he was at the bottom of the sea in the belly of a great fish, where he was broken as he cried out to God and repented from his sin. And suddenly, he was resurrected as the

whale had the “urge to re-gurge” him on the beach at Assyria. He went on to preach the word God had given him;

(Jonah 1:1 NKJV) Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying,

(Jonah 1:2 NKJV) "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."

(Jonah 1:3 NKJV) But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

Not Drowning World – But Rebellion & Selfishness

Jonah’s baptism was not a drowning of the world around him. It was a drowning of the rebellion and selfishness within him. Jonah had his own agenda, but through his baptism, he surrendered it. That’s also what baptism is about. Not only are you dying to the world that surrounds you, but to the selfishness within you. Baptism says, “Lord, I will go wherever You lead. Do whatever You desire. Whatever that might mean, I trust You. You are my God and my King.”

You

Great Story – I’ve been Baptized – Failed Miserably

You might be saying, “This is all very fine theoretically. But I was baptized six months ago, or six years ago, or sixty years ago, and I have failed miserably.”

Noah did Too / Got Drunk / Son Ham the Canaanites

So did Noah. After emerging from the ark, Noah got drunk and exposed himself in a manner that caused a problem in his sons felt to this day. The sinfulness that should have been eradicated from Noah’s world resurfaced when he was drunk in his tent.

Jonah – Greatest Revival / Went up and Pouted 400K Saved / Selfishness Resurfaced

What about Jonah? Jonah preached, and the greatest revival in history took place as the entire city of Ninevah turned to the Lord. Yet what did Jonah do? He went up on a hillside and pouted, angry because four hundred thousand Ninevites got saved. He failed miserably because the selfishness that should have been drowned in the belly of the whale re-emerged.

Noah 40 Days – Jonah 40d – Jesus 40d / 3 Trials – Only 1 Victorious / Complete Victory

During Noah’s baptism, it rained for forty days. After Jonah’s baptism, he emerged and preached, “forty days until Ninevah is destroyed.” Following Jesus’ baptism, He was led into the wilderness for forty days. Although all three had times of trial, only One emerged victorious. Only One made it successfully. Only One was baptized and moved on to total and complete victory. Was it Jonah, the great prophet? No. Noah, the man of faith? No. Only Jesus.

Jesus overcame Satan / Baptism not Dying to World & Self – Identifying Ourselves with Jesus

Jesus, in His forty-day temptation, overcame Satan. He didn’t fail. And because of His victory, baptism not only says, “I am dying to the sin around me, and I am dying to the sin within me,” but most importantly, it says, “I believe in the One who died for me.”

Baptism Doesn’t Mean going to be Perfect / Is Acknowledging I am Perfectly Forgiven

You see, gang, when you are baptized, it doesn’t mean you are going to be perfect from that point on. It means you acknowledge that you are perfectly forgiven and perfectly loved, that Jesus Christ paid the price for every sin you ever have done, are doing, or will ever do. The One who was baptized and was victorious through those forty days of trial and testing is now living in you.

Galatians 2:20

Thus Paul writes:

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

That’s the Gospel – Christ Victorious Living in Me / Be like Noah - Jonah

That's the gospel—Jesus Christ victorious, living in me. I don't know when you were baptized, but I encourage you to reaffirm your baptism in your own heart. Be like Noah. Watch the world drown, and rise above it. Be like Jonah. Die to your selfishness, and walk in newness of life.

If Failed – Enjoy Jesus' Victory / He who knew No Sin / Perfectly Forgiven

And if you have failed like Noah did, like Jonah did, like we all have, know this: Jesus is your Victory. He who knew no sin became sin for you. You are perfectly forgiven.

Enjoy Your Salvation – Live to that Calling

Enjoy your salvation, and live to that calling.

Matthew 4

The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-11)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

JB Prepares the Way / Baptism of Jesus / Dove Descending

We left off last study with John the Baptist preparing the way for the coming King, and then Jesus coming to be baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness. As Jesus came up out of the water, then the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father saying this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. So Jesus is empowered with the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry God has for Him, but first as we will read today, God sends Him into the wilderness to be tested.

(Matthew 3:16 NKJV) When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

(Matthew 3:17 NKJV) And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus Baptized Holy Spirit – We need it Too

Can I make a quick point there before we move into this passage? If Jesus needed to be filled with the Holy Spirit before He started His public ministry, how much more so do we. Nothing of eternal consequences will ever be fulfilled in the works of the flesh; it must be empowered from above.

(Zechariah 4:6 NKJV) So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

A New Pastor

Do you want a new pastor (don't answer that out loud), I will tell you that you do, then pray that God will give me a fresh anointing of His spirit this week, and watch what He will do. I beseech you that you will commit to that in your prayers everyday this week. I recognize the need for it in my life. Pray for the leaders of each ministry, and pray it for yourself Live above the common, Live in the sacred. Pray for me for your own benefit

Outline for Study of Matthew 4:1-11

- 3 Questions / Challenges
- 3 Answers
- 3 Reasons

(Matthew 4:1 NKJV) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

(Matthew 4:2 NKJV) And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

(Matthew 4:3 NKJV) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

(Matthew 4:4 NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

(Matthew 4:5 NKJV) Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

(Matthew 4:6 NKJV) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

(Matthew 4:7 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

(Matthew 4:8 NKJV) Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

(Matthew 4:9 NKJV) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

(Matthew 4:10 NKJV) Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

(Matthew 4:11 NKJV) Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

(Matthew 4:1 NKJV) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Notice Spirit is Leading / Jesus Submitted

It is important to notice that the Spirit is the one who is leading Jesus into this trial. Many trials are ordained by God, for His ultimate purpose. We see Jesus submitted to God's plan and purpose, not fighting against it but willingly going into it.

(Matthew 4:2 NKJV) And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

40 Days Body Starving to Death / Extreme Conditions / Satan Comes when Tired

Doctors say at about the 40 day mark, the body is at the point of starvation, and is ready to eat itself. Here is a tactic of the enemy, he doesn't come when we are full-strength, he comes when we are tired, worn thin. Here Jesus is 40 days of temperatures in the 120's in the day, and in the 40's in the evening. Jesus can't sleep in the day or He would be sun baked, and can't sleep at night because of all the snakes and animals looking to eat Him.

3 Questions / Challenges

Satan comes to Jesus with 3 questions, 3 challenges.

Question / Challenge #1

(Matthew 4:3 NKJV) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

Challenges Relationship to Father / Why God Allowing This

Satan says if you are the Son of God, then turn these rocks into bread. This first question, challenge is challenging Jesus' relationship to His Father. Satan is bringing the challenge, if your father loves you so much then why is he allowing this suffering in your life, why isn't He meeting your needs, why is He allowing this,where is He?

Question / Challenge #2

(Matthew 4:5 NKJV) Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

(Matthew 4:6 NKJV) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Make Something Happen – Force God’s Hand

Satan says if you are the Son of God, then throw yourself down, let your Father catch you. Satan is saying to Jesus, make something happen, make God have to intervene, force His hand to get involved.

Question / Challenge #3

(Matthew 4:8 NKJV) Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory

(Matthew 4:9 NKJV) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

Challenging the Cross / Why take the Hard Way – Go Easy Road

Lastly Satan comes and says I will give you all these things, just ask me Jesus and I will give you what you came here for (the kingdoms of the world) by just asking. Satan is really challenging the cross, challenging if this is all really worth it. He is saying Jesus why endure all this pain, why take the hard road, why suffer when you can just take it, take it the easy way, and have all that you desire.

3 Answers

Jesus gives 3 answers to Satan’s 3 challenges.

Answer #1

(Matthew 4:3 NKJV) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

(Matthew 4:4 NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Challenges – Where is He / So too for Us / Why Allowing this in Your Life

Satan says if you are the Son of God, then turn these rocks into bread. This first question, challenge is challenging Jesus’ relationship to His Father. Satan is bringing the challenge, if your father loves you so much then why is he allowing this suffering in your life, why isn’t He meeting your needs, why is He allowing this,where is He? So too it is when Satan comes to us in our hour, how He challenges our relationship with God, if you are His kids, then why is He allowing this, why isn’t He working to fix this. Has He left you, or are you really His child. Do you really think that He would receive you, look at you, all weak, may I remind you of your last failure, how about those thoughts you had today.

Deut 8 / Every Word – 2 Tim 3:16

Jesus (Quoting Deuteronomy 8:3) answers and says that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word of God. Note that, “every word” that proceeds from God. All Scripture is give by inspiration of God. *(Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV) "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.*

(2 Timothy 3:16 NKJV) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

(2 Timothy 3:17 NKJV) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Prvb 30 / A Shield – Protection / Jesus Addresses most Powerful Entity with Word

Proverbs 30 says that every word of God is pure, and is a shield. The Word brings protection for the believer. Jesus addresses the most powerful evil entity in the world, with the word:

(Proverbs 30:5 NKJV) Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Ps 138 / Every knee shall Bow

Speaking of His Word, God says that He magnifies, exults His word above His name, and we know that at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee shall bow and tongue confess He is Lord:

(Psalms 138:2 NKJV) I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

(Philippians 2:9 NKJV) Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, (Philippians 2:10 NKJV) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, (Philippians 2:11 NKJV) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Man more than Food & Clothes / Problem – Assoc Provisions with Hand Upon Us

The word says that man is more than food and clothes. The problem today is that we associate God's provision in the flesh as His hand upon us. We look at the here and now over the eternal perspective of God. Jesus goes back to the Word, man shall live by every word of God, and the word God has spoken, "this is My Son, in whom I am well pleased"

(Matthew 6:25 NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

(Matthew 3:17 NKJV) And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

George Mueller / Search Scripture till Found Promise

George Mueller was a tremendous man of faith, and I love his teachings. One of the things he lived and taught was that when that trial or temptation came to him, he would read the Scriptures until He found a promise to stand on, and then he would stand. He would read until he found that promise that applied to that situation and then stand. God will do that for you, and He will give you a word to counter whatever the attack is. Go buy one of those Precious Promise books, that are categorized by subject to make it even easier.

Not a Christian

When Satan comes and says you aren't a Christian, you reply:

(Ephesians 1:4 NKJV) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

(Ephesians 1:5 NKJV) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

(Ephesians 1:6 NKJV) to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Failed Again

When Satan says you failed again, you can't come before Him, you reply

(John 6:37 NKJV) "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Bills are Mounting

When Satan says your bills are mounting, where is your God, you reply:

(Philippians 4:19 NKJV) And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Answer #2

(Matthew 4:5 NKJV) Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

(Matthew 4:6 NKJV) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

(Matthew 4:7 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the LORD your God.'"

Josephus – 400 feet

The historian Josephus tells us that the pinnacle of the temple was about 400 feet high.

Satan says throw self Down – Make something Happen

Satan says if you are the Son of God, then throw yourself down, let your Father catch you. Satan is saying to Jesus, make something happen, make God have to intervene, force His hand to get involved.

Deut 6 / Jesus said Not going to Tempt – Same Word / Tempt – Present & Respond

Jesus (Quoting Deuteronomy 6:16) says you shall not tempt the Lord your God. Jesus is saying I am not going to make something happen. Tempt here is the same word Satan used. But we see the 2 different dynamics; Satan presents, and wants man to respond. But Jesus makes it clear that man is not to

present and expect God to respond. Don't confuse man's ways, that are fashioned after Satan's ways, and expect God to respond.

(Deuteronomy 6:16 NKJV) "You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.

How I want to get Something in Action / Chance for Change

How many times I want to make something happen when things aren't going as I think they should. How we can say if I do something, at least I am in motion; there is a chance for change if I at least start to do something, and then God will come along side and help me.

(Psalms 37:7 NKJV) Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.

Jesus Said I'm not Moving – Waiting Upon the Lord

Jesus says to the Devil, I am not moving, I am not going anywhere, I am waiting upon the Lord, I am waiting for Him to move and I will go where He leads me. Jesus was resting in the Lord. I think often we think Jesus was all stresses out in this trial, absolutely not, He is resting in the Lord, and anytime we rest in the Lord we will be at peace.

(Philippians 4:6 NKJV) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

(Philippians 4:7 NKJV) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Important for us to Wait – Not going Anywhere

How important for us to wait upon the Lord, to not try to force situations, to get things moving and think at least I am moving.

Marry an Unbeliever

Why don't you have a husband yet Satan will say; go ahead marry that man, yea he isn't a Christian but God will convert him after you get married because of your great witness:

(Psalms 37:4 NKJV) Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.

(Psalms 37:5 NKJV) Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass.

Take that Job

Should I take this new job, I am not hearing from God and have to make a decision soon, I'll take and see what He may do:

(Proverbs 3:5 NKJV) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

(Proverbs 3:6 NKJV) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

(Proverbs 3:7 NKJV) Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil.

Jesus uses the Word – Satan does Too / Psalm 91 / Quoting & Obeying

It is important to note here, as Jesus uses the Word to combat Satan, that Satan quotes scriptures here. He quotes from Psalm 91, but he misquotes, he leaves the part out that God will keep you in all His ways. Wait upon the Lord and He will keep you in all His ways, and His ways are sure and true. This passage is powerful in that we see Satan quote Scripture, but not obey it. How many people quote scriptures, but don't obey them. Jesus quoted, and obeyed, so too must we. What a difference it is to quoted, and to live it.

*(Psalms 91:11 NKJV) For He shall give His angels charge over you, **To keep you in all your ways.***

(Psalms 91:12 NKJV) In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Answer #3

(Matthew 4:8 NKJV) Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

(Matthew 4:9 NKJV) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

(Matthew 4:10 NKJV) Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Give just Ask / Challenging the Cross – The Hard Way / Why Suffer – there is an Easy Way

Lastly Satan comes and says I will give you all these things, just ask me Jesus and I will give you what you came here for (the kingdoms of the world) by just asking (notice Jesus doesn't dispute that Satan has

the rights to the earth – he is the ruler of this world). Satan is really challenging the cross, challenging if this is all really worth it. He is saying Jesus why endure all this pain, why take the hard road, why suffer when you can just take it, take it the easy way, and have all that you desire.

(John 12:31 NKJV) "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

Deut 6 / Commands 1-3 / Who to Worship – How to Worship – the Name to Worship

Jesus (Quoting Deuteronomy 6:13) is summing up commands 1-3, you shall have not other gods, worship no images, nor take the Lord's name in vain. As we had studied, these 3 commands show us who to worship, how He is to be worshipped, and the name that brings us to worship

(Deuteronomy 6:13 KJV) Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

(Exodus 20:1 NKJV) And God spoke all these words, saying:

(Exodus 20:2 NKJV) "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

(Exodus 20:3 NKJV) "You shall have no other gods before Me.

(Exodus 20:4 NKJV) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

(Exodus 20:5 NKJV) you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

(Exodus 20:6 NKJV) but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

(Exodus 20:7 NKJV) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Satan throws 10th Command / Jesus Answer is Submission & Love / Whole World – Never Break Fellowship

Satan is throwing the 10th command at Jesus, covetousness, which is the root of all sins. The 10 commands are 10 points Satan will attack, because he knows they are where the flesh are prone to fail in. But Jesus answer is in submission to the Father, but not only submission, but love. Jesus is saying Satan you could offer me the whole world, the easy life, the easy way, but nothing you can offer me would be worth breaking the fellowship that I have with the Father.

(Exodus 20:17 NKJV) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Finale Blow

At that final blow, Satan had to leave

The Devil Leaves Him

(Matthew 4:11 NKJV) Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Satan Must Depart – Love is Unbeatable / Army – Library – Fears - Doubts

Satan had to depart because love is unbeatable. Love has more power than the mightiest army, or great weapon. Love has more knowledge and wisdom than all the libraries of the world. Love has more security than the sum of all fears. Love has more surety than all the doubts that Satan can present to us.

Satan's Work – Defeated in Love

All that Satan was trying to work on Jesus was defeated in love. 1 Corinthians 13, the attributes of love:

(1 Corinthians 13:4 NIV) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

(1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

(1 Corinthians 13:6 NIV) Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

(1 Corinthians 13:7 NIV) It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

(1 Corinthians 13:8 NIV) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

Rocks to Bread / Patience – Provoke to Anger / Emotions not Override Love

Satan waited and work on Jesus' patience, come on turn the rocks into bread and eat, its been 40 days – but love is patient, Jesus was submitted to the Father's plan. Satan trying to provoke Jesus to anger, where is your Father, why has He left you in this situation, but love is not easily provoked, Jesus would not allow emotions to override love.

Throw Self Down / Envy – Boasting - Prideful

Satan worked on Jesus' envy, boasting, pride, throw yourself down Jesus and let them say wow look at you, how special you must be that angles rush to your aid – but love does not envy, doesn't boast, is not proud.

Worship Me – All Kingdoms / Love is not Self-Seeking

Satan worked on Jesus 'to be self-seeking, all this can be yours, worship me – but love is not self-seeking.

Same Love hold to Cross / No Record of Wrongs – Protects – Hope – Perseveres – Never Fail

It will be these same attributes of love that will hold Jesus to the cross. The nails were not strong enough, but love was, His love for you, and love for me as Jesus would keep no record of our wrongs, He would protect us from the wrath to come, trust in the resurrection power, and know just as in the wilderness so would it be upon the cross, that love always perseveres, and love will never fail. My how God loves us.

(1 Corinthians 13:4 NIV) Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

(1 Corinthians 13:5 NIV) It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

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(1 Corinthians 13:8 NIV) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

Jesus - Impossible to Fail / Love never Fails / God is Love

It was impossible for Jesus to fail there in the wilderness, or there upon the cross, because love never fails. God is love (1 John 4:8), and God never fails, nor will He ever fail us because of His deep love for us.

(1 John 4:8 NKJV) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Apply in Quite Place /

Christian these things I teach today will not be applied in this room, you will have to go home into a quite a place, lay these things out before Him, and let Him plant them deep in your heart. Love is something that will only come by seeking Him with all your heart, mind, and soul. Love only comes by beholding Him, and as we do, love radiates from Him and we absorb Him, and He is Love, for god is love.

(Matthew 22:37 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

(Matthew 22:38 NKJV) "This is the first and great commandment.

(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Jeremiah 29:12 NKJV) Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

(Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV) And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Plant Deep – Be Victorious / Next Temptation

You must seek him and say Lord plant this deep so I can be victorious in the next temptation. When the enemy comes in like a flood, may you go back to 1 Corinthians and say enemy I see you are trying to eat my patience, take me out of being kind, to act rudely, to become prideful, or full of envy, you are trying to provoke me to anger, to be self-seeking, but love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth. Lord may you love flow through me in this trial, this situation, let it protect me, give me the faith to trust in it, give hope in the darkness, and allow me to persevere, overcome, because love never fails

Recognize Evil One / Faithfulness – Make Happen – Easy Way

May we be a people that recognize the evil one, his ways, his strategy as he wants us:

- To question God's faithfulness, where He is and why He is allowing this.
- To try to make something happen rather than waiting upon the Lord to move.
- To try to get us to go the easy way.

3 Reasons

As we asked last week, why did Jesus have to be baptized, it is necessary to ask why the sinless One would have to be lead into this temptation. I give you 3 reasons:

- To Reveal
- To Relate
- To Remove

To Reveal

Reveal Solid Rock / Unmovable – Place Trust in Him

Jesus was led into the wilderness to reveal to us He is the solid rock upon which we can stand. Satan brought his best against Jesus, yet Jesus was unmovable. Jesus reveals to us that we can place our trust in Him, that nothing can move Him, nor can anything move us when we are firmly planted in Him.

(Matthew 7:24 NKJV) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

*(Matthew 7:25 NKJV) "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; **and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.***

To Relate

Relate to Our Weaknesses / Heb 4

Jesus was led into the wilderness to relate to us. Jesus is relatable to us in that He knows what it is to be tempted in the flesh, but shows us that victory is possible, to show us that He knows what we are faced with, and He can intercede for us because He has been there:

(Hebrews 4:15 NKJV) For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

(Hebrews 4:16 NKJV) Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

To Remove

Remove all Excuses / Shows Way to Victory

Jesus was led into the wilderness to remove all excuses. No one need say it is impossible to stand against the wiles of the devil, and to resist the flesh. Jesus removes all excuses for us failing, but shows us the way to victory.

Don't have to be Son of God / Spirit Filled – Person of the Word

This temptation of Christ shows us that we don't have to be the Son of God, filled with divine power to overcome and beat the devil in our lives, rather all we need to be is Spirit filled, people of the Word.

3 Challenges

Train in Peace Time - Fight in War Time

Before you go on your way, can I challenge you with something? We seen Jesus victorious in His trial, but how important to point out again, the way you train in peace time is the way you will fight in wartime.

Jesus Knew the Word / Shield & Sword / Knockout Punch / What Jesus did as Man

Jesus knew the Word, He quoted the word, He used the word as a shield to protect Himself from the draws of the flesh and enemy, and used the word as a sword to deliver the knockout blow to the situation. How did He do it? Philippians says that He emptied Himself when He came, so it is not because He was God, it was because of what He did as man, therefore so too can we.

(Philippians 2:7 NRSV) but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,

Luke 4 / Kept the Sabbath

How did He come out strong in the temptation? I believe He knew the Word because of what His custom was, and that was every Sabbath He was in the synagogue hearing and absorbing the word, observing the 4th command:

(Luke 4:16 NKJV) So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.

(Exodus 20:8 NKJV) "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Prayer Life

Secondly, it was His prayer life. We see that Jesus dedicated to prayer:
(Mark 6:46 NKJV) And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

Parents Obeyed Deut 6

Thirdly, His parents obeyed the Scriptures. Remember Jesus quoted 3 scriptures, from Deuteronomy 6 and 8. Deuteronomy 6 says parents teach your children the commands, in their rising up and laying down. Their investment paid off, their Son had victory when the battle came. Parents do I need to say anything more on that?

(Deuteronomy 6:6 NKJV) "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

(Deuteronomy 6:7 NKJV) "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Personal Opinion – Jesus' Morning Devotion

But I want to give you another view, and it is my personal opinion, but I personally believe that Deuteronomy 6-8 was Jesus' morning devotion. It was what He had read and absorbed into His heart, it was the fresh manna for that day that He had quickened in His heart and mind, and it was the word for that day. How often God has done that in my life, that what I had read that morning, or heard that week at church was the very word I needed for myself or someone else.

Here is what He Studied the Day of His Trial

If so, here are the words of the Lord Jesus would have been equipped with that day:

Deuteronomy 6

Godhead - Shema

Jesus, reading the Shema, the Lord our God is One. Jesus knowing His position in the Godhead:

(Deuteronomy 6:1 NKJV) "Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess,

(Deuteronomy 6:2 NKJV) "that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

(Deuteronomy 6:3 NKJV) "Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you; 'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

(Deuteronomy 6:4 NKJV) "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!

(Deuteronomy 6:5 NKJV) "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Keep Words in Heart – Taught by Parents

Keep these words in your heart. Jesus reminded of what He was taught by His parents:

(Deuteronomy 6:6 NKJV) "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

(Deuteronomy 6:7 NKJV) "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

(Deuteronomy 6:8 NKJV) "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

(Deuteronomy 6:9 NKJV) "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

(Deuteronomy 6:10 NKJV) "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,

(Deuteronomy 6:11 NKJV) "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant; when you have eaten and are full;

(Deuteronomy 6:12 NKJV) "then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Fear God

Fear the Lord

(Deuteronomy 6:13 NKJV) "You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.

Do Not Follow other gods

Do not go after other gods

(Deuteronomy 6:14 NKJV) "You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are all around you

(Deuteronomy 6:15 NKJV) '(for the LORD your God is a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

Tempt

Do not tempt the Lord

(Deuteronomy 6:16 NKJV) "You shall not tempt the LORD your God as you tempted Him in Massah.

Be Diligent to Keep the Commands of God

Be diligent to keep the commands, as we reviewed, especially 1,2,3.....

(Deuteronomy 6:17 NKJV) "You shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Do what is Right in Sight of God

Do what is right in the sight of the Lord:

(Deuteronomy 6:18 NKJV) "And you shall do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers,

Cast out enemies from Before You

Cast out your enemies:

(Deuteronomy 6:19 NKJV) "to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

Leave a Legacy to Children

Leave a legacy to your children; and He has as we read this account and know there is victory for us, because He is our victory;

(Deuteronomy 6:20 NKJV) "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?'

(Deuteronomy 6:21 NKJV) "then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;

(Deuteronomy 6:22 NKJV) 'and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.

(Deuteronomy 6:23 NKJV) 'Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.

(Deuteronomy 6:24 NKJV) 'And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.

(Deuteronomy 6:25 NKJV) 'Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

Chapter 7

Make no Covenants with Enemies

Make no covenants with your enemies, but utterly destroy them

(Deuteronomy 7:1 NKJV) "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,

(Deuteronomy 7:2 NKJV) "and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

Special Treasure – My Beloved Son

You are a special treasure – this is my Son in whom I am well pleased

(Deuteronomy 7:5 NKJV) "But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

(Deuteronomy 7:6 NKJV) "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.

God is Faithful / Honors the Commandments

God is faithful, and honors those who keep His Command:

(Deuteronomy 7:9 NKJV) "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

Be not Afraid – Remember Egypt

Be not afraid of them, remember how the Lord buried the Egyptian Army:

(Deuteronomy 7:17 NKJV) "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?';

(Deuteronomy 7:18 NKJV) "you shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

Destruction Shall Come

Destruction shall come:

(Deuteronomy 7:19 NKJV) "the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

Awesome God – Be not Afraid

Your God is an Awesome God

(Deuteronomy 7:21 NKJV) "You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, is among you.

Kingdoms Yours

All kingdoms shall be yours

(Deuteronomy 7:24 NKJV) "And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

Bow to No One

Do not bow down to any image

(Deuteronomy 7:25 NKJV) "You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God.

Detest the Evil One

Detest the evil one:

(Deuteronomy 7:26 NKJV) "Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.

Chapter 8

Trail Predetermined – God Proving Jesus to us / Reveal – Relate – Remove / Victory for the Taking

This trail was predetermined, it was Spirit led. God leads us into these places to prove us out. In the case of Jesus it wasn't to show God what was in Jesus, but God showing us what was in Jesus so that we might know that we have a solid rock to stand on, that Jesus can relate to us, and to remove all excuses that we can't have victory over the enemy, that we don't have to keep living in defeat, that victory is ours for the taking, because Jesus has shown us the way.

(Deuteronomy 8:1 NKJV) "Every commandment which I command you today you must be careful to observe, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers.

(Deuteronomy 8:2 NKJV) "And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

(Deuteronomy 8:3 NKJV) "So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.

Matthew 4:12-26

Jesus Changing Minds

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

JB Prepares the Way / Baptism of Jesus / Dove Descending

In our past studies we have seen John the Baptist preparing the way for the coming King, and then Jesus coming to be baptized by John to fulfill all righteousness. As Jesus came up out of the water, then the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove, and the Father saying this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. So Jesus is empowered with the Holy Spirit for the work of the ministry God has for Him, but first the Spirit leads Him into the wilderness to be tested. So today we pick-up with Jesus beginning His public ministry.

Jesus Stirs world Up as Moves through / Makes people Change Minds

In this passage of scripture today we see Jesus stirring up the world. Things we are sure of can easily be upset when Jesus moves through that area of our lives. When Jesus comes on the scene here to begin His public ministry, He is going to make a lot people change their minds on how things should.

Outline Matthew 4:12-25

We will see through Jesus' ministry that we should:

- Change our mind on how ministry should be (4:12).
- Change our mind on how God moves through the land (4:13-16).
- Change our mind on how the message should be preached (4:17).
- Change our mind on how God leads His people (4:18-22).
- Change our mind on how church should be (4:23-25)

(Matthew 4:12 NKJV) Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

(Matthew 4:13 NKJV) And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

(Matthew 4:14 NKJV) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

(Matthew 4:15 NKJV) "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

(Matthew 4:16 NKJV) The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

(Matthew 4:17 NKJV) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

(Matthew 4:18 NKJV) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

(Matthew 4:19 NKJV) Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

(Matthew 4:20 NKJV) They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

(Matthew 4:21 NKJV) Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,

(Matthew 4:22 NKJV) and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

(Matthew 4:23 NKJV) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

(Matthew 4:24 NKJV) Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

(Matthew 4:25 NKJV) Great multitudes followed Him; from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

1.) Change our mind on how ministry should be (4:12).

(Matthew 4:12 NKJV) Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

Not our idea of Ministry / John had Powerful Ministry

John is thrown into prison; now this is not our idea of how ministry should be. We have read how all the people were coming out to John to be baptized. We read how powerful his ministry was. John withstood the opposition of the religious leaders and his ministry prospered greatly.

Greatest Prophet / Imprisoned for Calling Sin – Sin / John Responds to Call & Hardship Comes

Jesus called him the greatest prophet, yet when John is thrown in jail for calling sin, sin as he tells King Herod you are in sin for being with your brother Philip's wife. John is responding to God's call to preach, and hardship comes for his obedience.

(Matthew 14:3 NKJV) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

(Matthew 14:4 NKJV) Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

Not how think Ministry should Go – Blessings should Flow / 2 Weeks Ago / Renewed by this Verse

If we are honest, that isn't how we think ministry should be. We think because we make the sacrifice ministry should just flow, bathed in blessings. Don't we think that is the way it should be, after all Lord we are serving you. I will be honest there are times I get discouraged, disappointed, I question what I am doing, maybe someone else should be doing this. Two weeks ago for whatever reason seemed like the worse I ever felt in all the years, I was discouraged all day Sunday, I awoke Monday morning feeling the same, but thankfully forced myself to open the word, and I started at this verse and instantly I was lifted up and refreshed and renewed.

Jesus Heard – Went the Other Way / Times You will Feel Abandoned – Know Where you Are

Jesus heard that John was thrown in prison, and went the other way. The Lord spoke to me that there will be times in the ministry that you feel I abandoned you, but Raymond, like John I know exactly where you are.

John will Even Question - Even John Needed a Mind Change

John will even question Jesus, he will ask are you the one we waited for, or shall we wait for still yet another, Even John needed a changed mind about how ministry should be, John was expecting to see Jesus' power displayed by overthrowing the oppressors of the Jewish people, but instead he finds himself in prison and Jesus going the other way.

(Matthew 11:2 NKJV) And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples

(Matthew 11:3 NKJV) and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

You See Ray – You are Fulfilling All Things / Decrease – Blind See – Verse 25

You see John, you see Ray, you see Gerald, BJ or Chris you are fulfilling all things according to my will. Things may not be as you thought they should, but they are going as I have planned them to go. John you prophesied well when you said I must decrease and He must increase; and what was Jesus reply to John's question of should we wait for another, Jesus said tell John what you have seen, the blind can see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf can hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor are

hearing the gospel, the good news. No doubt John would also be told verse 4:25 about great multitudes following Jesus. John, you have decreased, and Jesus has increased. It was necessary that the ministry have one focus, and that one focus is Jesus Christ.

(John 3:30 KJV) He must increase, but I must decrease.

(Matthew 11:2 NKJV) And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples

(Matthew 11:3 NKJV) and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

(Matthew 11:4 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

(Matthew 11:5 NKJV) "The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

(Matthew 11:6 NKJV) "And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

(Matthew 4:25 NKJV) Great multitudes followed Him; from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

This is What I am Doing – Stay Faithful to Words Spoken

John, Ray, Gerald, this is what I am doing in the ministry at this time, you just stay faithful to the words I have spoken and the place that I have you.

Lord Spoke Again - Israel will not Be Defeated / Claim the Same / Jer 29 & Rom 8

The Lord spoke another word to me that I want to share with you. That Sunday we had company over the house, we found ourselves talking about the current conflict with Israel and Lebanon (August 2006), and as I was sharing Ezekiel 38-39, of how Israel will not be defeated, of how God will supernaturally defend them when the final culmination of the Magog Invasion comes to pass (for we are only seeing birthing pains at this time). As I shared I shared in total power and confidence, I had absolutely no doubt the Israel will never be defeated to the point of destruction, for God's word will not fail. That Monday morning as I spent time with the Lord I felt the challenge come upon me, if you can believe that, then why can't you believe the word as strongly and with the same confidence when it applies to you. Seize this, apply it deep in your heart, and your life will change. Ray, even when things seem to going wrong, when discouragement comes upon you, you are disappointed, believe the word as it refers to you in the same power as you believe it applies to Israel. Jeremeiah 29:11, do you believe that passage, Romans 8:28, do you believe that verse? Claim them just as you claim Ezekiel 38-39 for the Nation Israel and watch life change:

(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Romans 8:28 NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

(Romans 8:29 NKJV) For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

(Romans 8:30 NKJV) Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.

(Romans 8:31 NKJV) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

(Romans 8:32 NKJV) He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

(Philippians 1:6 NKJV) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

John's Imprisonment – Jesus' Departure Shows ----

John's imprisonment and Jesus' departure, shows us that we need to:

- Change our mind on how ministry should be (our lives too) (4:12).

2.) Change our mind on how God moves through the land (4:13-16).

(Matthew 4:13 NKJV) And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali,

(Matthew 4:14 NKJV) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

(Matthew 4:15 NKJV) "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

(Matthew 4:16 NKJV) The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned."

Jesus' whole Life was Fulfilling Prophecy / So is Ours

Jesus' whole life was a life of fulfilling prophecy. Here He fulfills Isaiah 9 by going into this region. A life of fulfilling prophecy, and what is prophecy but simply the Word of God, and I believe the same applies for each man, as we live a life that fulfills God's word for His children, as we live according to His Word, we live a life of fulfilling prophecy.

(Isaiah 9:1 NKJV) Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles.

(Isaiah 9:2 NKJV) The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.

Pictures of Galilee

Some pictures of the area – what a beautiful area it is.

Northern Israel / 3 million People / Region of Death – Overrun by Gentiles / Mixed Marriages

Now Galilee, located in northern Israel, was a province comprised of (according to the historian Josephus) two hundred four villages and over fifteen thousand people (that's about 3 million people. It was called "Region of Death" by the Jews in Jerusalem because, throughout Israel's history, the Gentiles would constantly wage war in this area. Consequently, there were many mixed marriages and a great deal of Gentile influence within Galilee because of the continual conquering and resettlement of non-Jews into the region.

Major Trade Route - Gentile Influence / 2nd Class Jews – Hicktown / Dust of Sandals

This area was a major trade route, which added to the Gentile influence. The Jews in Jerusalem considered the Jews in the Galilee region second class Jews, they considered Galilee hicktown. When the prim and proper Jews returned from business in Galilee they would stop outside the city gates of Jerusalem, take their sandals off and shake the dust off because they didn't want Gentile dust coming into the Holy city to defile it.

Jesus the King – Prepared Way – Lineage of David – Dove – My Son / Starts Here –not Jerusalem

Now here is Jesus, the promised coming King of the Jews, John the Baptist prepared the way for the King, Jesus has right to the throne of David through His lineage, Jesus did nothing to disqualify Himself from being the promised Messiah as the Fathers approval was upon Him by declaring this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Yet the King of the Jews starts His public ministry in the areas of those considered second-class citizens, and Gentiles (the areas mentioned in verse 25, the Decapolis were Greek cities). Why not Jerusalem, I don't know, hence, just as they so it is now, we need to change our minds on how God moves through the land.

Application – God Moves where we Not Expect / Family – Friends - Muslim

Application for us today is that God will move in places and ways we would never expect. He will go and move in the last place we would ever expect, That includes that family member you think will never receive Him, that includes the Muslim extremist that we think more of in terms of the damnation they will face, then the prayers we lift up for them to turn and see the truth.

Devote Jews – Gentiles for Fuel of Hell

The devote Jews thought only reason God created the Gentiles was to fuel the flames of hell and for someone pay retail.

Jesus Came to Outcast – Outsiders – Looked Down – Under Attack- Darkness / What He Came For

(Matthew 4:16 NKJV) The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned." – Jesus came to those who felt outcast, to those who felt they were on the outside, to those who were looked down upon, to those who felt they were constantly under attack, to those who felt they lived in total darkness. One thing we do see is that this area is exactly what was prophesied that He came to do, as Jesus would quote this very scripture in Luke *(Luke 4:18 NKJV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;*

(Luke 4:19 NKJV) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Jesus goes here – to Change Minds

Jesus goes to the places that we would never expect. What an example for us. Jesus by going to this area to establish His ministry rather than Jerusalem shows us that we need Him to:

- Change our mind on how God moves through the land (4;13-16).

3.) Change our mind on how the message should be preached (4:17).

(Matthew 4:17 NKJV) From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Message not What we Expect / Change Surroundings & Environment / Change Oppressors

Jesus begins His public Ministry with a message that the Jews were not expecting. They waited for the Messiah that would come and change their surrounding, their environment. They were expecting Him to overthrow the Roman Empire, deliver them from their oppressors and establish His kingdom on the earth.

Jesus says You Change / Kingdom of Heaven exceeds Your Kingdom of Earth

But Jesus comes with a message that you need to change, repentance means to change ones mind and you need to change your mind about your sin and transgression, the kingdom of heaven exceeds your little kingdom here on earth,

Today Man wants Love-Joy-Peace / Lord brings Repentance / 1st Words of Jesus / Today Upsets

Today, man expects to hear the message of love, joy, and peace on earth, but the Lord brings the message of repentance. The first word out of Jesus' mouth to start His public ministry is repent. Today many ministries don't want to mention repentance because it upsets the people, and drives attendance down, God help those ministers.

Easy talk about Love / Love Magnified in Forgiveness – through the Offense

I know I find it always easier to talk about His love, His forgiveness, over talking about repentance. How deceptive that is, for His love and forgiveness is magnified through the offense of sin. We see His power through creation, we see His wisdom through the counsel of His word, but to see the God of love we must see it through the offense of sin, that the Holy God could allow a sinful man into His presence, that is love as we see the Holy God trade places with man, take His punishment of death, and in exchange give man access to the Holy God. That is Love. Christian don't present the gospel that is absent of the message that man needs to repent, you will do that person a great injustice.

Jesus changes the Mind of the Message

Jesus brings a message to the world that we would never have expected, Jesus message shows us how we need to:

- Change our mind on how the message should be preached (4:17).

4.) Change our mind on how God leads His people (4:18-25).

(Matthew 4:18 NKJV) And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.

(Matthew 4:19 NKJV) Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

(Matthew 4:20 NKJV) They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

(Matthew 4:21 NKJV) Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,

(Matthew 4:22 NKJV) and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Peter Casting – John Mending

Notice what Peter was doing when he was called. He was casting his net into the sea because Peter was bold and evangelistic in orientation. On the Day of Pentecost, it was Peter who preached. As a result, three thousand were saved—"caught up" in his glorious net of the gospel. John, on the other hand, wasn't casting nets, but mending them when Jesus called him. John, who would later become known as the "apostle of love," would go on to write epistles that would mend the church and mend people. I believe the

Holy Spirit inspired these vignettes to illustrate how the disciples' eventual ministries were already seen in what they were doing naturally. God has a way of turning the natural into the supernatural through His grace and for His glory.

Met in John 1 / Follow Me – Clear / What is Fisher of Men

Jesus here calls Peter and Andrew who were disciples of John we are told (in John 1:35-42), they had met prior about 1 year ago. Jesus says to them, "Follow Me", that is clear enough but it is what He says next that interests me, "I will make you fisher of men". Now He is relating to them where they are at, they were fisherman. But at that time do you think they started walking with Jesus and then leaned over to each other and said, what exactly is a fisher of men, what does that fully mean.

(John 1:35 NKJV) Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples.

(John 1:36 NKJV) And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

(John 1:37 NKJV) The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

(John 1:38 NKJV) Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

(John 1:39 NKJV) He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

(John 1:40 NKJV) One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

(John 1:41 NKJV) He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

Take time for Them to Fully Grasp / Maybe when Fishing with Jesus

I think it will take some time for them to fully grasp what that means. Maybe it will become real clear when they go fishing and haul the fish into the boat with Jesus and the net was ready to break. They will see we are drawing people to Him, into the boat, the place that He is.

(Luke 5:3 NKJV) Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

(Luke 5:4 NKJV) When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

(Luke 5:5 NKJV) But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

(Luke 5:6 NKJV) And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

(Luke 5:7 NKJV) So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

(Luke 5:8 NKJV) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

(Luke 5:9 NKJV) For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken;

(Luke 5:10 NKJV) and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."

Didn't Understand All – Left Family & Job / No Holding Back – the 2 Things / Don't have all Details

Although they didn't fully understand all the calling, they left family and job to follow Jesus. There was no holding back, and they left the 2 things that hold so many people back from following Him. What will my family think and I can't let this get in the way of my career and finances. They go, without looking back, to a calling they do not fully know all the details and how things are going to turn out.

Today want the Whole Story / Better Put – Tell Me & I'll Decide if Fits my Plans – Veto Right

Today, we want the whole story. Lord you have called me, now tell me what all you are going to do in my life. Or maybe better put, Lord you have called me, and I will review each statement thereafter and decide if it fits my plans. Should it affect my plans of how I want to go, I'll exercise my right to veto, and wait for You to present a plan that is more pleasing to me. Here we see these men, responding, and following, without the details, but stepping out in faith and being open to all that the Lord has for them.

I Will Make You – God says I Will Make You / God has a Call on Everyone

Verse 19 - Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men – Can I point that out to you, Jesus said, "I will make you" – fisher of men! Jesus said I will make you what I want you to be, a fisher of men. The same word the Lord says to us today, follow me and I will make you! God has a call and making upon you. He wants to make each and every one us into what He wills (a housewife, a worker that glorifies Christ, a student body president that doesn't go the way of the world, maybe an evangelist, missionary, or teacher of His word) but He will make us!. For these 4 men it was to become fisher of men, to you I do not know other than I know it is something, and it something great, if you will allow Him. For God works in you both to will and to do for His pleasure:

*(Philippians 2:12 NKJV) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;
(Philippians 2:13 NKJV) for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

Jesus Calling Disciples Show we need to Change Mind;

Jesus and His calling to these disciples shows us that we need God to:

- Change our mind on how God leads His people (4:18-25).

5.) Change our mind on how church should be (4:23-25)

(Matthew 4:23 NKJV) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

(Matthew 4:24 NKJV) Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

(Matthew 4:25 NKJV) Great multitudes followed Him; from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

100 Radius / How far will you Go

The towns named here cover a one hundred-mile radius. People would literally walk hundreds of miles to see Jesus. How far will you go to see Him? Jesus is changing minds that a relationship with Him is always convenient, will never cost us our time and energy.

Brought Demonized – Sick – Hurting / Jesus Healed them All

They brought those who were demonized, those who were paralyzed, those who were hurting—Jesus healed them all.

Notice the Order – Teaching – Preaching - Healing

But note the order: teaching first, then preaching, and finally healing. Teaching consists of laying down principles and precepts. Preaching is for the purpose of stimulating and proclaiming. Healing is the manifestation, the outworking of teaching and preaching.

The Healing Affirmed the Message / Message far more Important than Healing

Jesus' healing affirmed the message, the message is more wonderful, is a greater miracle, for all healing will come to an end at some point, but the message will last forever. The message was far more important than the healing. It is great to be healed and have another 10, 20 years of life, but the everlasting gospel is much more important than those 20 years.

Multitudes / Closer get the More Sick People See / Marriages – Addictions / Set Free

As we had mentioned that this area Jesus ministered in, was possibly 3 million people, and people were coming from all over, to get a multitude wouldn't take long. How many people was a multitude I don't know but I bet it was several thousands ((based on Jesus feeding of the 5000 men with the loaves and fish). Here is the point I am getting at, the closer you got to Jesus, the more sick people you would see, the more troubled people you would see, the more people needing help you would see. Those whose marriages were in ruin, those whose addictions were entrenched, those who were tired of their tongue, their meanness, those who know they needed help. These are the people Jesus came for and to, to those who were sitting in darkness, as he came to heal the broken hearted and set free the captives.

Jesus came to say now is the time, freedom has come:

(Matthew 14:21 NKJV) Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

(Luke 4:18 NKJV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

(Luke 4:19 NKJV) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Same Time Those Rejoicing

At same time you will see more people rejoicing, the closer you got to Jesus the more people you would see rejoicing for the kingdom has come, they have been set free, they are celebrating the newness of life.

Don't Expect to See Perfection

Jesus in this passage shows us that we need to have a changed mind about how gathering of God should be. Don't expect to come into a church and see that everyone has it together, that everyone is perfect. We will see rejoicing, and we will see the hurt being healed, the rejected being accepted, the seekers – seeking. It is a mixed multitude, and God meets us corporately, and He meets us individually.

We come Because Jesus is Here

The reason we are here is because Jesus is here, the reason people came to Jesus was because Jesus was there.

Outline Matthew 4:12-25

We will see through Jesus' ministry that we should:

- Change our mind on how ministry should be (4:12).
- Change our mind on how God moves through the land (4:13-16).
- Change our mind on how the message should be preached (4:17).
- Change our mind on how God leads His people (4:18-22).
- Change our mind on how church should be (4:23-25)

Matthew 5

The Beatitudes – Matthew 5:1-12

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Begin Sermon on Mount / Latin – Happy / Our Constitution

Today we begin our study on the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest sermon ever taught. Today we will look at the “Beatitudes” which gets its name from literally beatus in Latin, means “happy,” and every one of the following nine verses begins with the word “blessed” or “happy.” Our United States Constitution guarantees the pursuit of happiness, but Jesus’ constitution points out the pathway to happiness as He delineates the attitudes that lead to happiness.

Scriptures Declare – Happy God is the Lord / David – Sins Forgiven / No Sour Christianity

The Scriptures declare, “Blessed, or happy, is the people whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12). David said, “Blessed, or happy, is the man whose sins are forgiven” (Psalm 32:1). I believe the Bible knows nothing of a sour, heavy Christianity. I believe Scripture indicates that the people of God should be the happiest, most joyful people on earth, and they will be when their God is the Lord Jesus and we live His word as it becomes part of our very being.

(Psalms 33:12 NKJV) Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

(Psalms 32:1 NKJV) Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

(Matthew 5:1 NKJV) And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

(Matthew 5:2 NKJV) Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

So verse 1,

(Matthew 5:1 NKJV) And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.

Disciples – Followers / Made the Climb / Our Walk Uphill – What a View

These disciples (which means – followers, students) would be the ones who were following Jesus for more than just the spectacular miracles and all that Jesus could do to amaze them. These disciples mentioned here appear to be more than the 12 disciples we know by name. These disciples, followers, were the ones who would be willing to make the climb to see Him. The elevation of this mount was about 700 feet, it was an uphill climb. That sounds like our walk doesn't it, so often it seems like it is all up hill. Let me tell you, it is worth the hike because the view from the mount is beautiful. These disciples made the climb, while the on-lookers stayed down by the sea relaxing, saying He will be back, we will wait for Him to come back down. A disciple of Jesus Christ will make the climb to meet with Him, to hear from Him.

What a Time – Paralyzed – Lepers – Mental Illness / Evangelism Happening / Now Speak - Eternal

What a time this was, the thought of paralyzed walking, those with leprosy were being healed and that would mean fingers popping back on to hands, noses on to faces, what a time. People who were out of their minds, coming into a right mind, what a time. And imagine all the evangelism that came out of this as the lame beggar would go back to the same corner he once begged on and tell the other others, maybe pick them up himself and carry them to Jesus. But now we move into a time where Jesus is going to bring something more whole, more substantial, than the physical healing – Jesus is going to speak about the eternal things, Jesus is going to speak about the internal things (the things of the heart), and Jesus is going to speak the immediate things, the kingdom of heaven is here, and He is standing right in front of you.

(Matthew 4:23 NKJV) And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

(Matthew 4:24 NKJV) Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

(Matthew 4:25 NKJV) Great multitudes followed Him; from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

(Matthew 5:2 NKJV) Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

Opened His Mouth / Atmosphere of Anticipation

It is interesting to me that Matthew added this phrase, that Jesus opened His mouth before He taught. It leads me to sense an atmosphere of great anticipation. The disciples/followers have been with Jesus and have seen His power as we saw in our last study He was teaching, preaching, and healing (in that order).

These Disciples in Awe of Glory / Hanging on Every Word / Something Great is Coming

The disciples are in awe of His glory; Jesus has brought them to a place where they are hanging on His every word. Jesus takes them aside, apart from the crowds, the commotion, the buzz, the noise, the emotions, and it is now just Jesus and His disciples. No doubt they know something wonderful, something great is coming, is coming from the lips of the God-Man.

Life Changing Every Time He Opens Mouth / Do You Believe that Today

Something life changing will come when Jesus opens His mouth to us. Do you believe that today, is that your life today, God is going to open His mouth, and speak to me through this word, the Creator wants to teach me.

More than Words – Coupled with the Holy Spirit / The Holy Spirit Released

When Jesus opens His mouth, more than words come out, when Jesus opens His mouth to our lives, His words are coupled and empowered by the Holy Spirit, anytime and every time Jesus opens His mouth the Holy Spirit is released.

Receive Ye the Holy Spirit

It will be later in His ministry, Jesus will gather some of these same disciples to Himself, and He will open His mouth, and breath on them and say receive ye the Holy Spirit:

(John 20:21 NKJV) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

(John 20:22 NKJV) And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Study V-by-V / Bible Going Through Us - The Word – Became Flesh / God is Flowing Through Us

When we study this Bible, as we do, verse-by-verse, chapter-by-chapter, book-by-book, we are more than going through the Bible, but the Bible is going through us. The Bible, the Word of God is going through us, the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, Emmanuel, God with us, is going through us. How I wish every Christian would grasp this understanding and see the power that is available every time we open this word, it would change our approach to this Book; we would run to it, rather than look at it as one more thing on the "to-do" list.

This Word – This God – Is Love / Therefore Love Going Through Us / Galatians 5:22

This word, this God, is love, for 1 John 4:8 says God is love. Therefore love is going through us. As love goes through us it leaves its attributes within us. What does love leave behind, what does the Word that became flesh moving through us leave behind? Galatians 5:22-26. The fruit of the Spirit, for when God speaks His word the Spirit is release to work in us, and the fruit of the Spirit is love (singular) and the attributes of love are joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness gentleness and self-control. As the word goes through us, these are the things that are being left behind, and I also refer you to 1 Corinthians 13, another chapter on the attributes of love.

(1 John 4:8 NKJV) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

(Galatians 5:22 NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(Galatians 5:23 NIV) gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

No Wonder on Edge of Seat / man Shall not Live By Bread Alone

No wonder the disciples would be on the edge of their seats waiting in excited expectation of what Jesus would say. For man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God *(Matthew 4:4 NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"*

You Will Find Fruit of Spirit in Beatitudes / Attitude to Be – is Attitude of Love

What you will find in these beatitudes are the fruit of the Spirit. The attitude of the attitude to be, is an attitude of love we will see.

No Surprise

It should come as no surprise to us that the fruit of the Spirit is found in the beatitudes.

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Kindness

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It is through the Lord's kindness that we seek repentance; and we become the King's kids. The fruit of kindness in our heart leads us to be rich in the spiritual things. Kindness opens the doors to an abundance of spiritual blessings.

(Romans 2:4 NIV) Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Joy

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Our mourning is turned into rejoicing joy when the Lord comforts us. When faced with the things I don't understand I go back to what I do understand, and that is that God loves me and has a plan for me, and that brings joy to overflowing in my life.

*(2 Corinthians 1:3 NKJV) **Blessed be** the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, (2 Corinthians 1:4 NKJV) who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

(Psalms 30:10 NKJV) Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me; LORD, be my helper!"

(Psalms 30:11 NKJV) You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,

(Psalms 30:12 NKJV) To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

The Fruit of the Spirit is – Self Control

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Meekness is power under control. I need not get it right now, must have it today, for the day will come where I will rule the earth with Him:

(Revelation 20:6 NKJV) Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Goodness

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Nothing is more filling, than tasting of the Lord and His goodness. The more I partake, the more I become like Him.

(Psalms 34:8 NKJV) Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Patience

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Patience allows us to be merciful and to endure as God works on that person or persons.

(2 Thessalonians 1:4 NKJV) so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure,

The Fruit of the Spirit is – Faithfulness

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

A pure heart is a heart that is faithful to the Word and Ways of the Lord, and the day will come that when I see Him, I will be like Him, and I will be glad that I was faithful to the calling:

(1 John 3:2 NKJV) Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

(1 John 3:3 NKJV) And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Peace

(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

As I seek and bring peace, all will know I am becoming just like my Lord, the Prince of Peace, He is developing in me His very nature:

(Isaiah 9:6 NKJV) For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Fruit of the Spirit is – Gentleness (and all the others – joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control)

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Like Patience is to mercy, so is gentleness to those who come with aggression. Returning good for evil, love for evil, is the very image of God. A gentle and contrite heart is that of God:

(Psalms 34:17 NKJV) The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, And delivers them out of all their troubles.

(Psalms 34:18 NKJV) The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

(Psalms 34:19 NKJV) Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.

Are these Attitudes your Desire – Longing For / Let Lord Flow Through You

Are the attributes of the “beatitudes” what you desire in your life, is this what you are longing for? Then let the Lord flow through your life in Word, prayer, and fellowship, and because He is love, and as He flows through you, then the attributes of love, these beatitudes will be left behind.

Lets Go Deeper

Let’s go a little deeper and see what the Lord has for us as we look at each beatitude individually. What we will see is that the beatitudes flow through a personal testimony of every believers life. I love coming back to the Sermon on the Mount, these Beatitudes, it takes me back to the purest, simplistic, call that is upon my life, our life, and the attitude of Christianity. You could find all the instruction for the Christian walk right here in these 12 verses, pick any of life’s situation a Christian will face, and you will find the application here in these 9 Blessed Be.....

Outline for Beatitude:

- The Broken Heart (# 1-3)
- The Filled Heart (#4)
- The Changed Heart (#5-9)

The Broken Heart (# 1-3)

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Noticed Spiritual Bankruptcy

It was when I noticed my spiritual bankruptcy was when I realized something was missing in my life.

World says first step to Happiness – Confident / Not what Jesus Said / See God – Feel Poor

The world says, “The first step to happiness is to be self-assertive and confident, to highly esteem yourself and feel good about who you are.” That’s not what Jesus said. He said, “Blessed, or happy, are those who are poor in spirit—who realize their own spiritual poverty.” Anyone who truly sees the Lord will inevitably feel poor in spirit.

Isaiah – Peter – John in Revelation / I’m a Sinful Man

In the first five chapters of his book, Isaiah indicts the people of Judah and the surrounding nations, saying, “Woe unto you and you and you.” But in chapter 6, when he saw the Lord high and lifted up, he said, “Woe is me!” When Peter realized who Jesus was on a boat in the Sea of Galilee, he said, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man” (Luke 5:8). When John the revelator saw Jesus, he fell down as though he were dead (Revelation 1:17).

(Isaiah 6:5 NKJV) So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."

(Luke 5:8 NKJV) When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

(Revelation 1:17 NKJV) And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last."

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Brings us to Mourn over Our Sin / Woman Caught in Adultery – I Don’t Condemn You

When you realize you’re a sinner and when you mourn over your sin, the Lord will come to you and say, “I don’t condemn you. Go your way and sin no more.” That’s what the woman caught in the act of adultery heard, as did the prostitute who fell at the feet of Jesus weeping. “Leave her alone, Pharisees,” Jesus said. “The one who is forgiven much loves much.” In the state of realizing our poverty and in our mourning, we truly enter into the kingdom and are comforted.

(John 8:10 NKJV) When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

(John 8:11 NKJV) She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Tired of Fighting

Meekness, it is power under control. Meekness is the place where we are tired of fighting, tired of trying to do things in our own strength, where our spirit is broken, and we are now open to hear about God's way.

Stallion Broken / Moses – Jesus / Broken – Mourning – Readied to be Harnessed

Praus, the Greek word translated "meek," is a term used to describe a powerful stallion broken and able to be ridden. Moses was known for his meekness in the Old Testament. Numbers 12:3 declares him to be the meekest man on the face of the earth. Jesus was known for His meekness in the New Testament. In the only autobiographical description of His personality, Jesus said, "I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). So too, after a person realizing he is poor in spirit and begins mourning, he finds himself meek with his strength, is now readied to be harnessed for the purposes of the King and for Him alone. *(Matthew 11:29 KJV) 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.*

The Filled Heart (#4)

Now the heart is ready to be filled.

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Notice Order / Self-Glory Emptied / Void produces a Hunger / Beautiful place to Be – 10 or 15 years

Notice the order: First you're poor in spirit, then you're mourning over your sin, then you find yourself meek. Now that you've gotten rid of all that self-grandeur and self-glory, you find yourself hungering and thirsting because you're emptied of all that junk. The empty void produces a hunger and thirst to be filled. What a beautiful place to be, whether it is in the stages of giving our life to Jesus, or 5, 10, 15, 20 years later because a person is a sponge desiring to soak up all that the Lord has for them.

The Changed Heart (#5-9)

Now we see the results of the filled heart, for the heart has been changed and can be seen not in words only, but in deed.

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

You'll be Merciful to Others / No Longer Judgmental – Critical / More Righteous – More Mercy

After you have gone through the emptying process and you're filled with God's love, you'll be merciful toward others—no longer judgmental, critical, or analytical. Truly, the more righteous a man is, the more merciful he will be. The more sinful a man is, the more harsh and critical he will be.

Life about Others

With this changed heart and the mercy that it displays, life is no longer all about me, but God gives a heart that cares about others, their needs, and the need to be shown grace and mercy.

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

Changed heart – Wants to be Clean

With this changed heart comes the desire to rid it of anything that is not in line with the ways of the Lord.

Difference Clean & Pure / Not Distracted by the World

There is a difference between having a clean heart and a pure heart. All of us who have embraced the Lord have clean hearts. But a pure heart is one not distracted by the things of the world. Think of it this way: All soap is clean. But only one is 99.44 percent pure. Ivory soap doesn't have deodorants, perfumes, additives, or colorings. Ivory is nothing but soap. Other soaps are clean, but they're not pure. The pure in heart shall see God.

- “Why don’t I see God?” people ask.
Could it be because you’re no longer pure in heart?

- “Am I saying you are lost?”
No. But has your vision been obscured by a bunch of perfumes and additives, still clean, but no longer Ivory, deodorized and perfumed, but no longer pure?

(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Willing to Yield / Bring Peace between God and Man

This changed heart desires to yield for the sake of peace, and to bring people to a place of peace with God. Our heart, our attitude to be, isn’t just about being saved, but to see others saved. We will be called the sons of God, because God’s Son came to seek and save that which was lost.

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Thought these things Make Popular – Not in this World

What? Persecution? Maybe you thought if a person possessed a “beatitude mentality”—if he was aware of his own poverty, if he mourned over his sin, if he was meek, if he hungered and thirsted after righteousness, if he had a pure heart, if he showed mercy—he would be popular. But such is not the case, for if the attitudes of meekness and mercy, poverty of spirit and righteousness of heart are being worked out in you, you will encounter persecution. You will have enemies. You will be slandered and misunderstood because in 2 Timothy 3:12, Paul says this, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” That’s a promise.

(2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Jesus said be Happy – Joining a Great Company

Jesus said, “Happy is the one who is persecuted. You’re joining a great company, the company of the prophets. And, indeed, you will have profit in heaven—exceedingly great reward.”

Our Personal Testimony

Speaking of our personal testimony, how it seems to be in this world people say we are out of our minds, what a nutcase. Jesus says you are in good company.

Jesus Lived it Out

Jesus Lived Every Beatitude Out

For every beatitude we will see in the study of Jesus’ life, that He lived every one of them out.

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Kindness

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus knew what it was to be poor in spirit as He would take on the sins of the world and be separated from His Father in Heaven:

(Matthew 27:46 NKJV) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Joy

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Jesus would mourn over Jerusalem, He would mourn over the separation from the Father, but He would have joy and be comforted in the power of the cross:

*(Matthew 23:37 NKJV) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!
(Matthew 23:38 NKJV) "See! Your house is left to you desolate;
(Matthew 23:39 NKJV) "for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"*

(Matthew 27:46 NKJV) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

(Hebrews 12:2 NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Fruit of the Spirit is – Self Control

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Was there ever a greater demonstration of power under control, meekness, on willing to not fight back then when Jesus was being falsely accused, beaten, mocked by the soldier, nailed to the cross, and then to have the religious leaders come and mock Him:

(Matthew 27:39 NKJV) And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads

(Matthew 27:40 NKJV) and saying, "You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

(Matthew 27:41 NKJV) Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said,

(Matthew 27:42 NKJV) "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.

(Matthew 27:43 NKJV) "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

(Matthew 27:44 NKJV) Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Goodness

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

Jesus in all His ways sought to do the will of the Father, to right before Him, to please His heavenly Father:

(Matthew 4:4 NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

(Hebrews 10:5 NKJV) Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me.

(Hebrews 10:6 NKJV) In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure.

(Hebrews 10:7 NKJV) Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; In the volume of the book it is written of Me; To do Your will, O God.'"

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Patience

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

Jesus' life could be summed up as mercy, as He took the punishment intended for us. As the thief next to Him would ask, so too can we and have we, remember me when you come into your kingdom, even though I don't deserve it. Jesus answers to the thief, to us, to any and all that seek him to be Savior, - today you will be with Me in Paradise:

(Luke 23:42 NKJV) Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

(Luke 23:43 NKJV) And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

The Fruit of the Spirit is – Faithfulness

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

Jesus, coming to do the will of the Father, faithful and pure in every way:

(Luke 23:4 NKJV) So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man."

The Fruit of the Spirit is - Peace

(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Jesus, the peace maker between God and man, bringing to end the war between sinful man and the Holy God.

(John 14:6 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

(John 19:30 NKJV) So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

(John 14:27 NKJV) "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

(John 14:28 NKJV) "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

The Fruit of the Spirit is – Gentleness (and all the others – joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, self-control)

(Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:11 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.

(Matthew 5:12 NKJV) "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Jesus, persecuted for our sake; beaten, mocked, spit upon, then those 6 hours on a cross on a hill in Palestine, yet He would count it all joy so that He might bring as many as who would come into the kingdom of God.

Persecuted

(Matthew 26:39 NKJV) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

(Matthew 27:27 NKJV) Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him.

(Matthew 27:28 NKJV) And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him.

(Matthew 27:29 NKJV) When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

(Matthew 27:30 NKJV) Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head.

(Matthew 27:31 NKJV) And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified.

(John 19:17 NKJV) And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,

(John 19:18 NKJV) where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

(John 19:19 NKJV) Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

God Himself would allow lies to be spoken about Him, because He was looking forward to the reward to come, and He calls His reward you and I

Falsely Accused

(Matthew 26:59 NKJV) Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death,

(Matthew 26:60 NKJV) but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward.

(Ephesians 1:18 NKJV) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

The Beatitude

The attitude to be: we as Christians should have attitudes, these attitudes to be! May this study light the fire to seek after these things, to go to the depth of them, and take us to new spiritual heights in Him!

Salt and Light / Flavoring and Illumination (Matthew 5:13-16)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Begin Sermon on Mount / Latin – Happy / Our Constitution

We are in our study on the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest sermon ever taught. Last study we looked at the "Beatitudes" which gets its name from literally bea-tus in Latin, means "happy," and every one of the nine beatitudes begins with the word "blessed" or "happy." Our United States Constitution guarantees the pursuit of happiness, but Jesus' constitution points out the pathway to happiness as He delineates the attitudes that lead to happiness in the beatitudes.

Scriptures Declare – Happy God is the Lord / David – Sins Forgiven / No Sour Christianity

The Scriptures declare, "Blessed, or happy, is the people whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12). David said, "Blessed, or happy, is the man whose sins are forgiven" (Psalm 32:1). I believe the Bible knows nothing of a sour, heavy Christianity. I believe Scripture indicates that the people of God should be the happiest, most joyful people on earth, and they will be when their God is the Lord Jesus and we live His word as it becomes part of our very being.

(Psalms 33:12 NKJV) Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

(Psalms 32:1 NKJV) Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered.

Theme Continues / Immediately Following / Inward Changes – Outward Results

The theme of the beatitudes does not end with those first 12 verses, it continues on all the way through the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus continues to unlock to us the life filled with joy. I should remind you that the Sermon on the Mount was taught in one sitting, and that is how it is best to read it (in one sitting). But as for us as we study over the weeks to come, we need to look at every study in the context of the whole Sermon on the Mount, all 3 chapters. So, as in this study, immediately after the "oh how happy" inward changes of the heart, Jesus goes into how that will effect the outward condition of the world as we look at these 4 verses on salt and light. Remind you that we left off on blessed are you, happy are you, when you are persecuted and reviled for my sake, great is your reward in heaven. So Jesus gives the context that no matter the opposition, be salt, be a light, for great will be your reward.

(Matthew 5:13 NKJV) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

(Matthew 5:14 NKJV) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

(Matthew 5:15 NKJV) "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Let's take a look verse by verse.

(Matthew 5:13 NKJV) "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

Speaking Something Familiar / Dead Sea Area

Jesus is speaking of something they would be very familiar with in that day. The Dead Sea was south of Jerusalem and was high in salt content, and there was also salt mines in the Dead Sea area that were mined for salt.

Taken for Granted / Soldier worth his Salt

We take salt for granted in the day we live, but it was a much sought after commodity. In fact the soldiers in that time, along with their pay received a bag of salt. It was called their "salarium", where we get our word for salary. If you ever heard the phrase "he is worth his salt", that is where it came from. The soldiers had to perform highly to receive their weekly bag of salt.

High Quality

Salt of high quality was used

- They would rub salt on their meats to preserve it from rot.
- To bring flavor to the mostly bland food.
- It was an antiseptic to cleanse sores if they were wounded.

What we are to Be / Keep World from Rotting

Salt would be used to preserve the meat and the fish because they did not have refrigeration like we do today, so the salt was a preservative. Jesus is saying that is what we are to be to the world, we are to keep the whole world from rotting, and we are the preservative of the world. The church is part of the restraining of the Holy Spirit. We are the only thing that is bringing any sanity into this crazy world.

(2 Thessalonians 2:5 NKJV) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things?

(2 Thessalonians 2:6 NKJV) And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time.

(2 Thessalonians 2:7 NKJV) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.

World Wishes we would go Away / No Idea what Asks For / Freedom – Addictions/Marriage

The world wishes that we would go away, just disappear because they don't like what we represent, which is submission to a greater One, a life not centered on self, a life of repentance from sin and the desires of the flesh. They wish we would go away! Well one day we will, it will be the day of the rapture, and when we do disappear, all hell will break loose here on earth. Once again the world has no idea what they ask for. They ask for the freedom to do as they desire, and it leads them to the bondages of addictions, miserable marriages, depression, and blinded minds. They ask and hope for us to go away, and when we do, it will be hell on earth as we have studied in the book of Revelation.

Rub us Into People

Just as salt was rubbed unto the meat, so does the Lord want to rub us unto people. Not to rub them the wrong way, but to rub off on them, to bring them to a place of preservation.

Brings Flavor / Samaritan Purse – Sudan- Nica

Salt adds flavoring to bland food (Job said can flavorless food be eaten without salt), it can take an average meal and turn it into a delicacy, a gourmet meal. How we as Christians have brought so much flavor into the world. Humanitarian relief (I think of Samaritan Purse working in disaster areas such as the Gulf Coast, Iraq, NYC after 911, just about anywhere a disaster happens, you can count on them to be there), I think of the Orphanage in Nicaragua, the safety camp for the "night commuters" in the Sudan. A place of refuge for those children being raped, mutilated, killed or made to kill their parents and join the Resistance Army. I think of the soup kitchen in Curtis Bay feeding the hungry, and I think of this church that has brought life back into lives that were bland, just getting through the day, but turned life into a delicacy it was meant to be as people have a place to come and worship the King, to hear His Words of Love and direction. It is that salt that draws people to Him.

(Job 6:6 NKJV) Can flavorless food be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Promotes Thirst

Salt adds flavoring, but at the same time salt promotes thirst, and as the salt of the earth, we should be making those around us thirsty for the living water of Jesus Christ. People should say, "There's something about you that creates in me a thirst for what you're enjoying."

Antiseptic – Healing / Babies – Elisha / We bring Healing - Cleansing / California

Salt was used for cleansing and healing. The soldiers would put salt on their battle wounds. Physicians would use it in their practices; in fact we are told that when a baby was born the child would be cleansed with a salt (Ezekiel 16:4). We see Elisha healing undrinkable water by casting salt into the waters to heal it. Salt gives a beautiful picture of what God wants to do with His salt today, you and I, and that is to bring healing and cleansing to a world that is so ill and covered with blemish. Christian how many people we walk by every day who are ready to quit, wishing they could. Lives broken and in ruin because the ravages of sin. Marriages, addictions, our teens buying the lie of sex and drugs, and now the fall-out comes and they suffer the depression that comes with those things, the ills and the feeling of being dirty, and here we are with the salt, we are the salt, to cleanse them from their sin and bring healing as we lead them to Jesus Christ. They are all around us, we walk by them at work, at the 7-11, at the mailbox. I am reminded of the time in California walking down the street and passing a young man, looking right into his eyes as we passed and said hey, God love you, he passed and stopped and said what did you say, I said God loves you. He said I just got up out of my living room, my life is a mess, and I said God if you are real, show yourself, and here you are. After the gospel he prayed to receive Jesus. They are all around us, ready for salt to be rubbed on them for healing.

(Ezekiel 16:4 NIV) On the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths.

(2 Kings 2:19 NKJV) Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad, and the ground barren."

(2 Kings 2:20 NKJV) And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.

(2 Kings 2:21 NKJV) Then he went out to the source of the water, and cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.'"

(2 Kings 2:22 NKJV) So the water remains healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

Lost Flavor / Temple Mount Rooms

Verse 13 - but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men - At the temple, there was the court of the gentiles, then past that was the court of the woman which no gentiles could enter, and if they did they took their life into their own hands. Now next to the court of the woman were 4 rather large storage rooms. One room held wood for the sacrifices that were burned upon the altar. Another room was dedicated to men who had taken a vow before God (remember Paul in Acts) and that room was for them to pray in. A third room was for people who had come for the feasts to go and sit and meet with the teachers of the Law to ask questions (probably where Jesus was when he was 12 wowing the teachers of the Law when His parents lost Him). A fourth room was used to store salt. That salt would be used in the winter to de-ice the temple mount, or to kill vegetation that was along the footpaths to the temple. So the pure salt used for flavoring, preservative, antiseptic, but salt that was no longer useful was used to trample under foot. These people would understand His reference to salt that lost its flavor it was only good to be trampled on.

If Church has Lost Flavor / Must be Taken out of Earth / Low Profile – No Respect

If the church has lost its flavor and seasoning in this world, then what is it good for? If people cannot see a difference between a believer and an unbeliever Jesus says what it is it good for? How important I point out to you today, that the salt had to be first taken out of the earth before it could be sprinkled and rubbed. How we can be fooled by the devil or our own thoughts, when we say I am going to keep a low profile with this Christianity thing, I don't want to turn people off and push them away. That is a lie from the pit of hell for Jesus says be salt, be a light. We think they will respect us if we don't bring it on too hard, which would mean to have any flavor or give them any taste of the goodness of God. Jesus says not only are they not going to respect you, they will trample you under their foot. Under the foot means they have the control, they have the one-up. They keep us shut-up, just the way they wanted too. What a reversal of the beatitudes where Jesus says oh how happy you are when they do, for you will be lifted up, great is your reward in heaven. If you feel trampled under the world, it may be because you have lost your salt.

Greek Structure – You Alone are the Salt / Salt Promotes Thirst

The structure of the sentence in the Greek reads, “you alone are the salt of the earth”. God says you alone are the salt of the earth, in other words don’t think someone else is going to draw people to Christ, we are it. Don’t sit around and wait for someone else to do it, but to get out there and do it. Again, salt promotes thirst, and as the salt of the earth, we should be making those around us thirsty for the living water of Jesus Christ. People should say, “There’s something about you that creates in me a thirst for what you’re enjoying.”

Salt had Ceremonial Purposes

Before we move on to the light, let me close with this spiritual principle on salt; salt was to be sprinkled on to all the sacrifices that were before the Lord. Salt was part of the covenant with God. In Roman’s 12 we are called to present our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord. As we have just studied, every sacrifice was to be sacrificed with salt, we are to be the salt of the earth:

(Leviticus 2:13 NKJV) 'And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt.'

(Ezekiel 43:22 NKJV) 'On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they cleansed it with the bull.'

(Ezekiel 43:23 NKJV) 'When you have finished cleansing it, you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish.'

(Ezekiel 43:24 NKJV) 'When you offer them before the LORD, the priests shall throw salt on them, and they will offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD.'

(2 Chronicles 13:5 NKJV) "Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt?"

(Romans 12:1 NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

(Romans 12:2 NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Be Worth your Salt

Christian, be worth your salt

The Light – Jesus Reiterates

In verse 14-16, Jesus is reiterating the message again

(Matthew 5:14 NKJV) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

City of Safed / Sailors take Bearings /

There is a city in the region of Israel called Safed, and it is a city that sat upon a hill and it was there in the area of Capernaum in the region of the Sea of Galilee. The sailor who fished in the evening and couldn’t navigate off the stars because maybe it was overcast would take their bearings off of Safed. The city is still there today.

Jesus – Spiritual Application / Church to give Bearing to the World

Jesus is making a spiritual application. The church and its believers are a light to give the world a place to take a bearing off of. To guide them into a safe harbor, a friendly port.

(Matthew 5:15 NKJV) "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Didn’t Light Up – to Hide Away / Dear People in My Life / I am Someone’s Answer to Prayer

Let your light shine, Jesus is saying I did not light you up to hide you away. We are the last link to eternity they have. There are people dear to my heart, they live far away, I don’t see Jesus in them, and my prayer daily is that God would send someone into their life that will radiate His glory to them. What I know is that I am the answer to someone who is praying the same prayer I am. That some where there is a

person praying for their unsaved sister, brother, mother, father, friend from college, that relative, or friend, that someone will come and reflect the glory of God to them, and attract them to God.

Application – Not Hard to be Light & Salt / Easy as S-A-L-T

It is really not hard to be salt and light in a world of such a sad state, in such darkness, people thirsting but having no idea what for. Being a light and salt, is as easy as S-A-L-T.

Study – Study to show thyself approved unto God. I refer you back to last weeks study. The word flowing through you, that word is God, that God is love, therefore love is flowing through you. The fruit of the Spirit is love, and love is the heart and theme of the beatitudes (the oh how happy). Love, the attitude to be, screams God's love to those that are sitting in darkness, those that have a flavorless life:

(2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

(Galatians 5:22 NIV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

(Galatians 5:23 NIV) gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

(Galatians 5:24 NIV) Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

(Galatians 5:25 NIV) Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Allow – Allow God to speak to you daily, before you set-off on your way, your agenda, may God set you correctly. Every morning we awake, means God has graciously chosen to give us another day to be salt and light. It is a gift, and an exciting gift, should we chose to accept it, should we slow down to recognize it. Pastor Mike Macintosh of Horizon Christian Fellowship in San Diego says he wakes up every morning and says he hears the music to “Mission Impossible” playing in his mind. He says he looks at every day like that, that God has given him a mission every day, should he decide to accept, to go out and do what seems impossible, and that is shine and attract people to Jesus. Lord, daily I present my body a living sacrifice, let this sacrifice include the salt covenant:

(Psalms 143:8 NKJV) Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You.

(Isaiah 50:4 NKJV) "The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.

Light – Walk in the Light as He is in the Light. Live in the light every moment of every day, live a life of no compromise, live a life that is seeking after God and His righteousness (remind you read in 1 sitting), seek first the Kingdom of God. Live a life of no compromise, no shortcuts, and that includes when no one is watching, or we are in the quiet of our own homes. The salt has to come out of the earth before it can be sprinkled and rubbed to preserve, flavor, heal and cleanse.

(1 John 1:7 NKJV) But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

(2 Peter 1:19 NKJV) And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;

(1 Peter 2:9 NKJV) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

Talk – When you are living the S-A-L, then the “T” will naturally flow with them. We can't help but talk about what gets us up in the morning, what ignites our flame (light), what our passion is. Christian look for ways to steer the conversation unto Him, they may not like it at sometimes, but at least they will respect you and not trample you under foot. I think it was Spurgeon who said, catch on-fire for Jesus Christ and people will come to watch you burn. Let your speech about the Great I Am be seasoned with salt, and let it create a thirst in all who come in contact with you:

(Colossians 4:2 NKJV) Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

(Colossians 4:3 NKJV) meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,

(Colossians 4:4 NKJV) that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

(Colossians 4:5 NKJV) Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.

(Colossians 4:6 NKJV) Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

It is a Matter of the Heart (5:17-32)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Begin Sermon on Mount / Latin – Happy / Our Constitution

We are in our study on the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest sermon ever taught. We have looked at the “Beatitudes” which gets its name from literally bea-tus in Latin, means “happy,” and every one of the nine beatitudes begins with the word “blessed” or “happy.” Our United States Constitution guarantees the pursuit of happiness, but Jesus’ constitution points out the pathway to happiness as He delineates the attitudes that lead to happiness in the beatitudes.

Theme Continues – Unlocks Life Filled with Joy / Given 1 Sitting – Keep Context

The theme of the beatitudes does not end with those first 12 verses, it continues on all the way through the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus continues to unlock to us the life filled with joy. I should remind you that the Sermon on the Mount was taught in one sitting, and that is how it is best to read it (in one sitting). But as for us as we study over the weeks to come, we need to look at every study in the context of the whole Sermon on the Mount, all 3 chapters, and that Jesus is unlocking to us the life fill with joy.

Verse 17 – Shift in Sermon / Back to Law / Jesus shows not just Outward – Heart Condition

As we come into verse 17 today we will see a shift in the sermon, as Jesus will go back to the Law, the 10 Commandments. Jesus will clearly show in the verses to come that the Law wasn’t just something that was to be kept externally, but the Law also showed the inward condition of each man’s heart. Jesus will show that even 100% perfection on the outward keeping of the Law, that all are guilty before Him as He knows the inner thoughts of every mans heart. He sees through the actions, and into the attitudes.

Law & SM serve 2 Purposes – Drive & Direct / Wonderful Guides for Life / Each Topic vice-versa

The Law (the 10 Commandments), and this Sermon on the Mount, serve two very clear purposes of God, to drive a person to see the need for the Savior Jesus Christ, and secondly to direct a person in Christ. To drive us to Christ, and to direct us once in Christ. The Law, this Sermon on the Mount, are wonderful guides for a victorious Christian life. As we go through this study on the Sermon on the Mount we will look at it from both perspectives. By the way, you will find each topic discussed in the Sermon on the Mount, in the 10 Commandments, and vice-versa; you will find the topic of murder, adultery, coveting, honoring the Sabbath, and all the others for the heart of the Law is in the Sermon on the Mount and the Heart of the Sermon on the Mount is in the Law.

Drives to Christ / Galatians & Romans

Now the perspective that the Law drives us to Christ, is what the Law was intended to do:

(Romans 3:18 NKJV) "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

(Romans 3:19 NKJV) Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

(Romans 3:20 NKJV) Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

(Galatians 3:24 NKJV) Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Misconception Law not Spiritual – a Heart Issue / Commands 1-3&10 / 20 Chapters God's Heart

There is a misconception that the 10 Commandments were not spiritual (not about a heart condition, but all about external things), but that is incorrect, the 10 Commandments are and always were spiritual, they served the same purpose as this Sermon on the Mount, to drive people to the need for a Savior, and to direct people in their walk. Commands 1-3 can be nothing else but spiritual, and Command #10, you shall not covet is a spiritual one for all these deal with the condition of the heart. In fact the Apostle Paul said had it not been for coveting I would not have known sin. So Paul says I did good in all the other areas but found myself guilty when it came to coveting. If you study chapters 21-40 in the Book of Exodus, you will see how spiritual the Law is as God reveals His heart all the way through those chapters, as we see His love for the poor, the widows, the strangers, and for all man.

(Exodus 20:3 NKJV) "You shall have no other gods before Me.

(Exodus 20:4 NKJV) "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

(Exodus 20:5 NKJV) you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

(Exodus 20:7 NKJV) "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

(Exodus 20:17 NKJV) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

(Romans 7:7 NKJV) What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

Jesus not Correcting the Law – Correcting what Religion had Done / Bringing back to Purpose

Jesus is not correcting the Law in this Sermon on the Mount, what He is correcting is what the religious leaders had turned it into in the 1500 years since it was given. Jesus is bringing them back to the purpose of the Law, to drive them to see the need for the Christ, and to direct them in Christ.

Religious Leaders over Years / Turned it Outward / That what Religion Does

The religious leaders over the years had misrepresented the Law, and turned it into an outward appearance, the outward actions, while ignoring the inward attitudes of a man's heart. Isn't that just what religion does, it puts on a show, makes it out to what a person wants it to be, all the while ignoring the heart and desires of God. They make it fit their wants and desires, while looking right past God's heart and desire.

613 Laws / 348 – 265 / Woman Mirror – Spitting – False Teeth/Wooden Leg / 200 Feet / Self-Right

They would misinterpret this law so bad, that the Jewish teachers will take the Ten Commandments and add 613 laws to it. They made smaller commandments that every person had to know every detail of. 348 of them were do's, and 265 were don't. So 348 things you had to do, and 265 you were not suppose to do. A woman was not allow to look in the mirror on the Sabbath lest she see a grey hair and pluck it out, that would be considered harvesting (working on the Sabbath), You were not allow to spit in the dirt on the Sabbath lest the spit would roll the dirt into mud and you would then be plowing on the Sabbath (but you could spit on a rock). You had to take out your false tooth or take off your wooden leg on the Sabbath because they would be considered carrying a burden, and that would constitute working on the Sabbath. A person couldn't go more than 200 feet from their house on the Sabbath because that would not be honoring the Sabbath (so what they did was build lean-tubes every 200 feet from their home and say this is an extension of my home (man can always find a way to justify themselves, all the while missing God's intention, this is a day that you rest, and we yoke together in fellowship. So they established a system of self-righteousness that if you kept all the outward rules you were good and would be received into heaven. Jesus will destroy their self-righteous religion, and at the end of the Sermon on the Mount not one person would be left guiltless.

Jesus going to Destroy Outward Actions by End of Verse 20 / See Need to be Clothed

Jesus is going to get right to the bottom of this "outward appearance", the outward actions, and by the end of verse 20, there is no man who will be left standing in his own glory, and will see the need to be clothed in God's glory, for He cannot stand before the Holy God on his own merits.

I Suggest to You – Make their own Religion

I suggest to you, that what the religious people of the day did to the 10 Commandments, is the same as what religious people (whether in pulpits – or individual everyday people) have done to this Sermon on the Mount. Many people today have taken the Sermon on the Mount and turned it into the same thing they did with the 10 Commandments. People turn it into their own form of religion, and miss the whole heart of God, and the intent of the message, to drive us and direct us in Christ. To bring a person to that place of “poor in Spirit”, and Lord I need you to guide me every day and every step.

We Going back to God's Intent

We are going back to original, to the heart of God, and His intent for this great sermon.

Righteousness that Exceeds

(Matthew 5:17 NKJV) "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.

(Matthew 5:18 NKJV) "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

(Matthew 5:19 NKJV) "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:20 NKJV) "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Not Destroy – Fulfill / Standard Perfection – James 2:10 / Scribes Perfect

Jesus was saying, “I am not coming to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. I am not seeking to weaken it, but to establish it.” My standard Jesus says, “perfection”, if you break one law once, you are guilty and doomed to eternal punishment. The people thought the scribes and Pharisees were “near” perfect (as did the scribes and Pharisees) and God says you have to exceed that, you have to hit the 100% mark for your whole life, 99.9% wouldn't cut it. This is reiterated in the Book of James, break one command once, you are guilty before the Holy God. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is where you stand at this moment, you are guilty before the Holy God, you have broken His Law, and just as if you broke man's law you would pay a penalty, so too will you have to pay the penalty before God, and that penalty is eternal separation from Him, in outer darkness where the worm dies not, and fires are never quenched. Jesus brings people to the place that they need a Savior.

(James 2:10 NKJV) For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

(Mark 9:43 NKJV) "If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched;

(Mark 9:44 NKJV) "where 'Their worm does not die, And the fire is not quenched.'

Exodus 20 – Law Heeded – Altar Needed

Back in Exodus we saw that when God finished delivering the 10 Commandments, the very next thing we see happening is an altar for sacrifices being built; for when the Law is heeded, an altar is needed, and that is what Jesus is bringing the people to here in the Sermon on the Mount:

(Exodus 20:24 NKJV) 'An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you.

Jesus Moves On – If Still not Convinced / Also Great Direction to life of Joy

Now Jesus is going to move on in His sermon and show people their heart condition. For those who weren't convinced by verse 20, Jesus is going to show them their guilt and need. But for those who heeded, and recognized the altar needed, these passages are wonderful passages to direct us in life, and to continue on with the theme of the Sermon on the Mount, oh how happy is the man or woman. We covered these topics quite in depth in our study of the 10 Commandments, so I refer you back to those studies for deeper studies, and we will look at them here at a higher level.

Murder - Anger

(Matthew 5:21 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

Jesus teaches with Authority

Verse 21 - You have heard that it was said to those of old - Notice Jesus doesn't say to them you have read because most either couldn't read or more so they didn't have access to the scriptures. It would be easy for them to be misled by the religious leaders and teachers who would apply their 613 rules upon the people. In verse 22, Jesus will say, "but I say". Jesus teaches with authority, and the people will marvel. The other teachers would always quote other teachers because they were so unsure of themselves, but Jesus come out preaching in power, in confidence, in surety. It is that power that we can have confidence in His word.

(Matthew 7:28 NKJV) And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, (Matthew 7:29 NKJV) for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

(Matthew 5:22 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

Equal with Murder

Jesus showing it isn't actions, but attitude of the heart. Catch the depth of this, in God's economy, Jesus says I consider you equal with the murder when you hate. God doesn't rate or weight sin, because the standard is perfection, 100%, 99.99% won't make it. We covered this quite in-depth in our study of the 10 Commandments, and we called it "murder in the heart". Jesus is saying that anger you have towards that person, that hatred is murder from His perspective.

Fool – Idiot / Speaking Judgment

Verse 22 - But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire - Fool, is the same as calling them an idiot, jerk, etc. It is speaking in judgment against them, character assassination, tearing them down before others. This is what the Lord thinks of that (you are in danger of hell fire), we need to consider this statement next time we unleash our "righteous indignation" upon a person. We always think we are justified, the person needs to here this for their own good. Jesus is saying what was the attitude of the heart when you did that.

(Matthew 5:23 NKJV) "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

(Matthew 5:24 NKJV) "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Don't Expect Something from God

Jesus says to them, and to us, don't come to the altar expecting something from God when you know there is an unresolved issue with your brother, I won't receive your gift.

(Matthew 5:25 NKJV) "Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

(Matthew 5:26 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Legal System in the Day / Jesus says Fix while you Can

The legal system in Jesus' day required the plaintiff to personally track down the defendant. In other words, if you had something against someone, it would be your job to find him and bring him in physically before the judge (they didn't have police or soldiers doing it – the other person would go to clear their name for your name and character was of great importance in those days). This is why Jesus here says, "If you are on the road with your adversary—if he has captured you—cut a deal with him before you get to court. Apologize! Get it right because once the matter reaches court, you could get cast into prison and remain until you pay the last penny." But how can you pay the last penny when you're in prison? You

have no way to make money. That's the point. If you let the incident become a big deal by not dealing with it immediately, promptly, in humility, and with transparency, you'll never escape it. Jesus says fix it now while there is opportunity to fix it, fix it before the matter gets worse.

How Often we Don't because of Pride / Then gets more Complicated / Humble Self

I think many of us have found this to be true at one point or another. When we had the opportunity to deal with a situation, we chose not to because of pride, and then it grew and grew over the days and months and years, until it became so complicated and confusing that there was no way out. Jesus said, "Avoid this. Be wise. When you are on the road, when you're talking with your adversary, when you're still communicating, be humble, lest you find yourself imprisoned with no way of escape." It is always better to reconcile than to be right.

Adultery - Lust

(Matthew 5:27 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'

(Matthew 5:28 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

(Matthew 5:29 NKJV) "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

(Matthew 5:30 NKJV) "And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Jesus says Guilty / 10th Command

Jesus says don't think that just because you haven't committed the actual act of adultery, that you are not guilty before Him when you lust in your heart. This command covers the 10th command that you shall not covet. The 10th commandment is one of intent; the other commands are ones of activities. Paul said he would not have known sin had it not been for the 10th commandment.

(Exodus 20:17 NKJV) "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

(Romans 7:7 NKJV) What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet."

Pluck it Out – Cut it Off / Blind People / Whole Industries / Deal Violently

Pluck it out, cut it off Jesus says. Now He doesn't mean that literally because He is making the point that it is a matter of the condition of the heart. I've heard plenty of times that blind people say they still struggle with lust. We have whole industries around us to draw and attack people to lust because they know it is good business because they have plenty of patrons. Jesus is not talking about physically poking out an eye or chopping off a hand. Rather, He's saying, "Deal violently and directly with any part of your being—your activities, your hobbies, your schedule—that is leading you to sin. It's destructive, so deal with it decisively." Cut it off, throw it out, turn it off, there is no mister nice guy here, this is the place for a Christian to be mean and nasty, not gracious and kind.

God sees through the Thoughts / Pharisees Busted / Ezekiel

God sees the thoughts and intents of the heart. These scribes and Pharisee's who would hear this no doubt would be pierced as they would know that God sees, just as He had saw before. Ezekiel the prophet was given a vision of God (chapter 8) to proclaim to the elders and leaders of Israel that God sees what is in your heart. In the vision He had the prophet dig a hole in this wall (symbolic of the leaders heart), then the Lord says go in and tell me what you see, and what the prophet saw was these leaders of Israel had pictures of idols painted on the walls (symbolic of what was in their inner thoughts), they were worshipping the sun, they thought God didn't see. There were all of these drawings there on the walls of idols of the land, one idol we know was Ashtoreth, the god of sex. These pictures would have been pornographic, for archeology has uncovered these pictures and statues of Ashtoreth and they had exaggerated female forms. They were designed for the same purpose that pornography is designed

today, to arouse a person sexually. Here they were portrayed on the walls of this room that he came into when he had dug through the hole in the wall. The Lord sees and knows the thoughts of every man.

(Ezekiel 8:1 NKJV) And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house with the elders of Judah sitting before me, that the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there.

(Ezekiel 8:2 NKJV) Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire; from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, like the color of amber.

(Ezekiel 8:3 NKJV) He stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my hair; and the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner court, where the seat of the image of jealousy was, which provokes to jealousy.

(Ezekiel 8:4 NKJV) And behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, like the vision that I saw in the plain.

(Ezekiel 8:5 NKJV) Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

(Ezekiel 8:6 NKJV) Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations."

(Ezekiel 8:7 NKJV) So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall.

(Ezekiel 8:8 NKJV) Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

(Ezekiel 8:9 NKJV) And He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there."

(Ezekiel 8:10 NKJV) So I went in and saw, and there; every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls.

(Ezekiel 8:11 NKJV) And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up.

(Ezekiel 8:12 NKJV) Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'"

(Ezekiel 8:13 NKJV) And He said to me, "Turn again, and you will see greater abominations that they are doing."

(Ezekiel 8:14 NKJV) So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

(Ezekiel 8:15 NKJV) Then He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these."

(Ezekiel 8:16 NKJV) So He brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, were about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.

(Ezekiel 8:17 NKJV) And He said to me, "Have you seen this, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose.

(Ezekiel 8:18 NKJV) "Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

Divorce

(Matthew 5:31 NKJV) "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

(Matthew 5:32 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Pharisees Divided in 2 Camps – School of Rabi Shammai – Hillel / Duet 24 / Hillel - Liberal

The certificate of divorce He is speaking of is found back in Deuteronomy 24. Now on the impetation of that statement, the Pharisees were basically divided into two camps: the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel. Those who followed Shammai were very conservative, saying that on the basis of Deuteronomy 24, divorce could be granted only in the case of uncleanness, which they interpreted to be sexual immorality or adultery. The followers of Hillel were very liberal, saying uncleanness is much broader than simply adultery or immorality. If a woman, for example, put too much salt and pepper on her husband's eggs, which made him lose his temper (that would be a-salt), she had made him sin, and therefore was unclean—a legitimate reason for divorce. Or, if a man saw a woman who was more righteous or virtuous than his wife, he had the right to divorce her because she was now unclean by comparison. The followers of Shammai said a written bill of divorce must be given. The followers of Hillel said all that was required was for the husband to look at his wife and say, "I divorce you," three times.

Divorce for Frivolous Reasons / Much like Today

Consequently, not unlike today, divorce was occurring for the most frivolous reasons.

Jesus Gives 1 Reason / Pain of Unfaithfulness / Amazing not Death Penalty

Jesus gives one reason for divorce, and that is adultery. Now He isn't saying you have to divorce, but Jesus is acknowledging the pain that comes from unfaithfulness, as what is meant to be 2 people

becoming one, would be violated, and the pain that would bring the other could possibly be too much to overcome in the marriage. Again I refer you to our study on the 10 Commandments, you shall not commit adultery. But do you see something totally amazing here, Jesus doesn't command the death penalty for the cheaters. Jesus gives grace over death.

Divorce Difficult Issue / Cover that Chapter 18

Divorce is still a difficult issue in the church today, but we will wait until chapter 18 to get into all the details of divorce. But what I would like to do is take a moment to apply these passages to marriages. We studied 3 marriage killers, anger, lust, and divorce. Here is how they break down and destroy a marriage.

Outline

A Heart that that won't Let Go (Anger in the Heart)

A Heart that thinks there is Something Better (Lust)

A Heart that thinks there is Another Option (Divorce)

A Heart that that won't Let Go

1 Letter short of Danger

"Anger" is only one letter short of "danger" because danger always lurks beneath anger. You might be able to disguise it temporarily, but if anger is brewing inside you, it will lead to danger, for murder begins in the heart.

Harbor Anger – Fool / Won't Let Go / Becomes Complicated / 3yrs ago / Fix before Prison

When a person or persons in the marriage harbor anger and resentment towards their spouse, they are in danger of imprisonment. That fool husband of mine, that mean wife of mine, and the anger begins to warm, boil, then let loose. We are all fallen, sinful people, and we will offend and hurt others, and the great danger comes in when one or both people will not let it go. You are a fool, you have done this, and I am harboring this against you, and they won't let it go. Simple things become complicated things real quick. A simple statement that wasn't thought through, or action, has come out and the next thing you know it becomes a 3 day fight, and you are no longer even fighting about that particular issue, you are now fighting over things that took place 5 years ago. Jesus says to fix it while the fixing is possible, fix it before it becomes complicated and confused. Humble yourself, and seek reconciliation before you become imprisoned, because it is much harder to pay off a debt from prison. Fix it now, while you can.

9 Points for Happy Marriage

Jesus has given us all 9 beautiful points for a happy marriage, we just need to apply them daily:

- (Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- (Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.
- (Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.
- (Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.
- (Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.
- (Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.
- (Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.
- (Matthew 5:10 NKJV) Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- (Matthew 5:11-12 NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

A Heart that thinks there is Something Better

Fantasy never Live Up / Spouse Diminished / Takes us Back to Topic 1

Jesus spoke about lust. Lust is thinking there is something better than what you already have. Lust is a marriage killer, no spouse will ever live up to a fantasy, and a warning that reality will never live up to fantasy. It will never be what you think it will be. When people start cruising all kinds of places in their minds, their spouse is diminished by comparison, and then un-satisfaction arises, and what is amazing, it spills back over into our topic, little petty fights start. The fight isn't about anything the person really has done, but what they aren't, and it is a reason for the unsatisfied person to vent their frustration.

Cut it Off

Cut it off, whatever it is. If it is thoughts or flirtation at work or the gym, the television, the internet, the magazines, the romance books, cut it off, pluck it out of your life. Do not deal gingerly with it, get violent, get mean and nasty with it. If you have to offend someone over it then do it, tell them I can't walk to lunch with you, I can't hang out and talk with you, whatever it is, deal with it violently.

A Heart that thinks there is Another Option

No Options / No Ask for Forgiveness Later / Come to My Altar / No World's Frivolous Reason

Lastly, and a great marriage killer is when a person thinks there is another option. I'll just divorce them and ask for forgiveness later. Jesus is making it clear, don't come to my altar if you have an unresolved problem with a brother. Don't think because the world gets divorced for frivolous reasons that my church can too. One reason, adultery, and even then if you can reconcile then do it.

Marriage must Consider no other Option / Cortez

A marriage must be lived as if there is no options but to fix it, to fight for it, there is no ships leaving port. When Cortez came to conquer the new world, he brought his soldier to shore, had them turn to look back at the boats they came in, then gave the signal to the archer who then shot a flaming arrow into the sides of the ships, and made his men watch them burn and sink. He said there is no retreat, there is no going back, and he point into the jungle and said the battle is before you, there is no where else to go but in.

No other Options

Christian you must approach your marriage as there is no other option but to fight for it. You must burn the thought of any escape route, you must fix it now before it gets complicated and confused. Your marriage has only one direction, and that is forward together, until death do you part.

Words of Jesus

These things are not from the school of Shammai or Hallel, the school of the world, they are from the one who said, you have heard it said, but I say to you.....

Therefore you Shall be Perfect (Matthew 5:33-48)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Begin Sermon on Mount / Latin – Happy / Our Constitution

We are in our study on the Sermon on the Mount, the greatest sermon ever taught. We have looked at the "Beatitudes" which gets its name from literally bea-tus in Latin, means "happy," and every one of the nine beatitudes begins with the word "blessed" or "happy." Our United States Constitution guarantees the pursuit of happiness, but Jesus' constitution points out the pathway to happiness as He delineates the attitudes that lead to happiness in the beatitudes. Lets pick up where we left off last week in verse 33 of chapter 5.

Oaths

(Matthew 5:33 NKJV) "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'

(Matthew 5:34 NKJV) "But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;

(Matthew 5:35 NKJV) "nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

(Matthew 5:36 NKJV) "Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.

(Matthew 5:37 NKJV) "But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Anytime Someone Swears to God

Any time someone says to me I swear to God, it personally makes me think their word is not sure. You see when a person is a person of their word, they don't feel a need to be convincing, they are sure of their word and it is reflective in their confidence. But when someone says "I swear to God" (swearing by heaven), or "on my mothers grave" (swearing by earth), or the Holy Family Church of Pasadena (swearing by Jerusalem), or "I promise I am going to do this or give that – or my name isn't Sam Jones" (swearing by your head), I say to myself they must have a history of not letting their yes be yes, and feel the need to convince me that they will do what they are saying. Next time you watch the show "Cops", take notice of how many times the guy with the crack cocaine just found in his backpack, or glove compartment says I have no idea whose that is, I swear to God officer.

Church Pledges

By the way, may I point out churches or organizations that seek pledges or written commitments from people are outside the scriptures. We are sending out these pledge cards to you they say, and we want you to pledge a certain amount you'll give every month, and then we will send you a pledge reminder every month with an envelope so you can send it in, to send the pledge you promised. That's not a reminder, that's a bill. I remember when I went to a church when I was young in the Lord and they spent

the whole service giving the sells pitch, then you had to fill out the card at the end of the service and turn it in, don't take it home, make your pledge today, and then we will pass the basket so everyone can watch to see if you did not put something in. Then every month they would send me a bill, excuse me, a pledge reminder, and I would write the check out complaining all the way. So much for giving with a joyful heart. The church out of anyone should just say, let your yes be yes. I hate what money has done to the church today, I really do, it grieves me. Where God guides He provides. If the money isn't there, then maybe it time to consider doing something else.

Is from the Evil One / Jesus in the Garden / Statements – not Conversations

Verse 37, whatever is more than these is from the evil one. – It is from the evil one. Jesus will live this verse as Satan will try to get Him to change His yes there in the garden but Jesus knew there was no other by which man might be saved except by letting His yes be yes. Jesus said unless the Son of Man be lifted up just as the serpent in the wilderness was, there would be no healing for man. Jesus didn't making conversation, He made statements. When we talk, our words should be statements, declarations, not mere conversations:

(Luke 9:22 NIV) And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

*(John 3:14 NIV) Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,
(John 3:15 NIV) that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.*

(Matthew 26:39 NKJV) He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will."

Retaliation

(Matthew 5:38 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

(Matthew 5:39 NKJV) "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

(Matthew 5:40 NKJV) "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

(Matthew 5:41 NKJV) "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.

(Matthew 5:42 NKJV) "Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Leaders taught Obligation

(Matthew 5:38 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' - The religious leaders would teach that it was an obligation to strike back. They taught that vengeance was an obligation, for the flesh you see, loves to get even. Again I refer you back to the study in the 10 Commandments, the 6th Command, you shall not murder, and the study we had called "Murder in the Heart".

Taken out of Context / Exodus – Leviticus – Deuteronomy

They taught this out of context, the reference was from Exodus 21 and the context was of a man hurting a woman who was pregnant with child. The Lord imposed that whatever harm came to the child, the same harm will come upon that man. God is clearly establishing the sacredness of life, even the unborn. That passage of Scripture destroys every pro-choice argument, if you fear God. The other areas that it was used in the OT was in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and the context was that the severity of punishment for a crime never exceeded the crime; for once it did then it was no longer justice but revenge, and revenge is not the heart of God, for God is a just and fair God.

(Exodus 21:22 NKJV) "If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.

(Exodus 21:23 NKJV) "But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life,

(Exodus 21:24 NKJV) "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

(Exodus 21:25 NKJV) "burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

(Leviticus 24:19 NKJV) 'If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him;

(Leviticus 24:20 NKJV) 'fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.

(Deuteronomy 19:20 NKJV) "And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.

(Deuteronomy 19:21 NKJV) "Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Lead to error in Application / Protection to Violence / Hardest thing to Correct – Errant teaching

So the religious leaders missed the context of those Scriptures, and that error then led to the wrong application being taught to the people. Rather than taking a passage that was to bring protection, it became a passage that was used to promote more hatred and violence. One of the hardest things for us to do as Christians is to correct errant teaching isn't it. The cults, the liberal churches, the prosperity teachers on televisions, they are leaving a trail of destroyed lives, wrecked lives, and worse false converts. You speak with them and they have enough scriptures or esteemed teachers, that they think they have it right. And you sit there having to try to tear down board by board, just trying to get to the foundation, and then the battle of destroying that foundation to lay the true and solid foundation of the Word. I loved ministry in California because I met so many people who had zero religious background, and I had a clean slate to start with. But how hard this area can be because people are so entrenched in their religion and dogmas, and you are tearing board by board just to get to their foundation. All that we can do is to continue to study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and then sharing that word with whomever will listen. Verse by verse teaching and studying, how powerful it is. Verse by verse is God's way, He speaks of it in Isaiah of line upon line, precept upon precept, and we will steer clear of these errant teachers and teachings. .

(2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

(Isaiah 28:7 NKJV) But they also have erred through wine, And through intoxicating drink are out of the way; The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink, They are swallowed up by wine, They are out of the way through intoxicating drink; They err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

(Isaiah 28:8 NKJV) For all tables are full of vomit and filth; No place is clean.

(Isaiah 28:9 NKJV) "Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?

(Isaiah 28:10 NKJV) For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."

Jesus did – Isaiah 50 / Jesus lived what Spoke / Good word to Parents

(Matthew 5:39 NKJV) "But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. - That is exactly what Jesus did, Isaiah 50:6, they plucked His beard out. Jesus did not speak or teach anything that He wouldn't live up to. Good word for us parents.

(Isaiah 50:6 NKJV) I gave My back to those who struck Me, And My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.

Jesus gave Up His Cloak

(Matthew 5:40 NKJV) "If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. - Jesus gave up His cloak.

(Matthew 27:35 NKJV) Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: "They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."

Under Roman Law / DUI Checks

(Matthew 5:41 NKJV) "And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. - Under Roman law if a soldier was carrying something (like his backpack, tools, etc) he could tap a person on the shoulder and make them carry it up to one mile. Jesus is saying carry it two miles because you may blow their mind and they get saved in the process. I love going through DUI checks because I know I am going to pass. If you have ever been through one, by law they can't make you blow a breathalyzer unless you give them probable cause. So they first engage you in conversation to see if you reeking alcohol, bloodshot eyes, nervous, lying and what not. Well I use the opportunity to thank them for making the roads safe to travel, and then just come out and ask them who takes care of you, dealing with such stress, hazards, late nights, the strain upon their marriages. Here's a bible (Gospel of John), and a tract, the phone number to the church, or here is my phone number if you ever want to talk about the things of the Lord. This is what Jesus is saying, use the opportunity.

Go Out of your Way / More Opportunity in 2nd Mile / Beyond Requirement – into Relationship

Jesus is saying; go out of your way. You will always get more witnessing opportunities in the second mile than you will in the first. Go beyond the requirements into the realm of relationship. First mile you are just doing it because you have to; the second mile proves you are doing it because you care about them.

- You eat dinner because you are hungry; you do the dishes because you love me and want me to have a break.
- I work with you that is why I say hi, but swing by and ask how are things, and now it is beyond work into a relationship.
- At the 7/11, thanks for ringing me up, how is your day going?
- Can I help you load that piece of plywood in your car at the Home Depot.
- I took vacation to come here on this mission trip (how many people in the mission field think we are paid to go – then when we tell them its our money and our vacation, everything changes).
- Neighbor I heard your not doing well, don't worry about the snow on your sidewalk, or the grass on your lawn.

Beyond Requirement – into Relationship

You have gone beyond the requirements and into the relationship.

Speaking to Youth Today / Culture of no Service – Just Requirements

Let me speak to the youth that are in here today, Jesus addresses this sermon to His disciples, which simply means followers. These things apply to more than your parents or adults. There is a culture today that promotes that kids are to be kids until they move out of the house, a culture that they are to be served because they are kids (which is funny because the kid says I'm not a kid, don't treat me like a kid, except when you want me to do something). There is a culture today that kids aren't expected to serve until they are out of the house. They have their requirements, homework, chores, and what not, but they are only asked to go to the requirements.

Concerts – Bush Gardens are Great / But why so Many Depressed

You know what. I think Christian concerts are great, I think trips to Bush Gardens are great, but I see a lot of youth who are depressed, angry, empty, always unsatisfied, always living for tomorrow because today stinks (leaving out the word of today). Youth I will tell you the reason that is, is because you are not living second-mile lives. Your life is all about serving yourself, where is the next thing to make me happy, what are we going to do for me today, but as you know it doesn't satisfy. Kids test me on this.....I challenge you to go find something to do serving others that has nothing in it for you, and you'll find it to blow you away with great joy ----- because that is how God designed you, and the things the world elevates and esteems bring emptiness, if I am wrong then tell me why so many kids are empty and depressed, constantly searching for more.

Parents – Where are you At? / Find them Place to Serve

Parents where are you at in this? Parents find your children places to serve others, and not just in your house. Find them places outside of the house where they get absolutely nothing in return, and it is no where near confused with being a requirement.

Take Past Requirement – Into 2nd Mile Living / Concerts & Soup Kitchens / Don't Neglect 2nd Mile

Take them past the requirements in the home, and take them into second-mile living. This week we went to the movies, next week we are going to the soup kitchen. This month we went to the concert, next month we are going to help paint the woman's shelter. Next month we will teach Sunday school together as a family. Before we watch our movie we are going to have a time of prayer for our unsaved loved ones. Take them to the movies, absolutely, take them to the concert, but don't neglect taking them on that second mile journey.

2nd Mile Living will Change Life / This is Constitution of Happiness / J-O-Y

Parent's second-mile living will change your kid's lives; youth second-mile living will bring you to the place you are longing for. This sermon is the constitution of how to be happy; these words are words to bring people into the place of joy and happiness. Second mile living is a key to happiness. J-O-Y: Jesus first, others second, yourself last and you will have joy. Test me, or better said, test Jesus on His words, go find somewhere, someone to serve.

Love Your Neighbor

(Matthew 5:43 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

(Matthew 5:44 NKJV) "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

(Matthew 5:45 NKJV) "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.

(Matthew 5:46 NKJV) "For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?

(Matthew 5:47 NKJV) "And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?"

Bless Those - Do in Traffic

Verse 44 - Bless those that curse you - that is exactly what I do in traffic when some one cuts me off.

Pray for Those / Get them – Make them Pay

Verse 44 - pray for those that persecute you- there again is what I do in traffic, I pray Lord get them, make them pay.

I Need Help / Ok in Yes be Yes – 2nd Mile Living / Need Major Heart Surgery

I need help in this area. I think I am doing fairly well in the letting my yes be yes. I'm not doing too bad in the second mile living, but get me here and I can see the need for major heart surgery. How about you?

Need to be Infused by Living God / Separate us from World

Jesus will say Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Jesus will exemplify all these things. These things are all supernatural, therefore I need supernatural power from above, I need to be infused with the living God, the living God having free reign in my mortal body, I needed to be empowered and enabled by His Spirit. It are these attributes that separate us from the world, that people say they are clearly different from us.

(Luke 23:34 NKJV) Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

Not just Displayed to Unbelievers / Give a break to Christians

These things are not to just be put on for the unbelievers, but brought in among the family. How shocked we are when we find out how human Christians are. I met a young man who has moved to this country from Europe, he said he had met Christian missionaries doing short-term missions and they were so nice he wanted to be around them all the time so he moved to America. I told him that is what missionaries do, for they only have to do it for a week. I said don't be disappointed when you find out how human they are, when you see them after living back in the daily life (and that is the problem about life, it is so daily isn't it?). We need to cut our brothers and sisters some grace because life is so daily, and the daily can get to us, and let things out that we rather keep in.

Be Perfect

(Matthew 5:48 NKJV) "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

What a Preacher / Jab-Jab-Hook-Uppercut - TKO

Oh Jesus, what a masterful preacher. Notice how He sets the hearer up? Be a person of your word He says – jab to the head. Don't have revenge in your heart – jab, body shot. Love your enemy, not just your friends, ah hook. Jab, jab, hook, and now the upper-cut, "be ye perfect just as your Father in heaven is". TKO, who could possibly stand in their own righteousness after this flurry of punches.

Standard of Perfection

Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven – Jesus again brings it back to the standard is perfection:

(James 2:10 NKJV) For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

*(Matthew 5:19 NKJV) "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
(Matthew 5:20 NKJV) "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Notice the Grace – The White Towel

But, notice the grace given here. Jesus gives a TKO flurry, but He has the white towel to throw in the ring so that man can still survive and get out of the ring alive. He says as your Father in Heaven!

(John 1:17 NKJV) For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

What? I have a Father in Heaven / Moses – Elijah – Daniel and David / Nationally not Personally

Be perfect (ahh), as your Father in heaven (what they would say), I have a Father in heaven? Jesus is blowing their minds here. Moses never spoke of the Father in heaven when he delivered the law. Elijah, Jeremiah, David, nor Daniel never spoke of the Father in such an intimate way. When they spoke of the Father it was always in the National sense, they didn't speak of Him in the personal intimate way. They called Him God, not Father. The OT people never experienced the privilege and joy that we do, that we get to anytime we want to boldly come before the throne of grace, that we may call Him Father, that we may say Abba Father. Jesus is just now introducing this to the people, as 3 times in chapter 5 in this Sermon He refers to the Father; 12 times in chapter 6, and two more times in chapter 7; seventeen times in one sermon, Jesus refers to the intimate, personal, Father in heaven. Jesus is bringing into this Kingdom picture, a Father and son/daughter relationship. Jesus is blowing their minds.

No One can Stand – Father sends the Best

No one is able to stand to this standard of perfection, but we have a loving Father in heaven who will send the very best so that we might have a way out of this predicament that we can't fix by ourselves:

(John 3:16 NKJV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(John 3:17 NKJV) "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

(John 3:18 NKJV) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Position - Process

This Sermon on the Mount is about position and process. Jesus providing the way to have the position of righteousness (right standing/perfection) before the Heavenly Father. And, Jesus speaking of the process, of how we whom have been giving such a position should live. And He will even help with the process by sending His Holy Spirit to take up residence within us and help live according to His words.

Be Perfect – Sends the Best

Be ye perfect (ahh), as your Father in heaven; what? I have a Father in Heaven would send His very best to save me from my guilt before Him, the Holy God?

Round Hill Park

Sent His very Best! – I remember when I was a youth growing up in Pennsylvania, and we would go to Round Hill Park, the regional farm. We lived out in the rural (more country area – 40 miles from the city of Pittsburgh) and so was the park. We would go over there and ride our bikes down the hills, stop at the duck pond, walk up and play in the creek, go see the animals in the barn, make forts out of the hay bales and have battles. Now out there you didn't have public water and sewer, so the bathrooms left lots to be desired. For most people it was the last resort, if I can't make it home I'll have to use it, and it was under the knowledge that a person could hold their breath for the 90 seconds. The bathrooms were nothing but a small hole, over a big hole in the ground about 10 feet by 10 feet. It was gross, it had crawling we never studied in science or biology, there was movement in the waters that I have no idea what it could have been, bacteria, germs, and a stench that is still fresh in my memory, it was gross, but as a 12 year old we were always intrigued with gross things. We would say, would you jump in there for 5 dollars, how about 10, 50, 500, and then the unimaginable number to a 12 year, would you jump in for 1 million dollars? What if your brother fell in, would you jump in to save him (we never said sisters because they didn't have a chance. 1 million dollars, what if your brother fell in?

Jesus the Holy God / Dives In

Jesus Christ, the Holy and Pure God, for the joy that was set before Him, dove head first into the cesspool of sin, the scum of the earth, covered Himself with it from head to toe, took it all upon Himself, and said I count it all joy, so that I may say Father, behold – perfection!

(Hebrews 12:1 NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Says be Perfect – Then Provides Way

Jesus would just say, “be ye perfect”, Jesus would provide the way that man could be perfect.

Creator covers Self with Scum / 2nd mile Living – Cheek - Yes

The Creator of the Universe, the Holy and Pure God, covered Himself with the filth of the earth, all the sins of man, so that we may be perfect before our Father in Heaven. Now that is second-mile living, now that is turning the other cheek, now that is letting your yes, be yes. That is your God!

How far is that 2nd Mile

Christian, for us, is that second-mile really that far?

Matthew 6

Teach us to Pray (6:1-13)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Continuation of Kingdom Constitution / Chp 5 – Inner Attitudes / Chp 6 Outward Activities

Jesus continues His Sermon on the Mount, the constitution of His kingdom. In chapter 5, He addressed inner attitudes, now here in chapter 6, He will discuss outward activities.

Charitable Deeds

(Matthew 6:1 NKJV) "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

(Matthew 6:2 NKJV) "Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Hypocrite used 15 Times

Matthew will use the word hypocrite 15 times in his gospel. That is twice as much as the whole New Testament uses the word, which is a total of 21 times. He will use it in reference to giving, praying, and fasting.

5273. hupokrites, hoop-ok-ree-tace'; from G5271; an actor under an assumed character (stage-player), i.e. (fig.) a dissembler ("hypocrite")--hypocrite.

Hypocrite – area of Giving, Praying, Fasting / Greek Theatre – Mask Wearers

The hypocrite - In the area of praying, giving, and fasting, Jesus will talk about the *hupokrites*, or hypocrites. Hupokrites is a Greek word that means "mask-wearer." Hupokrites were actors in the Greek theater who wore masks, very exaggerated in form, with huge smiles and frowns so that even people in the back row could see what kind of emotion was being portrayed. We get the word two-faced from this same idea. A mask covered the real person. A hypocrite was not who a person really was, just who they were trying to portray.

Chambers of Secrets – then Sound Trumpet / Pharisees stood on Corner

Jesus said, "Don't be hypocritical in your giving." How did the hypocrites give? Originally, there was an area at the side of the temple courtyard called the Chamber of the Secret. People would go there and drop gifts designated for the poor in a large chest called the Trumpet. Later, the poor would come to the Chamber of the Secret and receive gifts from the Trumpet. It was all done very discreetly, with humility and honesty. But as the years went on, the Pharisees decided it wasn't practical to go all the way to the temple to give alms to the poor. So instead, they tied a small brass or silver trumpet to their belts. Then, whenever they wanted to give to the poor, they stood on a street corner and blew their trumpets. Upon hearing this, the poor people in the area would gather around the generous Pharisee as he distributed his alms with great flourish, while everyone around said, "My! Look how righteous he is!" Jesus called the

Pharisees hypocrites because they gave not out of concern for the poor, but that they might be seen by men. Jesus says I see behind the mask, I know the motive of your heart.

Salvation not a Reward / Store Treasures in Heaven

Speaking of these rewards, know that salvation is not a reward; it is a free gift, nothing to do with our performance. So there are rewards in heaven, given by God, and we should seek those rewards. Store your treasures up in heaven we are told.

(Matthew 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

(Matthew 6:20 NKJV) "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

(Matthew 6:21 NKJV) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

(Matthew 6:3 NKJV) "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

(Matthew 6:4 NKJV) "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

Done in Secret – Love not passing Basket / People Ask How do I Give – Shhh

Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing; let it be done in secret. That's why we love not taking an offering every week passing the basket; I think that takes away the joy of the secrecy. You come in a drop it in the box in the back, and we pay our rent, all our bills, give to missionaries, and orphanages in foreign lands. How many people come to me and say, I've been coming here for a month, how do I give, and I say, shhh it's a secret, there is a little box in the back of the sanctuary. Of course it blows the skeptics away when I tell them we don't pass the basket, they are blown away, because they love to say, see it always about the money.

Give because Love Jesus / God does more with Willing than with Pressured

You give because you love Jesus, simple and there is nothing more to it, and don't let it become anything more than that. Now those churches or groups that put pressure on people to give, they miss the whole point that God is making here, you'll never out give a willing heart, and secondly God will do more with a love offering of 50 dollars than a pressured offering of 100 dollars. God will find the ministry sales, get them a discount on their rent, or keep things running that should have broken years ago. And as I had said previously, where God guides He provides, so if the finances aren't there, that is a good indicator that God isn't in it, so don't try to keep some ministry alive on artificial life support, pressuring people to give, just go find something else to do where God is providing.

Prayer

(Matthew 6:5 NKJV) "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

3-6-9 Prayer at Temple / Couldn't Wait – Pray on Street Corner

The second time Jesus speaks of being a hypocrite, this time in the area of prayer. The Pharisees designated the third hour, the sixth hour, and the ninth hour as times of prayer. In other words, at nine o'clock in the morning, at noon, and at three o'clock in the afternoon, they would faithfully gather in the synagogues or in the temple to offer their prayers. But the Pharisees were not doing it to seek the Lord, but rather to be seen by men. On their way to prayer meetings, the Pharisees would stop on the corner of the street and begin to offer long and verbose prayers. In so doing, they were saying, "We are so eager to pray, we can't wait to get to the synagogue/temple." And people would say, "Oh, wow! Look how righteous they are!" We still do that in our own subtle ways, don't we? "Yes, as I was praying this morning at three o'clock, the Lord brought you to my heart." And we subtly let people know we are in a place of continual prayer. But really, I think the better application is the person who doesn't pray all month but then comes to the prayer meeting and prays for 30 minutes using flowery words, and the "spiritual" voice. Oh Great Father in Heaven, how great thou art, ohh Lord your beautiful, I can't control my tears when I think of you.....oh brother, Jesus said, "Don't do that. That's hypocrisy." Bible college was the worse I must say, people we preach, I mean pray, 5 point sermons over the meal. I'd give them 3 minutes, and after

that I'd start eating. They would have theological round table discussions about me to whether I was really saved or not.

(Matthew 6:6 NKJV) "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

Find a Closet / Put Do Not Disturb

Find yourself a closet, wherever that may be, a place where you can get alone with Him. If need be put a sign on the door, "Do not Disturb", so that you may have that time alone with the Lord.

Prayer natural Outcome / Me and Wife / Why should talking to Lord be Any Different

Prayer is the natural outcome of a personal relationship, and when that relationship is with the Creator of the Universe, your rewards, your blessings, will be abundant. Me and my wife love to talk with each other, we look forward to it, we get frustrated when we can't talk because of being separated because of work, travel, or ministry; talking is a natural outcome of our love and relationship, why should talking to the Lord be any different?

(Matthew 6:7 NKJV) "And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words."

(Matthew 6:8 NKJV) "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him."

Don't make Prayer Meaningless / Jesus Repeated – Matthew 26:44

As we pray (and sing) are we, like the Pharisees, guilty of meaningless repetition? Yes, if we're saying it without thinking. But the Scriptures do not forbid meaningful repetition. Jesus is not saying repetition in and of itself is wrong. How do I know? In Matthew 26:44, when Jesus made the same request of His Father three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, Matthew writes, "And He spoke the same words yet again":

(Matthew 26:44 NKJV) So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Matthew 7:7

In Matthew 7:7 it says to ask, seek, and knock. The verb tense is a continual tense, meaning to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking. Jesus is here in Matthew 6 is referring to senseless vain repetitions, where your heart and mind are not engaged, but going through a routine:

(Matthew 7:7 NKJV) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

(Matthew 7:8 NKJV) "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened."

Key is to Be Fully Engaged / Not Conversation with Self / Leave Closet in Confidence

The key is that when we pray we are fully engaged in our hearts and mind. We aren't having conversation with ourselves, we are not just reading a prayer list, but we are fully engaged, we are precise, and we leave the closet confident that we have been heard, and that the day is established to have continual conversation with the Lord throughout the day.

DISCIPLES Never Asked – Preach – Prophecy – Demons / But how to Pray / They Watched

The power of meaningful prayer; as far as we know, the disciples never asked Jesus to teach them to preach, to prophecy, or to cast out demons. There is no record of them asking how to worship or witness or how to build a ministry or lead their families. The one thing the disciples asked of Jesus directly was, "Lord, teach us to pray." Why? I believe it is because, after watching Jesus for several years, the disciples were convinced prayer was the secret of His ministry and the foundation of all He did.

Luke 11 – Two Years Later / Not Weightier – But Same / Prayer – Perfect Example - Model

In Luke 11, Jesus gave His disciples the same prayer, virtually word for word, that He had given two years earlier, recorded here in Matthew. He didn't say, "The prayer I taught two years ago was for the multitudes, but for you disciples, here's something heavier." Or, "The prayer I taught in the Sermon on the Mount was at the beginning of My ministry, but now two years later, here is something more meaty." It

was as though He was saying, "Don't you recall what I taught you two years ago?" as He gave this prayer verbatim to them once again. The Lord's Prayer is a wonderful model and a perfect example.

(Luke 11:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

(Luke 11:2 NKJV) So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

(Luke 11:3 NKJV) Give us day by day our daily bread.

(Luke 11:4 NKJV) And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one."

Completeness / Covers Our Needs – God's Worthiness

Two characteristics of this prayer strike me. I am amazed first by its completeness. It is wonderful because it covers all of our needs and all of God's worthiness.

Outline for the Lord's Prayer:

- God's Place (v.9)
- God's Plan (v.10)
- God's Provision (v.11)
- God's Peace (v.12)
- God's Protection (v.13a)
- God's Power (v.13b)

Conciseness – 65 Words / Concise – Not Wordy / Freeing – Liberating / Strength in Length / Surgeon / 15 Minutes – What is the Use / Prayer Freedom – turned into Bondage & Defeat

Secondly, I am impressed with its conciseness – only 65 words (35 in the original Greek). Jesus encourages us to be short and concise in our prayers, not to be wordy and keep repeating ourselves. To me, this is fantastically liberating because I fall prey to thinking, the longer I pray, the more impressed God will be. We have been deceived into thinking that the strength of prayer is in direct correlation to the length of prayer. It's not the length of the surgery that makes the operation successful, it is the precise of the surgeon's scalpel that does. We say oh I only have 15 minutes to pray, what is the use, so we don't pray. The Lord's Prayer is only sixty-five words, now that is precision! The prayer is a place of freedom and refreshment, yet how we have turned prayer into a place of bondage and discouragement, as we think what the use is, I only have 10 minutes, and He isn't going to bless (reward) this short time.

Follow this – Apply – New Power / Praying this as of Late – New Joy in Prayer

Follow me through on this study Christian, and apply it to your life, and I believe you will find new power and joy in your prayer life that maybe you have been lacking recently, or have never experienced. I have found myself praying the Lord's Prayer as of late, and I have found myself experiencing a great joy in prayer when I do.

Satan's Deceit – Religious System

Maybe it is important for me to add this here, for you may suffer the same deceit I had. You see I was raised in a religious system, and that is all that it was, rituals and dogmas that were powerless. Part of the ritual was to recite this prayer over and over, to the point it was not only meaningless, but it was dreadful, it became work, it was actually used as punishment for sin. After I was born-again, infused with the living God residing in me, I still had a great aversion to this prayer because I wanted to distance myself from the dogma, the thing that sucked the life right out of me....., good job by the enemy. I allowed that to keep me from the power of this prayer, to keep me from the very prayer that Jesus would teach His disciples – twice. If Jesus would teach it twice, and the same way each time, how much power is available to us, in it? So don't let the same happen to you.

The Disciple's Prayer

(Matthew 6:9 NKJV) "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

(Matthew 6:11 NKJV) Give us this day our daily bread.

(Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

(Matthew 6:13 NKJV) And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Give Us – Prayer of Intercession

Give Us—there is constant intercession for others as we pray this prayer. The Lord brings His body through this prayer that we are all in this together, so let's intercede for others as we intercede for ourselves.

God's Place

(Matthew 6:9 NKJV) "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Address is Everything / Settle Mind – Who we Coming Before / Abba Father – Personal God

Address is everything when you are sending a letter, and Jesus establishes that we start with settling our minds of who we are coming before to talk with. We are talking to our Father, our Abba Father, not some distant cosmic far off being, but the personal and intimate Father that gives the very best to His children, not withholding anything from them, even His only Begotten Son.

He is Holy / Whole World Tainted by Sin – His counsel is Perfect

While He is the intimate God, He still is the Holy God. He is Holy, meaning to be set apart, perfect and pure. Everyone and everything around us, everything that touches us, has been tainted and eroded by sin, but not Him, He is Holy, perfect and pure. I can come to Him and know His wisdom and counsel to me will be perfect, untainted and right on for what I need. You will never find that kind of counsel in this fallen world.

Holiness – Place of Reverence / Thy Will – Not my Will

His Holiness also leads me to a place of reverence that He is God, and I am not. He is not my responder, but I respond to Him, I will look for His will to be done, not my will. Lose sight of His Holiness, and we diminish His power.

God's Plan

(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

2 kinds of People – In Harmony – Not in Harmony / The Wise Man or Woman says Your Will / Pure

There are only two kinds of people: those who are in harmony with God's purpose, saying, "Thy will be done," and those who live for themselves, saying, "My will be done." The wise man or woman says Your will be done, because you are the Holy God, untainted by this world, perfect and pure in all your ways.

Minds set – Live Life Backwards / Loose Touch on World / If Not – Life of Contention

As we pray in this manner, God sets our minds on a key to living, living life backwards. His Kingdom is coming, His return is near, and those that keep that in the forefront of their minds will find they will have a loose touch in this world, they will find they take a lot of things a whole lot less serious. Those who live for the kingdom now continual struggle and live in tension and contentions because they have to have their way now.

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(Matthew 6:34 NKJV) "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Live Backwards – Live Pure Life / Save Self from Foolish Lust

When we live a life of the His kingdom coming, then it will be as John said, we who have this hope will purify themselves, and that pure life will remove so many heartaches that many brings upon themselves; *(1 John 3:1 NKJV) Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*

(1 John 3:2 NKJV) Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

(1 John 3:3 NKJV) And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

When Pray Your Will – have Peace / His ways Perfect – Has Perfect plan for Us

When we pray for His will to be done on earth, we can have peace in that because we know His ways are perfect, and we know His plans for our life here on earth is nothing but His very best;

(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Jeremiah 29:12 NKJV) Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

(Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV) And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

(Philippians 1:6 NKJV) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

God's Provisions

(Matthew 6:11 NKJV) Give us this day our daily bread.

Us – Intercession / Not just Food – All Daily Needs / Marriage – Kids – Job – Finances – Ministry

Our daily bread, our daily needs, and not just ours but those of our brothers and sisters. The daily bread is not just provide our nourishment, but Lord sustain all of our other daily needs. Lord provide, sustain all that my marriage needs, all that my children need, all that my ministry needs, my job and finances. You singles, that God would meet you in your daily singleness.

Give Today – Not Monthly / Why? – Prayer is our Greatest Need / He is our Daily Bread of Life

Give us this day—not this month, not this year. Why does the Lord want us to pray day by day? Why can't we just sort of blanket our requests by saying, "Lord, give us this month our monthly needs," or "Give us this year our yearly bread"? The Lord wants us to pray for our daily needs because prayer in and of itself is our greatest need. If the Father gave things to us on a monthly basis, we wouldn't pray very frequently. The Lord wants you and me to come before Him every day. Is it because He's on an ego trip? No. Is it because He has need of us? No. Because we have need of Him. He is our Bread, for He is the bread of Life:

(John 6:35 NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

God's Peace

(Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Need to Both Give and Receive / Position & Process / Christian Bar of Soap

Forgiveness, we need to both give and receive forgiveness. As we have spoken in past studies, there is righteousness the position, and righteousness the process. We are righteous before Him, because of our imputed positions of sons and daughters because of Christ finished work on Calvary's cross. But then there is righteousness the process and He continues to form and fashion us into His image. So as long as we are in these corruptible bodies, we will sin, and we must come before Him and be cleansed and forgiven so that we may have that open fellowship with Him. He is the Holy God, and we must approach Him as such. Sin causes separation in our relationships here on earth with our kids, spouse, and friends and neighbors; it is no different in our relationship with the Lord, the sin must be dealt with, resolved, so we can put it behind us and move on in our relationship. We must be washed with the Christian's bar of soap continually:

(1 John 1:9 NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Un-forgiveness robs us of Peace / Root of Bitterness will Choke You

As we have spoken also in chapter 5 of this Sermon on the Mount, that unforgiveness will rob us of our peace, and will put us in a place of bondage. Jesus says to forgive as you have been forgiven, and the peace you have with Me, you will have amongst men. Don't let the root of bitterness choke you out. So important is this point, so common is this point, that Jesus includes it in His 65 words:

(Hebrews 12:14 NKJV) Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

(Hebrews 12:15 NKJV) looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

God's Protection

(Matthew 6:13 NKJV) And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.

James 1

James 1 says that God will not lead us into temptation:

(James 1:13 NKJV) Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.

(James 1:14 NKJV) But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.

(James 1:15 NKJV) Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

What Saying – Don't Give more than Handle / How we put Ourselves in Bad Situations

What this is saying is that we are to ask God to help us not to enter into more than we can handle. Lord, I think this sounds good, I really want to do it, but Lord if this is not of you, is this is not going to be good for me, speak to me, or close the door to keep me from entering into a place that may take me place that are not good for me. How we can enter into something, and then find it is taking us away from the Lord, has brought us into a place that distracts us from the Lord, or brings temptations upon us that we are not spiritually mature enough to handle. I must date that person, and then after pushing into the relationship without asking God, the person doesn't have the maturity to control themselves when the temptations comes, and Satan is waiting. I must have that job, that extra 10% would be a great financial blessing, while not seeking the Lord and entering into a job that now takes me away form the family, or so much stress I am constantly in a bad mood and constantly missing church and fellowship – and Satan is waiting. Jesus says, pray to the Lord to ask for guidance in such areas so as to not take on more than you can handle, and pray that we not allow ourselves to be in a place where Satan can have his way.

Deliver Us - Intercession

Deliver us from the evil one – again both of these are also prayers of intercession.

God's Power

(Verse 13b) For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

3 Attacks on Jesus in Wilderness

There were 3 things Satan attacked Jesus with in His wilderness temptation:

The Kingdom – I'll give you all these kingdoms if you worship me:

(Matthew 4:8 NKJV) Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

(Matthew 4:9 NKJV) And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

The Power – show your power, use your power for yourself and turn these stones into bread:

(Matthew 4:3 NKJV) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

The Glory – come on, show how special you are, let the world see how your Father won't let you be dashed by the stones when you jump of the 400 foot pinnacle:

(Matthew 4:5 NKJV) Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

(Matthew 4:6 NKJV) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

Satan's Offer Temporary – Jesus now enjoys for All Eternity / Jesus ever Wavered on Word

All 3 things Satan offered for temporary enjoyments are all things that Jesus enjoys and displays for all eternity. All 3 are His because He never wavered on the Word of God, applied to His life; and now these 3 things (all the same things Satan still offers us today), Jesus can deliver to us, and He says to remember that in our prayers, every time we pray, that He has the kingdom, the power, and the glory, and we are not to settle for anything less, the trinkets and bobbets that Satan will offer us.

Jesus Acquired these 3 in the Garden / Victory won in Garden – Jesus Steeled in Garden

Jesus acquired these 3, the kingdom, the power, and the glory, through prayer, there in the garden as He would not back out, but found strength in the garden to go to the cross. I believe the victory was won there in the garden as Jesus would say "not my will, but your will be done", and it was from that point in the garden Jesus was steeled, Jesus was excited and determined for the cross, and the cross was just the result of what had already been decided in the garden:

(Hebrews 12:1 NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, (Hebrews 12:2 NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Kingdom – Power – Glory / Heavenly Kingdom – Resurrection – Be like Him

The kingdom, the power, and the glory are all His, and will be ours. Jesus had yet to go to the cross, yet He still includes it in this prayer as He speaks of it prophetically, as if it had already happened (prolepsis), because it was certain that it would, as same applies to us. The 3 things men will spend a lifetime chasing, and never receiving but at best temporarily, their kingdom, their power, their glory; we all be ours. When all is done, when the earth passes away, all that we are familiar with, all that will be left is His Kingdom. His power is what we all have hope in as we know that His resurrection power will lift us out of these bodies into His kingdom (and that same resurrection power is available for us today – Ephesians 1:19). And His glory, it is through His power that will raise us into His kingdom, and it is there that we shall see His glory, and come into glory ourselves as we will be like Him:

(Ephesians 1:19 NKJV) and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

(Ephesians 1:20 NKJV) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

(Ephesians 1:21 NKJV) far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

(1 John 3:1 NKJV) Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

(1 John 3:2 NKJV) Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

(1 John 3:3 NKJV) And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

65 Powerful – Concise – Complete Words / Great Model / His Words not Return Void

65 powerful, concise, and complete words to model prayer for us. I encourage you, pray this prayer, it is a wonderful prayer. If you are like me, and have bad memories of this prayer, as it was used for punishment rather than power, than go take it back from Satan today and apply it to your life. Anytime you pray or say the words of Jesus, there is power. For His word will not return void;

(Isaiah 55:9 NKJV) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

(Isaiah 55:10 NKJV) "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,

*(Isaiah 55:11 NKJV) **So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.***

(Isaiah 55:12 NKJV) "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

This Week Found Great Joy in Praying this Prayer

This week I found a great joy in praying this prayer, word for word, and as I did I found myself entering deeper at each point, spending time with the Lord in a sweet way.

God's Place (v.9)

(Matthew 6:9 NKJV) Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name – Lord I dwell on your holiness, my Father who loves me, and cares for me. I then found myself entering into praise for my salvation and relationship with Him

God's Plan (v.10)

(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven – You coming is near Lord, thank you for setting my mind above, on the things that are eternal. Lord lead me today, let me walk in your ways, and be pleasing to you, let me be pure before you.

God's Provision (v.11)

(Matthew 6:11 NKJV) Give us this day our daily bread. – Lord you know my needs, you know that bill that came. Father meet my brother Dan as he needs that touch from you in his tragedy. Lord go before my son, my wife, and grow my baby in your wisdom, knowledge and stature.

God's Peace (v.12)

(Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors – Lord I know my tongue was sharp, please for me, and let me seek to make things right with them.

God's Protection (v.13a)

(Matthew 6:13 NKJV) And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one – Lord guard me and my family from the evil one, you know our thoughts on this matter, we give them to you and you lead us Papa, you know what is best for us.

God's Power (v.13b)

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen – You are the awesome, mighty God. Your power reigns, and it reigns for me. Then I find myself back in worship, and when I am worshipping, nothing can touch me.

Great Prayer – Word for Word – as a Model / Lord has taught – now lets Pray

It is a great prayer, whether word-for word, or as an outline and example to help us pray. Lord has taught us how to pray, now I pray we have a wonderful week in prayer. Amen.

The Eclipse of the Son

Matthew 6:14-34

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Continuation of Kingdom Constitution / Chp 5 – Inner Attitudes / Chp 6 Outward Activities

Jesus continues His Sermon on the Mount, the constitution of His kingdom. In chapter 5, He addressed inner attitudes, now here in chapter 6, He will discuss outward activities.

Things Diminish Reflection of the Son / Kingdom – Power - Glory

The outward activities we will look at in the rest of this chapter are all things that diminish our reflection of the Son (S-O-N, not S-U-N), and things that rob us from enjoying the where we ended last study, the kingdom, the power, and the glory.

(Verse 13b) For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

We are Light of World / We Just Reflect / Jesus Source of Light

Jesus has said we are the light of the world, and that we are to let our light shine before all men, so that may glory at our Father in heaven. Now we are not the actual light, we are merely reflections of the source of light, and that source is Jesus Christ. Jesus would say, He is the Light of the World:

(Matthew 5:14 NKJV) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

(Matthew 5:15 NKJV) "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

(John 8:12 NKJV) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Sun & Moon / World gets in the Way

I liken this to the sun and the moon. The sun is a burning star, and the earth and the moon are planets. The sun produces the light, the sun is the light. That full moon is not the moon producing light, but merely reflecting the light of the sun. The moon will reflect the light of the sun when it is in the direct path of the sun's rays, but when it is outside the path of the direct rays of the sun, the reflection is greatly diminished. That time is called partial or total lunar eclipse; it when the world (the earth) comes in between the moon and the sun, and when it does it eclipses the moon and the moon is darkened. Picture perfect of what happens to us as “light reflectors” of Christ when the world gets in our path, gets in between us and the Lord, our light is greatly diminished.

This Study – Things that Block the Light / This is Jeopardy

The things we will look at in the rest of this chapter are all things that eclipse the Son, all things of the world that block out our reflection of Him, and rob us from enjoying the kingdom, the power, and the glory. I picture Alex Trebek on Jeopardy saying, forgiveness, fasting, wealth, and worry; and the buzzer beeping, and the contestant says, what are things that get in the way of Christians shining for Jesus? That is correct for 1000 dollars.

Outline for Matthew 6:14-34

- Forgiveness – Failure to Ask / Failure to Give (6:14-15)
- Fasting – Failure to Do It (6:16-18)
- Wealth – Failure to Lay up Treasures in Heaven (6:19-24)
- Worry – Failure to Seek First the Kingdom of God (6:25-34)

Forgiveness – Failure to Ask / Failure to Give (6:14-15)

(Matthew 6:14 NKJV) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

(Matthew 6:15 NKJV) "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fellowship – Not Salvation

This is speaking of fellowship, not salvation. Salvation is once and forever.

Righteousness Position & Process / We are Adopted – Roman Law – Debt/Name/Inheritance

Again there is righteousness (being right before Him) the position, and righteousness (being right before Him) the process. Righteousness the position is done and finished based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross. We are adopted sons and daughters and may I remind you that under Roman law (time of this writing) an adopted son or daughter could never be disowned. Once a person was adopted they were guaranteed by law to be forgiven all debts they owed, they were given the family name for life, and they were guaranteed their portion of the family's inheritance.

(1 John 3:1 NKJV) Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

(Ephesians 1:5 NKJV) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

(Ephesians 1:6 NKJV) to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.....

(Ephesians 1:11 NKJV) In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Blood Child could be Forsaken / 1 Cor 5:21

An adopted child could not be forsaken, however a child born of blood could be forsaken. Jesus, Gods only Begotten Son, would cry out from the cross that day, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me? Jesus forsaken by the Father as He would take on your sin and my sin so that we might become the righteousness of God, sons and daughters, that righteousness (right standing before the Lord), the position would be secured for all eternity.

(Matthew 27:46 NKJV) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

(2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Righteousness the Process / This Side of Eternity – Reflect Glory – Honor Family Name

So there is righteousness the process, as God works on this side of eternity to conform us into His image. Why His image?, so that we may reflect His glory, that we may proudly live up to the family name, and that we will not bring shame upon the family name.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

In Right Process – Sin still Offends God / Forgive – to Excuse Offense / Tension in Relationship / My Marriage / Earthly Relation

In righteousness the process, sin still offends the Holy God (1 John 1:9). Forgiveness means to excuse an offensive. That offense will cause tension in the relationship until it is corrected. In our earthly relationships when a person offends us, is there not tension in the relationship until the offense is resolved. In my marriage when my wife offends me by something she said or did (not that she ever has to worry about this), there is a tension in the home until the offense is discussed and worked out, and

forgiveness is asked for, and equally as important, forgiveness is given. Righteousness the process deals with our earthly relationship with our Father and fellow man.

(1 John 1:8 NKJV) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

(1 John 1:9 NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:10 NKJV) If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Christians out of Balance / How often Quote this Passage / Quote the Others / Deep Passage

Too many Christians today are out of balance. Many only think in terms of right standing with God in terms of position, and do not continually think of right standing the process. How often do you quote this passage of scripture? Of this whole chapter, we quote the charitable giving, the Lords prayer, fasting, storing your treasures in heaven, seeking first the kingdom of God, but how we blink right through this, and miss what God is saying, and what He is saying is deep, it should shake every Christian out of casual Christianity into a roll-up your sleeves and get serious about my walk Christianity.

Forgiveness not Blanket / No Forgive – Not Forgiven / Verse 12 / First Commentary on Prayer

God is saying that forgiveness is not a given (in righteousness the process), it isn't a cover-all blanket. God says if you don't forgive others, I'm not going to forgive you, and therefore when that happens there is going to be a problem between us, tension until you do. In verse 12 (of the Lord's Prayer) we are to ask God for forgiveness, to be excused from our offense, and then we are to be ones that forgive others when they offend us. So important is forgiveness that it is the first commentary Jesus gives about the Lord's Prayer. Next He is going to give commentary on letting His will be done on earth, letting His kingdom come, about giving us our daily bread as He will give commentary on fasting, treasures in heaven, and seeking first the kingdom, but He starts with the subject of forgiveness.

(Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

Forgiveness is Heart of Gospel

Forgiveness it is what the whole Gospel is about; the Gospel is about man being forgiven for their sin that offends the Holy God.

Live it in Balance / Never Experience Joy – Kingdom/Power/Glory

Christian, kingdom living is living in light of righteousness the position, and righteousness the process. Live out of balance in that, and you will never experience the joys of verse 13, the kingdom, the power, and the glory. A person that is insecure in the promised position, adopted forever, will never enjoy the kingdom, the power, and the glory because they will always be worried if their salvation is secured. A person that never (or rarely) lives in the light of righteousness the position (but lives in unrepentant sin, and not asking for forgiveness –and refuses to forgive others) will never experience the joy of the kingdom, the power, and the glory that can be enjoyed and experience right now, right here on earth, as we can enjoy His kingdom as we are led by His word which is always for us, never against us, which always wants to lead us in what is best for us. We enjoy His power as He moves through our lives, our marriages, in our child rearing, in our ministries. And we enjoy His glory as we get to reflect His glory today, to be that Light that shines in a dark world.

Relationship in Deadlock / Once Resolved go Deeper

Because there is tension in their relationship with the Lord, because of their sin, the relationship is in a deadlock, God can't take them deeper in the things of the kingdom, the power, and the glory until this issue, the tension is resolved. Once it is resolved, then God can take the person deeper in these things. Only 2 verses, but what a two verses they are!

No Forgiveness Blocks the Son / Now look at Fasting

So failing in the giving and asking for forgiveness blocks us from the Son, and rob us from enjoying the kingdom, the power, and the glory; lets now look at fasting.

Fasting – Failure to Do It (6:16-18)

(Matthew 6:16 NKJV) "Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

**(Matthew 6:17 NKJV) "But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,
(Matthew 6:18 NKJV) "so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**

When you Fast – Not If / Most Neglected Spiritual Principle

We have already talked about the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, and the same applies to the religious people today; but we who are seeking the Lord, let's focus in on those three words Jesus says in verse 16, "when you fast". Notice He didn't say if you fast, but when you fast. Fasting is one of, if not, the most neglected spiritual principle of Believers.

Fasting – Pushes Flesh Down – Raises the Spirit Up / Resisting Flesh – Releasing the Spirit

Fasting pushes the flesh down, and raises the Spirit up. Fasting is resisting the Flesh, and releasing the Spirit.

Fasting Slows us Down from Routine / Bring Focus 1 Thing – the Lord

Why? Because fasting slows us down, breaks the routine of life, and it brings you to focus on one thing - the Lord. Every time your stomach growls or you smell food, your mind will go to the fast, which will take you to the Lord.

Prayer Attaches Us – Fasting Detaches

Prayer attaches us to God; Fasting detaches us from the flesh/the world. It is a beautiful combination of attaching and detaching. Fasting has to be coupled with prayer. I don't fully understand it, but I believe it by faith; Prayer releases God's great power to change the course of nature, people, and nations.

Flesh says Satisfy – give Me / Fasting Builds Discipline / Flesh has more Say – Blocks out Son

Your flesh says satisfy me, but you say No. The Flesh is always give me, give me, give me. And then you say no, the flesh is what? Did I just hear you correctly? Did you say no? Yes, get use to it, the Spirit controls me, not my flesh. Fasting builds a discipline in our lives of not satisfying every physical urge that comes upon us. When we neglect the principle of fasting, the flesh gets more and more say in our life, and that blocks the Son out.

Notes on Line

Please go on-line and get the notes from our study we did on fasting; the study was called the "Principles and Guide to Fasting".

Moving on to Wealth

Now moving on to talking about wealth, and how it can distract us from the Lord, allows the world to get between us and the Lord, and diminish our reflection of Him, and rob us from enjoying the kingdom, the power, and the glory.

Wealth – Failure to Lay up Treasures in Heaven (6:19-24)

(Matthew 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

(Matthew 6:20 NKJV) "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

(Matthew 6:21 NKJV) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Joke All the Time / ATM in Church in Georgia

Well, I joked about it all the time, but it has come to pass; this week on CNN they covered a story of a church in Georgia that now has an ATM machine in the foyer so people can give. Whatever works for you I guess.

God not Raising Money – but Raising Kids / Follow Stocks – Real Estate

No speaking of the giving, giving is not God's way of raising cash. It's God's way of raising kids. Every time I give, I am giving away part of my stinginess and selfishness. God doesn't need my money, but I need to give. The Lord wants my heart, not my money (as Paul said in 2 Cor 12), and He knows that

wherever my treasure is, that's where my heart will be. If I have financial investments, I will follow the stock market carefully. If I hold real estate, I will follow the housing market with genuine interest.
(2 Corinthians 12:14 NKJV) Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

Treasures more than Money / Where put Heart

Now these treasures Jesus is speaking about is more than money, He is speaking of where and what we invest the majority of our thoughts and time. You can easily determine what your treasure is by just doing inventory on what you think of most and spend the most of your time on.

Not Where Heart – But where Treasure / Have Stock in Heaven – Will Keep an Eye on It

If I have treasure in heaven, guess where my heart will be? It is profoundly interesting to me that Jesus didn't say, "Where your heart is, there your treasure will be." Instead, He said, "Put your treasure in heaven, and your heart will inevitably follow."

First Use – Wise Men / Make Deposit – Great ROI

I like the first time this word for treasure is used in the New Testament, and we see it as the wise men lay their treasures at baby Jesus' feet. The word "treasure", means "to make a deposit". Jesus says to make deposits in heaven, it is a great investment, the return on investment is tremendous.

(Matthew 2:11 KJV) And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

2344. thesauros, thay-sow-ros'; from G5087; a deposit, i.e. wealth (lit. or fig.)--treasure.

Easy to be Distracted / Diminishes the Reflection of Son / Burn if doesn't Rot First

How easy it is for us to get distracted by getting more, securing more, and then the more we have the more we have to maintain, and the more it distracts us from the Lord, the more the world gets in the way and diminishes the Light of the Son reflecting off of us, because we are so busy working (refer you back to fasting) and maintaining stuff that is all going to burn, and that is if it doesn't rot before it is time to burn.

Ask How to Build Bank Account / Ask How Build Kingdom Account

Do we not ask ourselves how we can build up our bank accounts? Then lets ask daily, seeking Him, Lord what can I do today to build up my heavenly account/

Word for Treasure – Not Money / Treasure Hunters / In Him are all Treasures

Jesus uses the word treasure here, not money. He isn't saying we shouldn't work to live. What is saying is that we shouldn't live to work. I got to work more so I can have more. You work and get a paycheck, and pay your bills and save wisely for the future. But a treasure hunter, that is a whole different life; they are looking to hit it big, have it all. Funny thing thou, all the television specials that I have seen on treasure hunters, the ones that have found it, they didn't quit, they kept looking for the next treasure. I think we all should be treasure hunters, and like them, we have found it, the treasure is Jesus, and we shouldn't quit, but keep going, for in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Where your treasures are, there your heart will be;

(Mark 6:8 NKJV) He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff; no bag, no bread, no copper in their money belts;

5475. chalkos, khal-kos'; perh. from G5465 through the idea of hollowing out as a vessel (this metal being chiefly used for that purpose); copper (the substance, or some implement or coin made of it)--brass, money.

(Colossians 2:2 NKJV) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

(Colossians 2:3 NKJV) in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

(Matthew 6:22 NKJV) "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

(Matthew 6:23 NKJV) "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 that darkness!

Where Fix Eye – What Reflect

Where you fix your eye is what you will reflect.

(Matthew 6:24 NKJV) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Demonic Force – Want focus on Him

Mammon is more than just nickels, dimes, and dollar bills. Jesus identifies mammon as a master. I believe mammon is a god, a demonic force who wants you to be focused on him, in bondage to him, and all wrapped up in him.

Wealth – Blocker of Son

So wealth, the things of the world, getting in between the sun and the moon, and rob us from enjoying the kingdom, the power, and the glory.

Worry – Failure to Seek First the Kingdom of God (6:25-34)

(Matthew 6:25 NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

(Matthew 6:26 NKJV) "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

(Matthew 6:27 NKJV) "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

(Matthew 6:28 NKJV) "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

(Matthew 6:29 NKJV) "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

(Matthew 6:30 NKJV) "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

(Matthew 6:31 NKJV) "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

(Matthew 6:32 NKJV) "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Treasure – Evil Taskmaster / Jesus says not to Worry of Future / Not Advocating not Working

These treasures that man seek, can become evil taskmasters, putting people in bondage. Jesus says don't worry about securing your future, I'll take care of it. Now He isn't advocating being lazy, for the word says if a man will not work neither shall he eat:

(2 Thessalonians 3:10 NKJV) For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

Don't be Anxious / Word – to Strangle / Worry have and Don't Have

Does this verse mean we shouldn't care at all what we wear or about investments or monetary matters?

No. The meaning here is that we are to take no anxious thought, or literally, "Take no worry." The word worry means literally "**to strangle**." If you're worried about what you're wearing, eating, or drinking—about what you have or don't have materially—your personality will be tied in knots and strangled.

60 Trillion Droplets / ½ Glass of Water – Close and Airport

I once read that it takes sixty trillion droplets of fog to cover seven city blocks. Now sixty trillion droplets, or seven city blocks' worth of fog, can close down airports and tie up cities. Yet, if you condensed those sixty trillion fog droplets, you would end up with only half a glass of water.

Good Picture of Worry – How Going to Work Out / Airport Shutdown – You not Soaring

That's a good picture of what worry is all about. You begin with something little, only half a glass of water. But you start thinking about it and wrestling with it, wondering, How is this going to work out? How am I going to do that? And before long, you can't see straight, and your airport is shut down. You're not hearing from the Lord, and you're not soaring with the Lord as you once did because you're all fogged in.

Jesus said, "Don't take any anxious thought whatsoever. Don't let worry strangle you. Don't end up in a fog." The fog diminishes the reflection of the Son.

Lord takes Care of His Own

The Lord says I'll take care of you just like Solomon, and the birds of the air:

(1 Peter 5:7 NKJV) casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

(Philippians 4:6 NKJV) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

(Philippians 4:7 NKJV) and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(Matthew 6:34 NKJV) "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

We are Proof / Today has enough to Worry About

Seek first the kingdom, and everything else will fall into place. Every one of you is proof of this, for truly God has provided. We may have spent nights worrying, and yet the Lord has been faithful even when we've been foolish. That's why Jesus told us not to worry about tomorrow. Today has enough challenges of its own. Just deal with today, and above all, seek first the kingdom.

4 Things that block the Son, and rob us from enjoying the kingdom, the power, and the glory

- Forgiveness – Failure to Ask / Failure to Give (6:14-15)
- Fasting – Failure to Do It (6:16-18)
- Wealth – Failure to Lay up Treasures in Heaven (6:19-24)
- Worry – Failure to Seek First the Kingdom of God (6:25-34)

Light unto World

We are to be the light unto the world:

(Matthew 5:14 NKJV) "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

(Matthew 5:15 NKJV) "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

May we be a People / What have Deposited in Heavenly Account Lately

Christian may we be a people that reflect His glory, may we be a people that are not blocked out by the things of the world. We need studies like this to bring us back to that simple place, I am getting too busy, I am too wrapped up in the things of the world, I have slipped into a slumber, God has so much more for me, I need to leave the comfort zone and step out. What have I deposited in to my heavenly account lately.

WE ARE TO BE THE LIGHT UNTO THE WORLD

Conclusion

In Luke 19 when they heralding Jesus as the Messiah the Pharisees said to Jesus tell them to shut up, and Jesus said if they keep quiet then these very stones would cry out:

(Luke 19:35 NKJV) Then they brought him to Jesus. And they threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him.

(Luke 19:36 NKJV) And as He went, many spread their clothes on the road.

(Luke 19:37 NKJV) Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen,

(Luke 19:38 NKJV) saying: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

(Luke 19:39 NKJV) And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

(Luke 19:40 NKJV) But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Jesus was Prophesizing / 19th Century Scholars – Critical of Bible / Church became Silent

This was Jesus' response when the Pharisees called Jesus to quiet His followers on Palm Sunday as they shouted, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" Jesus is not using personification He is prophesizing. This prophecy was fulfilled beginning in the late 19th century. At this time scholars were extremely critical of the bible and it came under immense attack, but the church was silent. Scholars relying on secular writings claimed to forever disprove the historical accuracy of the bible. To sight just a few examples,

- Scholars claimed that the battle between Babylon and Palestine in the 14th Chapter of Genesis never happened.
- The critics said that the nation of the Hittites called out in the Old Testament, which ruled over Egypt and Babylon is not ever mentioned in sector writing, therefore they never existed.
- They also said that the Great Flood never happened
- That there were no secular writings about Pontius Pilate and the list of criticisms went on and on.

19th century Archaeology / the Stones Cried Out

At this same time the science of Archaeology began to grow. So what did the archaeological findings show? With one finding after another the stones were crying out proving the accuracy of the bible.

- Excavation at the site called out in Genesis 14 revealed the names of the four kings sited in the bible.
- A treaty between Egypt and the Hittites were etched on the palace walls on the capitol of the Hittites. There are an enormous number of archeological findings in almost every culture confirming the great flood.
- In 1963, the same year that prayer was taken out of the school, the separation of church and state, they uncovered a stone in Israel that read, "home of Pontius Pilate, governor".

Every Spade – the Rocks Cried Out / Willaim Ramsey / Nelson Glueck

Every time a spade was stuck in the ground more stones cried out. Sir William Ramsey, an atheist and a PhD gave his life to archaeology and disproving the bible, special Luke's writing in the Book of Acts. 25 yrs later he stated that Luke was accurate to the most minute detail and that he was now a Christian. Renowned Jewish archaeologist Nelson Glueck, said "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever contradicted a biblical reference." Over 20,000 archaeological findings related to scripture and not one disproves the bible.

We Cry Out Louder

The rocks indeed are crying out in these days, but even as loud as the rocks cry out, we cry out louder because just as these things can get in our way of reflecting the Son, they are also the same things that bring us into the direct path of His light, and makes us shine brightly, brings us into the enjoyment of the kingdom, His power, and His glory. It is a great day to be a Christian, and I love to praise His name as do you, as we live in His light, and celebrate our freedom from the bondages of sin and death, no rock can sing louder than us, for we are proclaiming His praises loudly because we can not keep silent ourselves.

Matthew 7

Judging, Casting, Asking and Doing (7:1-12)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Continuation of Kingdom Constitution / Chp 5 – Inner / Chp 6 Outward Personal / Chp7 Relational

Jesus continues His Sermon on the Mount, the constitution of His kingdom. In chapter 5, He addressed inner attitudes, chapter 6 He addressed outward activities that are determined in our heart (forgiving, fasting, seeking wealth, and worry), and now in chapter 7 Jesus continues on the outward activities but they move away from the personal, to relational, as this passage deals with our dealings with others face to face (as Jesus will cover judging, casting pearls to swine's, and doing the golden rule).

Outline for this Study – Judging, Casting, Asking, Doing (7:1-12)

- Judging (7:1-5)
- Casting Pearls (7:6)
- A-S-K ing (7:7-11)
- Doing – the Golden Rule (7:12)

Prayer Chp 6 – Again Chp 7 / Vital Prayer – No Need go It Alone

Jesus spoke of prayer in chapter 6 with the Lord's Prayer, and here in chapter 7 He returns to it again as he will say, ask, seek, and knock. The vital life of prayer in the believer, as Jesus speaks to us that you need not go it alone, call out to Me and I will answer you, lead you in all these areas, both personal and relational. How vital it is that we keep that appointed time each day with Him, to ask, to seek, and to knock, so that He may give to us, show us where to find what we seek, and that He may open to us.

Judging (7:1-5)

(Matthew 7:1 NKJV) "Judge not, that you be not judged.

(Matthew 7:2 NKJV) "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

(Matthew 7:3 NKJV) "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?

(Matthew 7:4 NKJV) "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?

(Matthew 7:5 NKJV) "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Verse of Backsliders

A favorite verse of the backslider, brother you're judging me; and then there is he without sin let him cast the first stone.

(John 8:7 NKJV) So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

Speaking of Condemnation / Fruit Inspectors – Identification not Condemnation

This passage is speaking of condemnation; later in this chapter Jesus will teach us about being fruit inspectors, saying we will know them by their fruit, but even if the fruit is revealed to be bad, the Lord still says we are not to pass condemnation upon them. When we look at being fruit inspector's next study, the examination is for identification, not condemnation. But here, this passage as the Greek definition uses it is about bringing condemnation, as a man passes final judgment upon a person, usurping God's role as the One who will judge their actions and bring discipline.

(Matthew 7:16 NKJV) "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?"

(Matthew 7:17 NKJV) "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit."

(Matthew 7:18 NKJV) "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."

(Matthew 7:19 NKJV) "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

(Matthew 7:20 NKJV) "Therefore by their fruits you will know them."

Bible College – Bumping / The Spiritual Gift / Gift for Intercession – Building Up the Body

We use to joke around at Bible College, we would act like we had a big beam in our eye, and as we would be knocking over lamps, bumping into walls, clubbing people in the head, we would say brother I see a speck in your eye. Some people think they have been given the spiritual gift to correcting every Christian and their sin. I think it important to add in here at this passage, that at times God gives us the gift of discernment to use in someone's life or ministry, but the context of spiritual discernment is that of intercession, in the building up of the body. So when the Lord does give us discernment, of first response to that information is to hit our knees in prayer for that person. God gives you discernment so you can pray for them, for as Romans 3:10, there is none "speck-less", no not one:

(1 Corinthians 12:4 NKJV) There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

(1 Corinthians 12:5 NKJV) There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

(1 Corinthians 12:6 NKJV) And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

(1 Corinthians 12:7 NKJV) But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

(1 Corinthians 12:8 NKJV) for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,

(1 Corinthians 12:9 NKJV) to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,

(1 Corinthians 12:10 NKJV) to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

(1 Corinthians 14:12 NKJV) Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

(Romans 3:10 NKJV) As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

(Romans 3:11 NKJV) There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

(Romans 3:12 NKJV) They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

(Matthew 7:2 NKJV) "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Degree Used Upon Us / Want to Give Grace – Because Need Grace

Just as we had spoken about forgiveness, that if we won't forgive others, then God will not forgive us; Jesus lays out a deep statement here in that whatever degree we judge others, that is the same degree that we will be judged. I'll tell you one of the reasons I would never get divorced is because I don't want my wife telling everybody how big a fool I am at times. I want to show grace (and not condemnation) so people don't start poking around in my life to find out how much of the fallen nature still gets "show time" in my life. I want to be gracious unto others, so God and people will measure back the same degree of grace to me, because when I look in the mirror, I know who I am truly am, no matter how well I put the show on outside.

(Matthew 7:3 NKJV) "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?"

(Matthew 7:4 NKJV) "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye?"

Splinter & Beam – Same Material – Same Sin / How Large Others Sins Are /

Listen Christian, the splinter and beam are made from the same material (the Greek word for one is twig, and the other is timber, both are the same material of wood, except one is used in a small dimension, the other a large); and yet how someone else's same sin is so large and repulsive even though it made of the same material as ours, it is the same thing we are dealing with.

(Matthew 7:5 NKJV) "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

See Clear to Remove

The reason we want to see clearly is so that we can help the brother get the speck out of their eye. You know brother, I am struggling with the same thing myself, let's hold each other accountable, let's pray for each other, let's get together for coffee once a week to keep each other strong, as iron sharpens iron, so does a man sharpen the countenance of his friend.

(Proverbs 27:17 NKJV) As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

How Know if Condemning - Not Willing to Get Involved / Jesus Washed Dirty Feet

How do I know if I'm condemning people? If I am not willing to get involved in their lives, to be a part of helping them be restored, then I am probably practicing condemnation. When Jesus walked into the Upper Room where His disciples were sitting, He noticed they had dirty feet. Did He point His finger and say, "You guys, why don't you wash your stinky feet? It's a mess up here." No. John 13 says He rose from supper, girded Himself with a towel, and began to wash their feet Himself. So, too, I do not believe I have the right to point out someone's dirty feet unless I'm willing to kneel down and wash them.

(John 13:4 NKJV) rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.

(John 13:5 NKJV) After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Found to be True – Critical People not Nice / Pressure Around Them / Freedom and Encouraged

What I have found to be true is that critical people are just generally not nice people. Now the question I ask myself is are they not nice people because they are critical, or are they critical because they are not nice people. I lean towards that it is a spiritual thing, and that people who are critical become people who are just not nice. I am sure you share with me in that there is a pressure when you are around them and talk with them because you feel they are looking for something that you say or do so they can be critical of you. I figure at best I'll make it 5 minutes before I give someone a reason, because it is not hard to find sin in a sinner. But oh, the joy of being around gracious people, even when you deserve condemnation for something you have done, they show you grace and love, and that freedom encourages you, rather than discourages you, and you seek to be more like the Son.

Commentary on the Beatitudes

This passage comes right after our last study of things that block us from reflecting the Son, things that rob us of enjoying the kingdom, the power, and the glory of God. Look at the Beatitudes; this is commentary on how to be poor in spirit, to mourn with those who hurt, to be meek, and to be merciful, to not be critical, to not be judgmental. Not judging is putting the Beatitudes into action.

(Matthew 5:3 NKJV) "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 5:4 NKJV) Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

(Matthew 5:5 NKJV) Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

(Matthew 5:6 NKJV) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.

(Matthew 5:7 NKJV) Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.

(Matthew 5:8 NKJV) Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.

(Matthew 5:9 NKJV) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.

Casting - Pearls (7:6)

(Matthew 7:6 NKJV) "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Why Next – Same Material / Careful – World Spiritually Blinded

Why is this next, I think it is because we are not to be judgmental, we want to clear our eye so we can help the speck in our brothers eye, for it is all out of the same material; so we can say I know what you are going through I struggle with the exact same thing. However, I can say brother I know exactly what

you are struggling with brother, it is a battle for me also, yes we should do that, but Jesus says don't do the same with those in the world, those outside of the family. The world is spiritually blinded, and there are some things that we can share with each others as believers, and have a clear understanding, but try to share those same things with an unbeliever, and they think you are nuts, and not only that, they take those things and use them against you to make you look like a fool, or to tear you apart should you have shared something intimate with them.

(1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

(1 Corinthians 2:15 NKJV) But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.

End Times Discussion / Not share Personal Weakness / Jimmy Carter

There are times when I am talking with someone, and say we are talking about world events and I want to get into quoting end-times scriptures and the Lord lays it on my heart to not. There are times when I am talking with someone and the Lord lays it on my heart not share personal things with this person. I am reminded of the article I read that in an interview then President Jimmy Carter said that he at times struggled with lust; man the media ripped him to shreds in that.

When to Not? / Matt 7:7

How do we know when to share and when not to? Ask, verses 7-11. We ask the Lord and listen to Him so that He may lead us.

Used to Not Preach Again / When Quit – Matt 7:7

This passage is often used for a time to quit sharing the gospel with someone (I've used often myself); I think truly the context is sharing our personal matters with people who will use them against us (hence – to trample and tear us to pieces); however, I don't want to be dogmatic and say this is the only application. Now I personally do not think there is ever a time to quit sharing the gospel, to give up on them. I say share the gospel as often as the opportunity presents itself; but there is a time to protect your time. I personally won't keep "debating" with someone over the gospel, when it is going to cost me another night away from my family, or keep me from witnessing to someone else who I haven't shared with before but the opportunity has presented itself. When I was doing street ministry in California, I can remember people (often drunk) who would have talked with me for the whole 4 hours I was out there, but I would reach a point and say, ok I have given you the gospel, here is a tract and the Book of John, read this and call me and I'll come back to talk with you. And they would say, one more question, did Adam have a bellybutton, can God make a rock so big that He can't move it. I'd move on because I gave him the word, and right across the street was 5 teenagers that I hadn't reached yet. But, I can think of a time I was on the airplane, shared with a guy, and we had 4 more hours until LAX, and I answered all those questions for him about bellybuttons and rocks, because I had nowhere else to go. So how do I know when to share and when not to? Verses 7-11

A-S-K ing (7:7-11)

(Matthew 7:7 NKJV) "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

(Matthew 7:8 NKJV) "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

(Matthew 7:9 NKJV) "Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

(Matthew 7:10 NKJV) "Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

(Matthew 7:11 NKJV) "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

A-S-King

Asking, Seeking, Knocking: A-S-K-ing, Ask the King. The theme of the Book of Matthew that the King has come, and we can boldly come before His throne of grace because the door has been open

(Hebrews 4:16 NKJV) Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Continual Verb Tense – Asking/Seeking/Knocking // Continual Giving/Finding/Opening

The verb tense is a continual verb tense, meaning keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking until you get what you are asking for. The verb tense would also mean to continually ask, and you'll continually be given; continually seek and you will continually find; continually knock and it will continually be opened for you.

School Thought – Ask Once / Jesus asked Continually

Again, there is a school of thought that says that if you ask for something more than once that you have weak faith; that theology is destroyed here in this verse, and that the very fact that Jesus in His prayer asked for the same thing 3 times, and that was within just a few hours time. So we are exhorted by the Lord to continually ask, continually seek, and continually knock.

(Matthew 26:42 NKJV) Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."

(Matthew 26:43 NKJV) And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

(Matthew 26:44 NKJV) So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Notice Relationship – Loving Father / When Knock a Servant not Answer / Cultivate Relationship

Notice the relational aspect here, as God associates our asking (prayers) as an intimate relationship, a loving Father with the children that He loves. When we knock on the door a servant is not going to answer, but our Father in Heaven. He is determined to cultivate a relationship with me that will be as vital in the ages to come as it is presently. Thus, He says to us, "I want you to be continually asking, continually seeking, continually knocking because you need the exercise in developing spiritual communication skills. And as you do, I'll take care of you. I'm not going to allow you to bite into a rock or eat a snake. I'll guide you and give you wisdom

Establish a Lifestyle / Life of Fellowship / Tapping into Main Vine

What the Lord wants to establish is that this is a continual lifestyle, that we continually seek Him, that we continually ask him, that we continually have this fellowship with Him. As we are tapped into the Main Vine, we will draw all that we need for life and godliness. Maybe you say, oh come on Ray I know this, why keep repeating this? Because Jesus will speak of prayer twice in these 2 chapters, because it is the life-line of the Christian. Do you approach it as such, as the very oxygen you breathe to exist everyday.

(John 15:5 NKJV) "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."

You Being Evil – Speaks of Selfish Nature / HOLY Father – Untainted / His Giving Perfect & Pure

Verse 11 - If you then, being evil – Speaking of our selfish fallen nature; yet even as selfish as we are, we take care of our kids. Now put that in the perspective that Our Father who art in heaven, Hallow (Holy) is He. He is so holy that He is untainted and not spoiled from the effects of the fallen world. His wisdom and giving are perfect because He is unspoiled by the world, and wants to bring us into that place of enjoying all that comes with His Kingdom, His Power, and His Glory. The Lord says make asking, seeking, and knocking your lifestyle, never stop. The Lord wants to give to us good things just as that earthly father does, but God in His perfect and untainted wisdom knows when the time is right to give it, when we are ready to receive it, or not receive it because what it could possibly do to us.

Sermon Mount – 1 Sitting / Approach in Context / Lord's Prayer – Hindrance to Prayer

Now, as we have mentioned in times past that this Sermon on the Mount was given in one sitting, so we should approach it as such, approach it in its total context. What we have covered is the Lord's prayer (I encourage you to review that), and what we also have (though not spelled out directly for us) are hindrances to our prayers being answered. Here are hindrances to our prayers that we have studied in this Sermon on the Mount:

Wrong Motives

Not seeking first the kingdom, but our own selfish desires:

(Matthew 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

(Matthew 6:5 NKJV) "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward."

(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

(1 Corinthians 10:31 NKJV) Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God.**
(1 Corinthians 10:32 NKJV) Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,
(1 Corinthians 10:33 NKJV) just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

Sin in our Lives

Unrepentant sin hinders our prayers no matter how many times we ask, the failure to repent and seek God's forgiveness:

(Matthew 6:12 NKJV) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

(Matthew 6:24 NKJV) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

(Isaiah 59:1 NKJV) Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

(Isaiah 59:2 NKJV) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; **And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.**

(1 John 3:22 NKJV) And whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments** and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

Lack or Reverence for the Lord

Not respecting that we are coming before the Holy God, and/or allowing something else to be greater in our lives, aka an idol:

(Matthew 6:9 NKJV) "In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

(Ezekiel 14:1 NKJV) Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.

(Ezekiel 14:2 NKJV) And the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

(Ezekiel 14:3 NKJV) "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. **Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?**

(Ezekiel 14:4 NKJV) "Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols,

An Unforgiving Heart

Failure to forgive, judging and harboring ill feelings towards others:

(Matthew 6:14 NKJV) "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

(Matthew 6:15 NKJV) "But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

(Matthew 7:1 NKJV) "Judge not, that you be not judged.

(Mark 11:25 NKJV) "**And whenever you stand praying**, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Stinginess in Giving

(Matthew 6:3 NKJV) "But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

(Matthew 6:4 NKJV) "that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret **will Himself reward you** openly.

(Matthew 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

(Proverbs 21:13 NKJV) Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor **Will also cry himself and not be heard.**

(Luke 6:38 NKJV) "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. **For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.**"

Wrong treatment of Spouse or Kids

(Matthew 5:32 NKJV) "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

(Matthew 5:43 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

(Matthew 7:12 NKJV) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

(1 Peter 3:7 NKJV) *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Worry

Worrying will rob your prayer life:

(Matthew 6:34 NKJV) *"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

Hindrances / Positive Aspect / Open the Door

All these things or one of these things can be hindrances from prayers being answered, hence why must keep asking sometimes, because what we ask is being hindered. Now the positive on this is that when we are free of these hindrances, then we can have confidence that our prayers will be answered:

- *Pure Motives* - (compared to - Wrong Motives)
- *Purity in Our Lives* - (compared to - Sin in our Lives)
- *Reverence of the Lord* – (compared to - Lack or Reverence for the Lord)
- *Forgiving Heart* – (compared to - An Unforgiving Heart)
- *A Joyful Giver* - (compared to - Stinginess in Giving)
- *Proper Treatment of Spouse* – (compared to - Wrong treatment of Spouse or Kids)
- *Trusting the Lord* – (compared to – Worry)

How Important – Keep Listen After Receive / It is a Lifestyle – Wants Continual Fellowship

But, oh how important for all of us to listen to this; continually ask, seek, knock.....even after God has spoken. So often once we hear from the Lord we think the matter is over, and we close our ears to hear part 2 (if you would) of what he is doing. We say ok I got that prayer request answered and now time to move on to the next need. Christian the Lord continually wants to talk with us, He wants us to have that as a lifestyle, to continually be speaking to Him, but to continually be listening for Him.

Failure could be Disastrous

Failure to do so could have a disastrous outcome.

Abraham & Isaac / Abe Heard and Obeyed / 3 days Later

Abraham, take thy son, thy only son and take to the mount to sacrifice him to Me. Abraham had heard the voice of the Lord, Abraham was obedient to the call, and he took his son, his only son to that mount that day, after a 3 day journey, and try to tell me that he would be any different than you or I, any different than Jesus Himself, as he would no doubt say to the Father, oh if there be any other way. Three days of no answer, Jesus 3 times He would ask if there be any other way, but Abraham would be obedient to the Father, even to the point of raising the knife, but he would then hear the voice of God, the Word of God, STOP!, don't touch that child. Christian had Abraham not had ears to hear, had he said I have heard from God, and thus it will be done, nothing more to discuss, then he would have made the most disastrous error of his life. But Abraham had a continual ear for the Lord, it was his lifestyle, and he had the ear to hear.....STOP!.

(Genesis 22:1 NKJV) *Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."*

(Genesis 22:2 NKJV) *Then He said, "Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."*

(Genesis 22:3 NKJV) *So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.*

(Genesis 22:4 NKJV) *Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off.*

(Genesis 22:5 NKJV) *And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you."*

(Genesis 22:6 NKJV) *So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together.*

(Genesis 22:7 NKJV) *But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"*

(Genesis 22:8 NKJV) *And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together.*

(Genesis 22:9 NKJV) *Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood.*

(Genesis 22:10 NKJV) *And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.*

(Genesis 22:11 NKJV) But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am."

(Genesis 22:12 NKJV) And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."

(Genesis 22:13 NKJV) Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son.

(Genesis 22:14 NKJV) And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of The LORD it shall be provided."

How Important to Keep Listening / Keep in the Fellowship of Prayer

How important for us to keep listening, even after the prayer has been answered. To keep in the fellowship of prayer, to not seek out prayer time because all is well with life.

Doing – the Golden Rule (7:12)

(Matthew 7:12 NKJV) "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

What is it Therefore / Verse 13 Shift in Sermon – Warnings / Summing Up Kingdom Living

This verse starts with "therefore", every time we see a "therefore" in the Scriptures we need to ask, what is it there for? Verse 13 will be a shift in the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus will deliver multiple warnings to the hearers. So here in verse 12 Jesus is summing up kingdom living, all that you have been told to do here in this Sermon on the Mount, do it, and you will be live the kingdom of God here on earth.

The Law & Prophets

Verse 12 for this is the Law and the Prophets. - Jesus said that this is the Law and the Prophets. What we have studied in the last 3 chapters are our vertical relationship with the Lord, and our horizontal relationship with fellow man, this making the cross. The Sermon on the Mount drives a person to Christ as the need for a Savior is brought before all man, and then the Sermon on the Mount directs us in Christ as to how we are to live the Kingdom of God on this side of eternity. All the Law and the Prophets, Jesus will later sum up the Sermon on the Mount in chapter 22; love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself. All taught here in these 3 chapters, and the latter, loving your neighbor wrapped up real tightly here with this golden rule, whatever you want men to do, do also to them:

(Matthew 22:35 NKJV) Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,

(Matthew 22:36 NKJV) "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"

(Matthew 22:37 NKJV) Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

(Matthew 22:38 NKJV) "This is the first and great commandment.

(Matthew 22:39 NKJV) "And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

*(Matthew 22:40 NKJV) "On these two commandments **hang all the Law and the Prophets.**"*

Golden Rule Existed at Time of Jesus / Jesus gives it in the Positive / Do it Regardless of Return

The golden rule that existed at the time Jesus said this, was always in the negative, meaning if you don't want them to do it to you, then don't do it to them. Jesus gives it in the positive in His Kingdom, Jesus says treat others the way you would want to be treated. Do it unto others the way you would want it done to you, but you keep doing it, even if they never do it in return for you. This kingdom living turns the other cheek, goes the second mile, regardless of what we ever get back in return.

Want o be Liked – Nice – Mercy – Peace / Live the Sermon

Do you want people to like you, then like them. Want people to be nice to you, then be nice to them. Do you want mercy, then give mercy. Do you want peace, then give peace. Live the Sermon on the Mount.

Apostle John

One of the people listening to this great Sermon was the Apostle John, who would some 60-70 years later be exiled unto the Island of Patmos because of his witness for Christ. His witness would make the then Roman Emperor insane and they would try to kill him in boiling oil church history says (whether true we will ask him shortly when we see him in heaven), but the boiling didn't kill him, so they exiled him to the Island of Patmos where the Lord would give him the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He would see Jesus in His glory. After his release from Patmos the aged John would go from church to church to preach, the

gathering place would be overflowing, people would come from miles away to hear him. Church history said that in his last years, his body near its end, frail and weak, that he would walk up to the pulpit, the room would grow deathly silent, and John would say, "little children, love one another", and then he would sit down, and the people would leave there and talk about that sermon for hours and days and weeks. So I end this section of the Sermon on the Mount the same, "*little children, love one another*" – *for this is the Law and the Prophets*.

Why One Way? (7:13-14)

(Matthew 7:13 NKJV) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

(Matthew 7:14 NKJV) "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Nagging Wife

A man and his ever-nagging wife went on vacation to Jerusalem. While they were there, the wife passed away. The undertaker told the husband, "You can have her shipped home for \$5,000, or you can bury her here, in the Holy Land, for \$150." The man thought about it and told him he would just have her shipped home. The undertaker asked, "Why would you spend \$5,000 to ship your wife home, when it would be wonderful to be buried here and you would spend only \$150?" The man replied, "Long ago a man died here, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take the chance it will happen again."

Resurrection a Fact

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is fact; it is not just a story, but it is historical history, but it is not just history, it is His-story. The resurrection is His story of love to all men everywhere. It is His story, His message to mankind that there is a way for sinful man, to boldly come into the presence of the Holy God. That way is by one way, and one way only, Jesus Christ.

Billy Graham

Billy Graham tells the story from many years ago when he was hosting a Crusade in a small town, and he had to mail a letter. So walking down the street knowing he was close to the post office, but not sure how close, he asked a little boy standing on the street corner, 'excuse me young man, could you tell me where the post office?' The little boy pointed the way out for Billy, and then before leaving Billy says to the little boy, "young man tonight I will be speaking at the town center on how to get to heaven, would you like to attend?" The little boy says, "No thank you sir, no offense, but you don't even know how to get to the post office".

Billy Knows / God made it Simple – 1 Way!

Thankfully the ministry of Billy Graham does know the way to heaven, because God has made it so simple, He has made it by one way, and one way only, so man need not be confused on – the way!

White Marsh – The Name - YHVH

A few weeks ago I was at the Avenue in White Marsh with some friends, and one friend had a Christian t-shirt on that had some Hebrew writing on it "YHVH", the "tetragrammaton", the theological definition for the name of God which is "I Am that I Am", from Exodus 3:14, when Moses asked the Lord who should I say sent me, what is your name, and the Lord said I AM THAT I AM, I am all that you will ever need. A name so Holy that the Jewish people had revered so holy that they left out the vowels of the name in fear that someone might mispronounce the name of the Holy God. When they would come to His name in the Scripture, they would simply say, "the name", and continue reading on.

(Exodus 3:13 KJV) And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

(Exodus 3:14 KJV) And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

Zen Buddhist Lady / 2 Points – Narrow-minded / Jesus good Man – Not only Way

Well this lady stopped and said what does that mean, and as I began to explain it to her, as soon as I said, "the Name", Jesus Christ the Risen Lord, she immediately threw her hands in the air, said I've heard enough, and walked away saying I am a Buddhist. But she couldn't resist herself and had to come back and get her say in. She had two main points, and point 1 being that Christians were not nice people, and point 2 being that Christians were judgmental, legalistic, and narrow minded. I sensed that it was point 2 that made her feel the way she felt about point 1. Her statement to us was that Christianity was too

narrow, hence legalistic, that all roads led to God, and as long as you are on some road (the one you determine) you will make it. But you Christians with your one way, and one way only, are narrow-minded bigots, judging others, condemning others, self-righteous, hence you are not nice people and I don't want anything to do with Christianity. But as I so often hear, they will say "Jesus was a good man, I like Him, but He is not the only way".

Continual Dialogue / Like Jesus – Reject Exclusive Mentality

Over and over again, I find myself (and I am sure you have too) dialoguing on this particular point with unbelievers who say, "We like Jesus, but we reject the exclusive mentality you propagate.

Why People feel this Way / Our Generation interested in Equality – not Truth / Afraid Bigoted

Why do people feel this way? I suggest to you it is because our culture—our generation in particular—is more interested in equality than in truth. We are more afraid of being thought prejudiced or bigoted than of being wrong. We are scared to death of being labeled narrow-minded.

Pope this week with ADL

We see this clearly illustrated in the news this week as the Pope (leader of 1 billion followers of Catholics) met with the leaders of the ADL (Anti-Defamation League, a U.S. group that fights racism and anti-Semitism) looking to bring unity amongst the faiths. The Pope said he was sorry for his harsh remarks against the Muslims, and hoped that it would not prevent the faiths from respecting each others. But the clearer example of how more and more those Christians that will not waver from "1 Way" will become more and more labeled bigots and narrow-minded by what the leader of the ADL was quoted as saying by the AP News article on Thursday October 12, 2006 (see full article at end of notes):

Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL, said his group supports Benedict's desire for honest interfaith dialogue, particularly when it comes to relations with Muslims.

"If we really feel our faith is the only one that is right, how can we still have dialogue? The answer is that we must believe we have a truth, not the truth. As long as we believe that we can respect other truths," Foxman told The Associated Press in a telephone interview after the meeting. "This is the dialogue we need to have, both Jews and Christians, with the Muslims."

But Exclusive is Jesus' Call to Us / He was Straight forward

Yet, that is exactly what Jesus Christ calls us to, be narrow. He came on the scene and said there is an exclusive mentality to Christianity. He was direct and straightforward when He said:

(Matthew 7:13 NKJV) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

(Matthew 7:14 NKJV) "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Jesus made Simple – Keep this Message Simple

Since Jesus made it so simple, then I am going to keep this message simple, 2 reasons why Christianity so exclusive and so narrow? Now verse 13 represents a shift in the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus will close with the gospel presentation, and bring warning to the hearers, this is the only way. Interestingly through the remaining of His Sermon on the Mount He continually uses "pairing" "two", comparing one to another, to keep it real simple, and real clear. We will see

- 2 gates, 2 ways, 2 destinations, and 2 groups of people (verses 13-14 – speaking of gates and paths)
- 2 kinds of trees, 2 kinds of fruit (verses 17-20 – speaking of good fruit and bad fruit)
- 2 groups at the judgment (verses 21-23 – speaking of people who call Him Lord, but He says depart from Me I never knew you)
- 2 kinds of builders, building 2 kinds of foundations (verses 24-28 – speaking of building on the rock compared to building on sand when the storms come)

Christ Drawing Line – Clearly as Possible / Destruction or Life / Be Ready - Equipped

Christ is drawing the line as clearly as possible between the way that leads to destruction and the way that leads to life. I pray you will memorize these two, and be ready and equipped the next time you are challenged of why 1 Way.

2 Reasons – Only 1 Way

1. Protection
2. Provision

(Matthew 7:13 NKJV) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

(Matthew 7:14 NKJV) "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

1.) Protection

God's Protection for Us / Fragility of Man – Children / 15 ways – Enemy 15K Paths of Confusion

First of all, narrowness is God's protection of us. God is saying, "I understand the frailty of humanity and that you are but children. So I will keep it real simple. You see, if the Lord had fifteen legitimate paths to heaven, the Enemy would still counter with fifteen thousand illegitimate destructive paths, and it would still be confusing.

Look today all Deception with 1 Way / Jesus says Watch out False Prophets / Wolves & Lion

Look at all the deception that is out there for just this One Way, through Jesus Christ. The next theme Jesus will give us (verse 15) is to watch out for false prophets coming to deceive you, they are ravenous wolves, they are offspring's of the roaring lion seeking to devour:

(Matthew 7:15 NKJV) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

(1 Peter 5:8 NKJV) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Always be Koresh – Jim Jones - Mohammed's - Krishna / Father keep Simple – Not 15 but 1

There will always be David Koresh's, Jim Jonese, Mohammed's, and Krishna's who will be deceptive and manipulative, weird and destructive. So our Father, in His wisdom, says, "Kids, I'm going to keep it real simple. There are not fifteen paths or 55 paths. No. There's only one Way: Jesus, My Son."

Jesus – John 14:6 / In Greek – Only Way

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). In Greek, it is most clear that He is saying, "I am the only way. There is no other way to enter into the presence of the Father but by Me." God's provision is exceedingly clear to any and all who will listen.

(John 14:6 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

2.) Provision

Dad and Kids

A dad was teaching his kids on this subject, he said "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into Heaven?" "The father asked his children. "NO!" the children all answered. "If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?" Again, the answer was, "NO! ""Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children, and loved my brothers and sisters, would that get me into Heaven?" He asked them again. Again, they all answered, "NO!" "Well, then how can I get into Heaven?" His five-year-old son shouted out, "YOU GOTTA BE DEAD DADDY!"

Other ways than Jesus Sacrifice Unnecessary / Plunged into Hell / Open-minded Discounts

We have no fear in death, because the narrow way is the sure way. Secondly, and most importantly, narrow is the gate because of God's provision for us, it proves that the price has been paid, the debt has been cancelled. If, indeed, there are many paths to God and many routes to eternal life, then the sacrifice God made in becoming a Man—slaughtered before the foundation of the world, plunging into hell, suffering in ways we will never comprehend—was all unnecessary (not only unnecessary, but foolish). If you say, "Well, let's be open-minded about the way to heaven," you discount the provision of what God

did on your behalf to provide the way, the access to Him and before Him, and the surety of that way. The way was provided not by silver and gold, but most precious treasure in the universe, God Himself.

No Death for Mohammed-Buddha / Only Jesus traded Places

Mohammed didn't die for you. Buddha wouldn't die for you. Only Jesus gave everything to save you from your sins.

Protection - Practical / Provision – Gospel / Show Protection – to Share Provision

By the way, this is the beauty of these 2 simple reasons that we share with people of why there is only 1 way. We speak of "protection" that God keeps it simple to protect us from the wolves, and then we speak of the "provision", because the provision (God becoming man to trade places with sinful man) is the power of the gospel, it is the gospel and only the gospel that has the power to change a person's life, to bring them before the Holy God.. So we show them the protection, to bring them to the place of sharing and seeing the provision.

Ultimate Insult to God / Diminishes Price Paid

If I say there is any other way, other than the Holy God becoming man, to be beaten, whipped, spit upon, nailed to a cross, to suffer 6 hours, and then die..., and if I say there is another way, then that is the ultimate insult to God, to say your only begotten Son suffering and dying was a nice gesture, but there are other ways, then that is the ultimate insult to God, because it diminishes the price that was paid, the Only Begotten Son.

Mohammed – My Teaching / Buddha never claimed deity / Hindu – Pantheistic / Jesus Only

- Mohammed came on the scene and said, "Do not look at me. My teachings are my essence."
- Buddha never claimed to be anything of a godly man at all. In fact, his religion or philosophy is basically atheistic.
- Hinduism is pantheistic (many gods – hope you picked the right one).
- Jesus alone says, "It's Me. I am the Way."

The Spiritual Journey – Every Road leads to God / Don't Preach your Way

You will hear over and over again that "Spirituality is a journey up a holy mountain, and no matter which route you take, when you get to the top, you will find God. So just wander wherever you feel inclined and embrace the other pilgrims on their paths. Don't try to convert them, please don't offend them, let's respect each of them, for every route leads to the top of the mountain, and they will find God just as you will."

Hill in Palestine / Holy God takes Hold of Sinful Man

The analogy is all wrong. You see, it is not any mountain upon which God sits and man meanders, but one Mount, a Hill in Palestine called Golgotha, where Jesus Christ with one hand would take hold of sinful man, and with the other hand take hold of the Holy God, and be the bridge between sinful man and the Holy God.

God not Sitting on Hill – God Reaching Down – Coming Down

God is holy, He is not some sort of portly gentleman sitting on top of a hill, saying, "pick a route and find your way, and there I will be waiting for you". Rather, He is high and holy on the top of a sheer face rock that no man can climb on his own, where every man is left in a hopeless situation because their sin separates them from the Holy God. Yet, although man is sinful, God in His love reaches down to him, and helps him up. It is not man meandering up to God. It is God reaching down to man, saying, "I will elevate you and save you if you grab hold of Me through the Person of My Son."

Confucius – Mohammed – Buddha - Krishna

Let me give you an illustration of the difference between God and the false religions. One day a traveler fell in some quicksand and was going under.

- Confucius came by and said, "It is evident that man should avoid such situations" then he kept walking.

- Then Mohammed came by and shaking his fist at the man said, "It is the will of Allah" and kept walking.
- Buddha came by and said, "Let this man's dilemma be an example to many" and kept walking.
- Krishna came by and said, "Better luck next time" and kept walking.
- Then Jesus Christ came, reached His hand down and said, "Take my hand, I will pull you out". Only Jesus has the power and the love to pull you out of the quicksand of sin.

Every Religion man Trying Make up Hill / Christianity – You are Hopeless / I must Come Down

Every religion is man trying to make it up the mountain, trying to pull himself out of the quicksand.

Christianity alone says, "You are hopelessly lost—but I love you. And I'm reaching down to you. Grab My hand." It is God Himself coming down from His Holy mountain (the very throne of heaven), and reaching down to man.

Mow the Grass

For whatever reason my 13 year old must have wanted to see what my beautiful yard would look like with a bunch peanuts thrown in it, and what it looked like was thousands of ants. Before I mow the grass, suppose I see a group of ants headed for destruction (as I start the mower and their whole world shakes), and wanting their lives to be spared from the mower, I say, "Ants, repent (change your direction)! Hide! Run from the judgment to come!" They would look at me and scratch their heads. They wouldn't comprehend what I was saying because I'm too big, I too awesome in power and might. So the only way I could communicate effectively with them would be to become one of them—to become an ant myself so I can relate to them and they to me.

God Declared Holiness – We Couldn't Hear / God became Ant / Communicate Truth – Violated

God declared His holiness and righteousness and love to us, but we didn't hear Him. In His awesomeness, we couldn't comprehend Him. So God became a Man, an ant, if you would, in the Person of Jesus, and He dwelt among us, not only to communicate to us truth, but to die for us when we violated that truth.

No One Else Did – No One Else Could – Only Jesus

No one else did that. No one else could. No one else would. Only Jesus.

Apostle Paul - On Straight Way – Eyes Open

It is only on the "straight and narrow way" that man's eyes can be opened to the truths of God. I love how God's Word reveals itself throughout the Scriptures. The man Saul, before his conversion, breathing wrath upon the Church (the Way) the Scripture says, but when Jesus encountered him, he put him on the road called straight, and it was there that his eyes were opened, the scales of blindness fell off, and he
(Acts 9:1 NKJV) Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest
(Acts 9:2 NKJV) and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

(Acts 9:3 NKJV) As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.

(Acts 9:4 NKJV) Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

(Acts 9:5 NKJV) And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

(Acts 9:6 NKJV) So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" Then the Lord said to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

(Acts 9:7 NKJV) And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.

(Acts 9:8 NKJV) Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

(Acts 9:9 NKJV) And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

(Acts 9:10 NKJV) Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

(Acts 9:11 NKJV) So the Lord said to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying.

(Acts 9:12 NKJV) "And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

(Acts 9:13 NKJV) Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem.

(Acts 9:14 NKJV) "And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

(Acts 9:15 NKJV) *But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.*

(Acts 9:16 NKJV) *"For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."*

(Acts 9:17 NKJV) *And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

(Acts 9:18 NKJV) ***Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.***

(Acts 9:19 NKJV) *So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.*

(Acts 9:20 NKJV) ***Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.***

Yes I am Narrow Minded / Call me Whatever you Will / He calls me Son

I am narrow-minded because Jesus Christ said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." He opened my eyes to see that. And now I live a life of freedom as He delivered me from the way of destruction, the things I was doing before He met me on the way that were destroying my life. And now I have freedom from death as I have not the hope from man, but the promise from God. Call me narrow-minded, call me a bigot, call me judgmental, I will not apologize to any of them, because He calls me "Son". Jesus is God's protection of me, and God's glorious provision for me.

(Acts 4:12 NKJV) "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Supplemental Notes:

Pope condemns use of religion for hate

By ARIEL DAVID, Associated Press Writer

Thu Oct 12, 10:22 AM ET

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI met Thursday with representatives of a Jewish group and said that religion should never be used to justify hatred and violence.

"May the Eternal One, our Father in heaven, bless every effort to eliminate from our world any misuse of religion as an excuse for hatred or violence," Benedict told a delegation of the Anti-Defamation League, a U.S. group that fights racism and anti-Semitism.

The comments came a month after Benedict's speech at a German university sparked anger in the Muslim world when he quoted a medieval text that characterized some of the Prophet Muhammad's teachings as "evil and inhuman" and called Islam a religion spread by the sword.

Since the uproar over the speech — which has raised a cloud over his planned visit next month to predominantly Islamic Turkey — Benedict has expressed his regrets for offending Muslims.

He has stressed that the quote didn't reflect his own opinion, saying his address was intended as an invitation to frank dialogue between religions.

Benedict repeated such a call in Thursday's Vatican meeting with the ADL, saying that while Catholic-Jewish relations have greatly improved over recent years, initial steps "toward a more open conversation on religious themes" have so far been too tentative.

"It is precisely at this level of frank exchange and dialogue that we will find the basis and the motivation for a solid and fruitful relationship," he said.

The aim of such dialogue, he said earlier in the speech, is "to build relationships not just of tolerance but of authentic respect."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL, said his group supports Benedict's desire for honest interfaith dialogue, particularly when it comes to relations with Muslims.

"If we really feel our faith is the only one that is right, how can we still have dialogue? The answer is that we must believe we have a truth, not the truth. As long as we believe that we can respect other truths," Foxman told The Associated Press in a telephone interview after the meeting. **"This is the dialogue we need to have, both Jews and Christians, with the Muslims."**

In his speech Thursday, the pope also reiterated his condemnation of anti-Semitism, saying that "the church deplores all forms of hatred or persecution directed against the Jews and all displays of anti-Semitism at any time and from any source."

Foxman said he had asked Benedict to be "a strong, constant voice against anti-Semitism," adding that the pope responded privately: "I will always be available for you as a voice against anti-Semitism."

The 4 Warnings of the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 7:13-29

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Continuation of Kingdom Constitution / Chp 5 – Inner / Chp 6 Outward Personal / Chp7 Relational

Jesus finishes His Sermon on the Mount, the constitution of His kingdom. In chapter 5, He addressed inner attitudes, chapter 6 He addressed outward activities that are determined in our heart (forgiving, fasting, seeking wealth, and worry), and now the first half of chapter 7 Jesus continues on the outward activities but they move away from the personal, to relational, as this passage deals with our dealings with others face to face (as Jesus will cover judging, casting pearls to swine's, doing the golden rule), and the Lord spoke to us again the only way to do these things is by asking – seeking – knocking to our Father in Heaven.

Jesus made Simple – Keep this Message Simple

Now, in the second half of chapter 7, verse 13 represents a shift in the Sermon on the Mount, as Jesus will close with the gospel presentation, and bringing 4 warnings to the hearers, and He does so by using “pairing” “two's”, comparing one to another, to keep it real simple, and real clear. We will see

- 2 gates, 2 ways, 2 destinations, and 2 groups of people (verses 13-14 – speaking of gates and paths)
- 2 kinds of trees, 2 kinds of fruit (verses 17-20 – speaking of good fruit and bad fruit)
- 2 groups at the judgment (verses 21-23 – speaking of people who call Him Lord, but He says depart from Me I never knew you)
- 2 kinds of builders, building 2 kinds of foundations (verses 24-28 – speaking of building on the rock compared to building on sand when the storms come)

Paul Taught & Warned in Acts 20

Now, the Apostle Paul, in his farewell gathering, knowing he was on his way to Rome where he could be beheaded, Paul gave final instruction to a group of elders from the church in Ephesus. “For three years,” he said, “I have taught you and warned you with many tears” (see Acts 20).

(Acts 20:20 NKJV) "how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,

(Acts 20:31 NKJV) "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

Shepherd needs to Feed & Warn / Malnutrition – Fat for the Kill

If a shepherd only warns the flock, but never feeds them, they will die of malnutrition. If he only feeds the flock and never warns them, he is simply fattening them up for the kill.

Sermon Mount / Blessed – Oh How Happy

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Good Shepherd both fed and warned His flock as the masses gathered around Him on the hillside. He began by talking about the pathway to happiness. His first words were “Blessed, or happy, are the poor in spirit. Happy are they who mourn. Happy are the meek.”

Highway to Holiness / Perfection – Adultery – Murder / Need a Savior

Then He talked about the highway of holiness. Many people thought they were pretty good and fairly holy because they didn't commit murder or adultery. But Jesus explained to them that if they were angry with their brother without a cause, they were guilty of murder. If they had looked at a woman with lust in their heart, they were adulterers. Such teaching would drive people to realize that no one is holy, that all are sinners, and that everyone needs a Savior.

Now Warnings / 2 Gates – Life & Destruction

Finally, He taught that the broad way is hazardous, concluding His Sermon with this sober exhortation: "There are choices you must make concerning the right way and the wrong way." There are two gates. Narrow is the gate that leads to life and broad is the way that leads to damnation. You've got to make a choice, and the wrong choice will be hazardous to your eternal state.

2 Trees – Wonder who to Listen To / 2 Foundations – Build Solid or lose Everything

There are two trees. When you're wondering whom you should listen to or receive from, check out the fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Watch out for deception. There are two foundations. The wise man builds his house upon the rock, and the foolish man builds his house upon the sand. The wrong choice will lead to destruction. You'll lose everything.

Outline

Outline for the 4 Warnings of the Sermon on the Mount

1. Warning on the Path – There is Only 1 Way
2. Warning of the Persons – Beware of False Prophets
3. Warning of the Produce – You will know them by their Fruits
4. Warning of the Place – Build on a Solid Foundation

Warning of the Path – There is Only 1 Way

(Matthew 7:13 NKJV) "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.

(Matthew 7:14 NKJV) "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Last Study

I refer you back to our last study as we look in depth of why there is only 1 way, and the warning to all who would try to deviate from that path. God makes it simple, one way, and He does that for our protection and because of His great provision, the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Warning of the Persons – Beware of False Prophets

(Matthew 7:15 NKJV) "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.

Not to Judge – But Identify / Look & Sound like Us / Scriptures Tell us – Draw & Fleece

We are not to judge them (Matthew 7:1-5), but we are to identify them. How we identify them, the Scriptures tell us what they will do, because many times they look and say the same things you do; they have the same clothes, they baah like sheep just like you:

- First, In Acts 20, Paul said the same thing to the elders at Ephesus: "When I leave, men will rise up, and draw disciples to themselves." He called such men ravenous wolves, even as Jesus did here. How will you know them? Acts 20 says they will seek to draw men after themselves instead of pointing them to Jesus.
- Secondly, 2 Peter 2:3 says these ravenous wolves will make merchandise of you. They'll go for your pocketbooks, concerned not so much about feeding you as they are about fleecing you. The word ravenous where used elsewhere in the Scripture speaks of "extortionist". They talk 10 minutes about Jesus and 30 minutes about money.

(Ephesians 4:11 NKJV) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,

*(Ephesians 4:12 NKJV) for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,
(Ephesians 4:13 NKJV) till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;
(Ephesians 4:14 NKJV) that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,*

*(Acts 20:29 NKJV) "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.
(Acts 20:30 NKJV) "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.
(Acts 20:31 NKJV) "Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*

*(2 Peter 2:1 NKJV) But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.
(2 Peter 2:2 NKJV) And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.
(2 Peter 2:3 NKJV) By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.*

Didache

The writings that circulated among the early church, called the Didache, specifically stated that if a man said, "Thus saith the Lord. I have need of a steak dinner and a new garment," he was to be branded as a false prophet immediately. Beware of any man who preaches about his own needs. That would be the same if a person would come and say that God said if I don't raise 5 million dollars that He was going to kill me.

Wolves Draw & Merchandise / Jesus Affirms – Tells how to Identify

So the wolves will come to draw men to themselves, and make merchandise of the flock. So we aren't to judge and condemn them, but we are to identify them according to the Word, the Scriptures. Jesus affirms this in the next passage, and tells us how to identify them.

Warning of the Produce – You'll know them by their Fruit

(Matthew 7:16 NKJV) "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

(Matthew 7:17 NKJV) "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

(Matthew 7:18 NKJV) "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

(Matthew 7:19 NKJV) "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(Matthew 7:20 NKJV) "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Not Judge – Inspect Fruit / Not Flawless – But Fruitfulness

We are not to be judges, but we are to look for fruit. The fruit we are to look for is not flawless, because we are all full of flaws and shortcomings. No, the issue is not flawlessness, but fruitfulness. The tree that has a lot of leaves but no real fruit is going to be dealt with severely when it is hewn down and cast into the fire.

Fruits of Intimacy – Not Work

How important though that we look at verses 21-23 to see what kind of fruit, for we will see that it is not fruits of work, but intimacy.

(Matthew 7:21 NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 7:22 NKJV) "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

They Build Orphanages / Context Fleecing – Drawing / Teaching Another Way

Jesus is saying plenty of people will come, some very sincere, and call Jesus Lord, they will build hospitals, orphanages, do great works, be heralded as wonderful Christians but in the end they will hear the words, depart from Me I never you! The context is men drawing people to themselves, fleecing the

flock, and warning #1, they may even preach there are others ways to heaven, oh yes Jesus is the Way, but don't forget to add this, this and this. They may teach Jesus Christ, and.....you fill in the blank. Jesus Christ and keeping the Sabbath, Jesus Christ and do these rituals, something other than, Jesus Christ, period!

But some are Wonderful / Correct Doctrine / Left Behind

But they may have preached the right way, the only way, they may have had their doctrine correct, they may have filled churches with there great preaching (I think of the Pastor in the Left Behind Movies, after he was left behind throwing that baseball in the sanctuary, saying I knew your word, I taught it, and I was good, but I didn't know you).

May have Right Words – but Never Intimacy / Outward Happening – Nothing Inside / Father's Club

What Jesus was saying they may have said all the right words, did wonderful things, but there was never a relationship, there was never intimacy. The word for I never "knew" you is first used in the New Testament in the context of a husband and wife having intimacy. Jesus is saying there was all kinds of action outward, but nothing happening inside. I don't want my kids having some "father's club". I don't want them hanging a picture up of me and saying that is dad, and once a week we go and talk about him, and sing songs about him, and have little envelopes to give money to his causes. I don't want a father's club with my kids, I want to walk with them, to hold them, to talk with them, to have intimacy with them. I want to coach there football team, high-five them when they score a touchdown, I want intimacy. That is the difference between religion and a relationship. There is religious facts, and then there is the relationship:

*(Matthew 1:25 KJV) And **knew her not** till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.*

Miraculous not always God / The Anti-Christ

Just because there is something that appears to be miraculous going on doesn't mean that it is the Lord.

The Anti-christ will come doing signs and miracles, and many will think it is the Lord:

(2 Thessalonians 2:9 NKJV) The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

(2 Thessalonians 2:10 NKJV) and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

They Say – Did we Not / Always be Wary

Notice that many will say, "Did not we prophesy?" Always be wary of people who promote themselves in ministry. Whenever I hear a ministry say, "Look what we are doing," bells ring, and red flags go up in my mind because Jesus taught humility and secrecy.

How Do It? / Lying – Power of Devil – Pharaoh Magicians / Lord Used Because Love the Old Lady

Many of these wolves and false trees will come to Jesus and say, "But, Lord, didn't we prophesy? Didn't we cast out demons? Didn't we do miracles?" The question arises, "How could these wolves, these false leaders, these bogus trees do these things? How could they prophesy, cast out demons, and do miracles if they were fakes?" There are three possible answers.

1. One is that they were lying. They never did them. Maybe they just thought about doing them, or thought they were doing them.
2. Second, it is possible they were doing these things in the power of the devil. The Book of Acts talks about Simon the Sorcerer, who did miracles, but not in the power of the Spirit. In Moses' day, Pharaoh's magicians copied, to a certain extent, the miracles of God, but it was by the power of the devil.
3. Third, the Lord could have been simply using them in spite of themselves. The Lord uses TV evangelist because He loves that old in Kansas, who truly believes the Words, even those the vessel is a fake. The Lord used Balaam, even though Balaam was not right with Him. The Lord prophesied through King Saul, even though Saul's heart was far from Him. He spoke prophetically through Caiaphas the high priest, saying, "Should not one man die for the nation?" although Caiaphas knew it not.

People may Say I Don't Want Christianity

There are those who see these false teachers and know it, and say if that is Christianity then I don't want anything to do with it; well the Lord is saying neither do I, and I will say to them, depart from Me, I never knew you.

Warning of Place - Build on the Solid Foundation

(Matthew 7:24 NKJV) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

(Matthew 7:25 NKJV) "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

(Matthew 7:26 NKJV) "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

(Matthew 7:27 NKJV) "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Familiar Story / Same Material – Same Location / 1 Stood – 1 Fall / Diff was Foundation / Palestine

Here is the familiar story of two men building houses. Both men used the same material. Both built in the same geographical location. But one man's house stood while the other man's house collapsed. The difference was in the foundations. One built on the rock, the other on the sand. In Palestine, all land becomes parched in the summer, causing even the sandy and unstable areas to appear rock-solid. The true test doesn't come until the rain falls. Jesus here is saying, "Be careful where you build your house. Build on something tried and true. Build upon the Rock."

We all Building Something / Foundation Same till Storm Comes – When Storm Comes

We are building something. We are building relationships in marriage, building careers, building a home to live in, in the gym building our bodies, learning a trade, building towards retirement, studying at the university. Whatever you are building, must be built on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. We must build on the narrow way, the Rock. Notice that it says that when the storm comes, not if the storm come. Many a men and woman today have yet to have the storm come, but it will says Jesus. It may be the storm of just growing old, as the body doesn't respond as it once did; the eyes start to go, the organs fail, then the ultimate storm of death. You know, for people who don't know Christ, like those houses built in Palestine, their foundation looks the same to them as the foundation of the Christian. They say I see no difference in their foundation as mine, we live the same quality of life, we watch football, we like these same activities, I see no difference in our foundations. That is all fine until the storm comes, when love is lost, when death of a loved one comes, when illness comes; and the Christian says but I still have hope, I still know that I am not alone; I have a hope for tomorrow. The foundations look the same until the storm comes, but sadly for many unbelievers it is too late, and all is lost. If you do not know Christ today I pray that you will build your life today, on the solid foundation, Jesus Christ, before the storms of life come, and you be ruined, yes even lost to hear those words, depart from Me, I never knew you. The Lord says today is the day, don't wait until tomorrow:

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

(2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV) For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Who Builds on Sand – The One who Hears & Does

Verse 24 - "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them - Who is the one who builds his house upon the rock? The one who hears the Words of the Lord and does them. Who is the one who builds on the sand? The one who hears His Words but doesn't do them.

(James 1:22 NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Great Dangers for Students / Hears but Leaves and gossips

One of the great dangers for we who love the Scriptures is to think hearing is equivalent to doing. You might say tonight, "Yeah, I agree with the teaching Jesus gave on judging. I shouldn't judge. I need to show mercy. Right on." But if you leave here and immediately turn to someone and start gossiping or analyzing, judging or critiquing, you're foolish, and your house will collapse.

Bible Students – can Conclude they Hear & Agreeing – thus they are Doing / Wise puts into Action

We have such need to hear these words of Jesus because Bible students are in great danger of being foolish men who erroneously conclude that because they are hearing the truth and agreeing with the truth, they are automatically practicing the truth. The wise man not only hears Jesus' words but also puts them into practice. And his house stands when the storm comes.

Jesus Teaches with Authority

(Matthew 7:28 NKJV) And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

(Matthew 7:29 NKJV) for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Teaching Astonished / Storms not Blow us Away – Only His Words

Truly these last 3 chapters are amazing teaching, all that Jesus spoke, the man who hears, can't help but be blown away. That when the storms of life blow, we who have built upon the Rock, Jesus Christ, will not be moved, not blown away, for only His Words blow us away, but never the storms.

Matthew 8

3 Healings of Jesus (8:1-15) – Part 1

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person chp1-4 / Principles chp5-7 / But Does have Power to Carry Out Principles / Election Year

Matthew is the gospel of the King. In the first four chapters, His Person is revealed as we looked at His lineage, birth, baptism, and wilderness trial. In chapters 5 through 7, His principles are recorded as we looked into His teachings on the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom. But the question arises: Does Jesus have the power to carry out those principles? Or is He, like so many of our leaders (as the election draws near and we are bombarded with all the campaigning), a nice person with good principles, yet impotent to really make a difference? In Matthew 8, and 9 we find the answer as we see the power of Jesus released. In the following three chapters, Matthew records twelve miracles which show Jesus not only had the rhetoric, but He had the dynamic to make things happen, He had the power to back His words, and what words they are.

12 Miracles of Matthew 8-9:

1. The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
2. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
3. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)
4. Healing of Multitudes (8:16-22)
5. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)
6. Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)
7. Jesus Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)
8. Jesus Heals a woman with 12 year Issue of Blood (9:18-22)
9. Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)
10. Jesus Heals 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)
11. Jesus Heals a Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)
12. Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

3 Miracles / How Healed – Who Healed

In today's study we will look at 3 of those 12 miracles, we will look at 3 healings. As we look at these 3 healings our hearts will be warmed and uplifted as we see 2 things:

1. Who God Healed.
2. How God Healed

Outline for Study of the 3 Healings (Matthew 9:1-15):

- The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
- The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
- The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)

People Shocked by Who Jesus Healed / 3 Groups Looked Down Upon / All 1st Healing

As we read today we will see that many people of that day were shocked by who He healed and what He said, because that culture, there were three groups of people who were absolutely, irrefutably looked down upon. The lepers, the Gentiles, and woman; all three who He heals first after the Constitution of His Kingdom.

Lepers – AIDS of the Day

The first group was lepers. Lepers were believed to have been smitten by God. Lepers were banished from society. Leprosy was the AIDS of that day (as people today treat HIV positive people as lepers, how sad).

Woman / Birth of Girl Party Over

The second group was women. Jewish men felt that women were necessary for the propagation of the race, but outside of that, they didn't have a whole lot of value. In fact, if you were living in Jesus' day and were giving birth to a baby, your friends and relatives would gather in your house with presents in hand, anxiously waiting for the news of the baby's birth. If the midwife came out and said, "It's a boy!" celebration would follow. Gifts would be exchanged, and your friends and relatives would stay at your home for three days in celebration and feasting. But if the midwife came out and said, "It's a girl," your friends and relatives would immediately leave, taking their presents with them. Woman you have come a long way today, and you can thank Jesus Christ, for everywhere the Gospel has gone woman have been elevated, but where the gospel has not (China, Mid-East, India) woman are still in many ways looked at like this.

Gentiles / For the Fire of Hell / Jewish Prayer

The third group looked down upon was Gentiles—everyone who was not a Jew. The Jews basically believed that Gentiles existed only as fuel for the fires of hell. If a Jew brushed his clothes against a Gentile on the street he would go home and burn those clothes and go through a ceremonial cleansing. The Jewish men had a prayer every morning they would recite, they would say Lord I thank you that I am not a dog, a gentile, or a woman.

First 3 Healings – These 3 / Heaven is going to be Big – Amazing who is There or Not There

With this in mind, check out Matthew 8, the first three healing miracles Matthew recorded involved a leper, a Gentile, and a woman. Matthew's readers must have said, "What are you trying to tell us, Matthew, that the kingdom of God includes lepers, Gentiles, and women? This thing is more inclusive and more expansive than anything we've ever heard." People are going to be there that no thought would, andthere will not be people there that many expect to be there. Most amazing is that we will be there (if you have committed your life to Christ).

3 Ways God Healed / Personal – Intercession - God Choosing

Also, as we read we will see 3 powerful healings that will give us great insight into how God heals, and prayerfully we come back to our memory should or when the day comes that we need a healing touch from the Lord. We will see personal request for healing (with the leper), intercessory request for healing (the centurion for his servant), and God just healing with no personal or intercessory request (as with Peter's mother-in-law).

The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)

(Matthew 8:1 NKJV) When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

(Matthew 8:2 NKJV) And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

(Matthew 8:3 NKJV) Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

(Matthew 8:4 NKJV) And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Fitting 1st Miracle / Leprosy a Picture of Sin / Lev 13 – Begins under Skin / Talmud 61

I think it fitting that the first miracle recorded in the New Testament deals with the cleansing of a leper because Isaiah 1:5, 6 makes it clear that leprosy is a picture of sin. Leviticus 13 teaches that leprosy begins beneath the surface of the skin—just as sin does. What you see outwardly in people's lives is only the result of what is going on within them. We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we're sinners. Leviticus 13 goes on to say that leprosy, like sin, spreads throughout the body. Like sin, one could control it for a season. But if he didn't destroy it, it would eventually destroy him. The Talmud taught that leprosy was second only to death in its list of sixty-one defilements. He who had leprosy was as good as dead because his disease would separate him from the rest of the community. When a person contracted leprosy, he was forced to live only with fellow lepers. If he had to come to the city, the Law required him to cry out, "Unclean, unclean," in order for everyone within a one hundred fifty-foot radius to back away and clear the area. In the beginning stages, the skin of a leper would take on a hard, glossy appearance. As it progressed, it caused his nerves to become numb, which in turn led to the loss of fingers and toes. What a picture of what sin does to us; it is glossy at first, but then it hardens us, deadens us, and eventually numbs us, then it starts to take life away. How divinely inspired, that immediately after the Sermon on the Mount a leper is healed, because after reading the Sermon on the Mount, there are none clean, we all feel stricken by sin, lepers if you will, who need to be touched by God: *(Isaiah 1:5 NKJV) Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints.*

(Isaiah 1:6 NKJV) From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

Rabbis – Felt Judgment of God / Smitten

The rabbis felt strongly that leprosy was a direct judgment from God. In fact, the word "leprosy" means "smitten." They felt that those who had leprosy were being judged by God and therefore must be terrible people.

Imagine – as he Comes to Jesus / Go Away Low Life / When I Saved

If you can imagine this, this leper comes to Jesus, with sores oozing, skin discolored, did he have all his extremities we do not know, but when he came you can be sure the sea parted because everyone would be getting out of the way. They would look with detest, they would look with judgmental attitudes, hey why is he coming before Jesus, he is the scum of the earth, he is the plague of the earth, he needs to crawl back to his hole, go back to his leper colony and let us come and behold Jesus. That is what the world often thinks of the down and outers, the low-lives of the world. I remember when I first got saved, in my bedroom, I was walking on a cloud enjoying the freedom of forgiveness, the refreshment of the cleansing of my sin; so I went to the only think I knew for church (my childhood upbringing), and I remember walking up to the doors of the church and I was about 5 minutes late, service had already started, and these 2 ladies standing outside talking, I could hear them (I'm sure they wanted me to hear) talking as they looked at me with disgust, they said can you believe the nerve of people, to come to God's house late, and then dressed like that (I was wearing shorts in Florida). I wanted to stop and say if you knew where God has pulled me from, where my life was heading, you would say God you are amazing, but instead they looked on with disgust. God lead me on from that church just a few weeks later; but I went to a Calvary Chapel, and to be honest it wasn't that much better for the first year, people kept their distance from me, and question if I was just "trying out" this Jesus things.

Reaches Down – Reaches Out / Imagine the People throwing Stones / Jesus never turned Away

Verse 3 - Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. - How important for us to look at this story, and see how God reaches down, and reaches out to those the world has written off. Heaven is going to be big folks. To this one with gross, running sores, and a strained voice, odor emanating, and digits missing, Jesus could have said, "Be clean," and the guy would have been clean. But what did Jesus do? He touched him. Imagine after all those years of no one touching Him, all those years of hearing the yells of the people 'a leper – a leper". People running to the other side of the street when he walked, parents running out to grab their children, all the years of hearing the taunts of the children, how many times in his life people would throw stones at him, get away from here, every night he would go to sleep alone, wake-up alone, no wife to hold, no kids to kiss, every night falling asleep alone knowing tomorrow brought no change, nor hope of change, except another day for his disease to worsen. Yet Jesus doesn't say, "be clean", Jesus purposely,

specifically, touches him. How the touch of Jesus would melt anyone, yet imagine how it melted this man. If Jesus did nothing else but touch him, how that would have been enough, but Jesus touches him, no doubt looks into his eyes, and says "I am willing, be cleansed". The words of Jesus, yes I am able, yes I am willing, because your worth to me, you are priceless to me, regardless of the value the world puts on you. Oh how I remember those same words (in a sense), when the Lord touched me, when I saw my worth to Him, even though I felt worthless in this world, as everyday I awoke to hopelessness because I knew all the world had to offer was emptiness and vanity. Did you know our Lord never refused anyone who came to Him looking for help? He never said, "No, I don't have time for you." In every instance, He dealt with people graciously, mercifully, and compassionately.

Christian don't make the Mistake / Love these words – Be Clean

Regardless of the sin you might be struggling with right now, don't make the mistake of countless thousands of lepers saying, "I need to stay away from Jesus. I'm unclean." Jesus can handle your sin. He's not shocked or horrified by it. He's not embarrassed of it. Jesus touched the leper, and He can handle your sin as well. The biggest mistake people make concerning Jesus is thinking, "When I get it together, then I'll let the Lord come near me. When I deal with my leprosy, then I'll let the Lord touch me." But they'll never get it together until the Lord touches them! You who are faltering in faith, struggling in sin, caught up in carnality, I have news for you. Jesus can handle it. Not only are there those who say, "Don't touch me until I get it together," but there are those who say, "Touch me, Lord. I want to come into Your presence. I want to lift my hands and sing Your praise. But don't change me. I like myself just the way I am." If the Lord touches you, you will inevitably be changed. If you don't want to be changed, it's vain to seek His touch. How I love these words of Jesus. He said, "I will. I will! Be thou clean."

The Healing – Personal / Worshipped Him

Verse 2 - And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean – Notice this healing is a personal request for healing from this man. He comes to Jesus, boldly I might add, and says I know that you are able, and submit to if you are willing. The Constitution of the Kingdom, not thy will but your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. When we need healing, we shall boldly come and say Lord I know you are able, but I submit to whether you are willing, for let your will be done, I know Your ways are above my ways. Christian, when we can mature ourselves to that place, we will be like this leper, one who can worship in the good seasons as well as the bad seasons. Notice he came to Jesus and worshipped Him. The first time we saw this word used in the New Testament was when the wise men came to worship the babe of Bethlehem. We worship Him for who He is, not what He can do, and when we worship Him for who He is, we will praise Him for everything He does. We will be worshippers of God, we will live a life of worship, and we will then fulfill why we have been created. *(Matthew 6:10 NKJV) Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

(Matthew 2:1 NKJV) Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,

(Matthew 2:2 NKJV) saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

Tell No One – Go Show Yourself

Verse 4 - And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."– Now, many speculate that Jesus is saying don't tell anyone because it is not yet my time, I don't want people to try to make me king, or follow me as a circus show, but I think it was too late for all that anyways, He just performed the miracle in front of multitude. What I believe Jesus is saying is saying is don't hang around and tell people your testimony, don't do interviews with CNN and Katie Couric, make a beeline directly to the Temple for the High Priest to examine you. In Chapter 13 and 14 of Leviticus, the priests were given instruction how to diagnose and deal with lepers among them. But chapter 14 goes on to instruct on what to do with a leper that was healed (but no leper was ever healed, the law sat on the books for 1500 years for this very day). In Leviticus 14 it says the High Priest had to examine this man and if he was indeed healed of leprosy, the priest was to make sacrifice on behalf of that man. Jesus told the leper to do this as a testimony to the high priest (Levt 13 says to Aarron or his sons and they were the High Priests). Annas and Caiaphas, were the High Priests, they had to examine him, and declare him clean, the very same men who would

condemn Jesus, even though they saw Him heal what was considered impossible, 1500 years this law never used, no doubt they had to go pull out the instructions to know what to do.

(Luke 3:2 NKJV) while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

(John 18:13 NKJV) And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.

(John 18:14 NKJV) Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Leviticus 14

The ceremony was to take 2 turtledoves, one was to be killed draining its blood in an earthen vessel with water running over it (picture of Jesus the earthen vessel filled with living waters – John 4). Then the living bird would be dipped in the blood and water and let free, and the blood and the water would be sprinkled 7 times (with the brush made of hyssop – Ex 12 the Passover) over him that was cleansed. After 8 days the High Priest would sacrifice a lamb with oil, dip the blood on his right ear, right thumb, then do the same with the oil, all a picture of those that have been cleansed will be lead by the Spirit (oil) in all that they hear, do, and go. After this the High Priest was to call all the nation together, and would pronounce him clean, and accepted back into the community, his family. Jesus was sending a message of love to the religious center of Israel, that lepers are being transformed, and I offer that same love to you.

(Leviticus 14:1 NKJV) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

(Leviticus 14:2 NKJV) "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest.

(Leviticus 14:3 NKJV) "And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine him; and indeed, if the leprosy is healed in the leper,

(Leviticus 14:4 NKJV) "then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living and clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop.

(Leviticus 14:5 NKJV) "And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

(Leviticus 14:6 NKJV) "As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water.

(Leviticus 14:7 NKJV) "And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.

(John 4:10 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

(Exodus 12:22 NKJV) "And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.

(Psalms 51:7 NKJV) Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Jesus has the Power

Verse 4 - and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them - "Jesus said, because in Leviticus 14, there was a prescribed cleansing ceremony for lepers who were healed. The interesting thing is, although the ceremony had been on the books for fifteen hundred years, never was one leper cleansed until this man. Oh yes, Jesus has the power to back His principles, and He has that same power in your life and my life today.

3 Healings of Jesus (8:1-15) – Part 2

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person chp1-4 / Principles chp5-7 / But Does have Power to Carry Out Principles / Election Year

Matthew is the gospel of the King. In the first four chapters, His Person is revealed as we looked at His lineage, birth, baptism, and wilderness trial. In chapters 5 through 7, His principles are recorded as we looked into His teachings on the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom. But the question arises: Does Jesus have the power to carry out those principles? Or is He, like so many of our leaders (as the election draws near and we are bombarded with all the campaigning), a nice person with good principles, yet impotent to really make a difference? In Matthew 8, and 9 we find the answer as we see the power of Jesus released. In the following three chapters, Matthew records twelve miracles which show Jesus not only had the rhetoric, but He had the dynamic to make things happen, He had the power to back His words, and what words they are.

12 Miracles of Matthew 8-9:

1. The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
2. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
3. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)
4. Healing of Multitudes (8:16-22)
5. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)
6. Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)
7. Jesus Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)
8. Jesus Heals a woman with 12 year Issue of Blood (9:18-22)
9. Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)
10. Jesus Heals 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)
11. Jesus Heals a Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)
12. Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

3 Miracles / How Healed – Who Healed

In today's study we will look at 3 of those 12 miracles, we will look at 3 healings. As we look at these 3 healings our hearts will be warmed and uplifted as we see 2 things:

1. Who God Healed.
2. How God Healed

Outline for Study of the 3 Healings (Matthew 9:1-15):

- The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
- The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
- The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)

People Shocked by Who Jesus Healed / 3 Groups Looked Down Upon / All 1st Healing

As we read today we will see that many people of that day were shocked by who He healed and what He said, because that culture, there were three groups of people who were absolutely, irrefutably looked down upon. The lepers, the Gentiles, and woman; all three who He heals first after the Constitution of His Kingdom.

Lepers – AIDS of the Day

The first group was lepers. Lepers were believed to have been smitten by God. Lepers were banished from society. Leprosy was the AIDS of that day (as people today treat HIV positive people as lepers, how sad).

Woman / Birth of Girl Party Over

The second group was women. Jewish men felt that women were necessary for the propagation of the race, but outside of that, they didn't have a whole lot of value. In fact, if you were living in Jesus' day and were giving birth to a baby, your friends and relatives would gather in your house with presents in hand, anxiously waiting for the news of the baby's birth. If the midwife came out and said, "It's a boy!" celebration would follow. Gifts would be exchanged, and your friends and relatives would stay at your home for three days in celebration and feasting. But if the midwife came out and said, "It's a girl," your friends and relatives would immediately leave, taking their presents with them. Woman you have come a long way today, and you can thank Jesus Christ, for everywhere the Gospel has gone woman have been elevated, but where the gospel has not (China, Mid-East, India) woman are still in many ways looked at like this.

Gentiles / For the Fire of Hell / Jewish Prayer

The third group looked down upon was Gentiles—everyone who was not a Jew. The Jews basically believed that Gentiles existed only as fuel for the fires of hell. If a Jew brushed his clothes against a Gentile on the street he would go home and burn those clothes and go through a ceremonial cleansing. The Jewish men had a prayer every morning they would recite, they would say Lord I thank you that I am not a dog, a gentile, or a woman.

First 3 Healings – These 3 / Heaven is going to be Big – Amazing who is There or Not There

With this in mind, check out Matthew 8, the first three healing miracles Matthew recorded involved a leper, a Gentile, and a woman. Matthew's readers must have said, "What are you trying to tell us, Matthew, that the kingdom of God includes lepers, Gentiles, and women? This thing is more inclusive and more expansive than anything we've ever heard." People are going to be there that no thought would, andthere will not be people there that many expect to be there. Most amazing is that we will be there (if you have committed your life to Christ).

3 Ways God Healed / Personal – Intercession - God Choosing

Also, as we read we will see 3 powerful healings that will give us great insight into how God heals, and prayerfully we come back to our memory should or when the day comes that we need a healing touch from the Lord. We will see personal request for healing (with the leper), intercessory request for healing (the centurion for his servant), and God just healing with no personal or intercessory request (as with Peter's mother-in-law).

The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)

Able – But Willing / Weis Translation / Never tired of Us – His Children

The leper would come and not question Jesus' ability to heal, but His willingness. He would say Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean. Isn't that like us, we who call Him Lord; we have no doubt of His power to heal us, but at times we do question His willingness. I like the Weis translation, which has Jesus' reply to the leper, "I desire it with all My heart. The word used there in the original Greek means to desire greatly, love to, it would be my great pleasure to do so. Maybe you question His willingness because you have been here before; Lord, I know I have asked you this 30 times before, but will you help me with my addiction, will you help me with my temper, my lust, my treatment of my spouse or children, I know you are able, but are you willing after all these failures, are you tired of my failings, maybe you even

wondering if He has cast you off (as they had cast off the leper).....Jesus would say to you this time and the next times, I desire it with all My heart, it would be My great pleasure to do so! Hear those words today, hear the heart the Father has for His children, how precious we are to Him.
*(Matthew 8:2 NKJV) And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."
(Matthew 8:3 NKJV) Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing (I desire it with all My heart); be cleansed."
Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)

(Matthew 8:5 NKJV) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,

(Matthew 8:6 NKJV) saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

(Matthew 8:7 NKJV) And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

(Matthew 8:8 NKJV) The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.

(Matthew 8:9 NKJV) "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

(Matthew 8:10 NKJV) When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

(Matthew 8:11 NKJV) "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 8:12 NKJV) "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

(Matthew 8:13 NKJV) Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Occupier / Respect-Power-Wealth / Matters Not – Who He is – Not Who we Are

Keep in mind that the Romans had conquered Israel and were therefore the despised occupiers of the land. Furthermore, to attain the position of centurion, one had to prove himself a valiant warrior in battle. Therefore, the centurion in this story was not merely a soldier in the occupying forces—he was a commanding officer, a man of great power and respect (We also know, from Luke's account (7:3-6) of the same incident, that he was wealthy, for he had many servants.) So, in the passage before us, Matthew paints a picture of a wealthy Roman approaching a poor Galilean, a powerful centurion seeking out a meek Carpenter, a mighty man of war addressing the Prince of Peace. What a contrast. But what do these things matter when a person is in need, power, respect, and wealth mean nothing when faced with something outside of one's control. It becomes an issue of who He is, not who we are.

Note: In Luke's account it says that he sent servants to Jesus. It appears to be a contradiction, but in the Greek sentence structure the Centurion coming his servants coming still represent the same, because the servants represented the Centurion, and only spoke on behalf of the Centurion.

Not Worthy – Ceremonially Unclean / Knew Jesus only Needed to Speak

Verse 8 - *The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof.* – this Centurion was very familiar with Jewish Law, we read in Luke 7 that he had a great love for the Jewish nation and had even built them a synagogue there in the region. The Centurion therefore must have known the tradition that a Jew that entered a Gentiles home was ceremonially unclean (John 18:28). The Centurion felt unworthy to allow Jesus to have to suffer such a thing, and go through all the inconvenience of becoming ceremonially clean again. But, he also knew enough, that all Jesus had to do was speak the word and it would be done.

I Understand How Kingdom Works / All Rome behind my Command

Verse 9 - *"For I also am a man under authority* - The man says all you have to do is speak your word, and it will be done. He is saying I understand how a kingdom works; I understand the authority behind the kingdom. As a centurion, when I give a command, I have all of the Roman Empire behind my command. All my commands are based on the will and law of Rome, and all of Rome and Caesar are behind them to

make it happen. This centurion is saying I know the kingdom you are part of has the power to move heaven and earth, because you have the will and law of God and heaven behind you.

Jesus Marveled / Mark 6

Verse 10 - When Jesus heard it, He marveled -Jesus only marvels twice in the whole Bible. Mark 6:6, as He marvels at the people's unbelief in His home town; here He marvels at this man's belief (and he was a Gentile).

(Mark 6:4 NKJV) But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house."

(Mark 6:5 NKJV) Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.

(Mark 6:6 NKJV) And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Not Found Such Faith / Jesus Proclaiming / Heaven Huge – See that in Our Community

Verse 10 – I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! - Jesus is proclaiming right here that the Gentiles (non-Jewish people) will inherit the Kingdom of God (totally blowing the Jewish people, especially the religious leaders away). This Kingdom of God is big, it will include people that the world has cast off and written off. Jesus sends the message loud and clear, heaven is huge, and my love goes out to all men and woman, my heaven is open to the lepers, the Gentiles, to woman, and all others that will come. May we see what the Lord is doing around the world, around this community, in churches that have different flavors, and different doctrines, dogmas, but agreeing on the Way. Heaven is going to be huge, because our God is huge.

Catch This / Sends Message to High Priest – Now Centurions & Herod / Heads of State

Jesus will minister to a Centurion! Did you catch that, Jesus will minister to a Centurion! Jesus will minister to the very group that would nail Him to the cross. Just as we saw with the leper, Jesus sends the leper back to the very High Priests that will condemn Him, He sends them a message of love, and here in this story the very same group that would in the future crucify Him, drive spikes through His hands and feet, pierce His side with a sword, Jesus would send them this message of love. By the way, since this is Capernaum, than this centurion and these soldiers would all be under King Herod, and the message goes all the way up. In just 2 healings Jesus sends His message of love to the heads of State, and head of the Religious community.

(Matthew 27:54 NKJV) So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Sends Warning / Religious People / Diagnostic Question

But Jesus also sends out a warning, He says many who you have cast off (referring to a Gentile, who they thought were only to fuel the flames of hell) will come into the Kingdom, but many of the fine, upright, outstanding, religious people will be cast into outer darkness, eternal torment, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus is saying the people who think they are the chosen ones, because of their religious affiliation, because they were "born" into it, raised since a baby in it, they have the leaders, the teachers, the books, and the building, but never had the Person, the intimacy with Him, will perish. What a word of warning today. I ask the diagnostic question to people to gauge if they truly understand the only way of salvation; I'll ask if you were to die tonight, and you stood before God and he said why should I let you into My heaven, what would be your answer. I hear all kinds of answers, they may say because I am a good person – wrong there is none good the Bible says. They may say I served in the church for years – wrong God says I wanted a relationship not a sacrifice. They may say because I am a, fill in the denomination, and wrong again. The answer is because I am a sinner, and Jesus died for my sin (I refer you back to our study in chapter 7 on the 4 warnings of Christ and our study on Why 1 Way). There is only 1 Way, through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

(Matthew 8:11 NKJV) "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 8:12 NKJV) "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

(Matthew 19:17 NKJV) So He said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

(Hosea 6:6 NKJV) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

(Matthew 7:21 NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 7:22 NKJV) "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?"

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Billy Sunday

Jesus sends the message of love, but also warning, giving the hearers plenty of time to change mind and direction, and so He does today. I am reminded of the story of when the great evangelist Billy Sunday was preaching on this passage on the weeping and gnashing of teeth, and this skeptic in the crowd, a prideful woman enjoying her sin, she said but Mister Sunday what about us people that don't have any teeth, drawing a chuckle from many other critics; Billy Sunday, without missing a beat said maam, for you, teeth will be provided.

How He Healed

Now we saw in the case of the leper we saw personal petition for healing, and we saw the context of that being that the leper came worshipping, submitting to the will of Jesus. Here we see the power of intercession as this Centurion goes the distance to intercede on behalf of someone near to his heart. May we be like the centurion, be people of intercession for those who are hurting. I refer you back to our study in Exodus 28, speaking of the High Priest having the people on their heart, and bearing their burdens upon his shoulder through prayer.

I Will heal Him / No Mention of Gender / Jesus leaves Multitude / Lost in a Crowd / I Desire

Verse 8 - And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him – I love this that Jesus says I will heal "him", there was never a mention of male or female, I love that, Jesus knew, and Jesus knows, He knows your name. Jesus says I will come, I will leave the multitude, I will leave where it is happening, and I will come to the individual. Beloved, if you ever have felt lost in the crowd, know that Jesus sees through the crowds of people, Jesus leaves where all the excitement is, and just as He gave that leper a private audience with the King of kings, so too does he do for this servant, that nobody knows the name of – Jesus says I will come, the context of the story is that Jesus immediately started that way to him. It was as if Jesus was saying this servant is ill, then I will leave immediately to come to him. Beloved, Jesus will see through the crowds of people, all the excitement over here or there, and He will come to you immediately, He will give private audience with you, for He says, "I desire it, I desire you, with all My heart."

The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)

(Matthew 8:14 NKJV) Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.

(Matthew 8:15 NKJV) So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

Jaws Drop – Leper/Gentile/Woman / Cast off Religious Garments

The 3rd healing, Jesus heals a woman and jaws would be dropped; a leper, a Gentile, and now a woman. The message is loud, the message is clear, cast off your old religious garments, and come and see the glory of the Lord.

How He Healed / Thy Will be Done

Notice this third healing there is no mention of intercession, no personal request, Jesus chooses to heal. What do I glean from these three healings, I should ask, and continue to ask personally for healing, I should intercede for the healing of others, and I should trust, God will heal as He chooses. In all sickness may I be as the leper, coming to worship Him, continuing to worship, and saying let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, I submit to your will, and worship you because you are my Lord.

Jesus touches Her

Jesus touches her, and what does she immediately do, she serves them. You can always tell the person that has been touched by the Lord, because they serve. It is a natural response to His touch.

Miracle 13

I said we read of 12 miracles in these 2 chapters but I think I missed one here. This should be miracle number 13, and that is that we don't read of Peter's wife yelling at him; "I can't believe you brought God to the house without with out calling me in advance. The house is a mess, the kids left their clothes all over the place, dirty dishes in the sink, look at my hair, we have nothing to eat. I think that is a miracle that a woman had unexpected company and she doesn't complain about the house being a mess.

What would you Make Jesus for Dinner

Beloved, what would you serve Jesus if He came for dinner at your house. Would you stress about what to cook Him, the condition of the house, the mess the kids have made. Can I encourage you today to have Jesus over for dinner with the family, take time today as a family, enjoying the day together, a meal together, talking of Jesus together. I can tell you from what we have been studying, Jesus would enjoy the feast of your company. He would enjoy playing with your kids, looking into their eyes, making them laugh. He would enjoy you being comfortable, you beholding Him, looking into His eyes, holding His hand, "its been a great day together Lord, lets do it again tomorrow". Touch me again Lord.

The Lord of All Creation – Jesus Calms the Storm

Matthew 8:16-27

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person chp1-4 / Principles chp5-7 / But Does have Power to Carry Out Principles / Election Year

Matthew is the gospel of the King. In the first four chapters, His Person is revealed as we looked at His lineage, birth, baptism, and wilderness trial. In chapters 5 through 7, His principles are recorded as we looked into His teachings on the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom. But the question arises: Does Jesus have the power to carry out those principles? Or is He, like so many of our leaders (as the election draws near and we are bombarded with all the campaigning), a nice person with good principles, yet impotent to really make a difference? In Matthew 8, and 9 we find the answer as we see the power of Jesus released. In the following three chapters, Matthew records twelve miracles which show Jesus not only had the rhetoric, but He had the dynamic to make things happen, He had the power to back His words, and what words they are.

12 Miracles of Matthew 8-9:

1. The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
2. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
3. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)
4. Healing of Multitudes (8:16-22)
5. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)
6. Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)
7. Jesus Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)
8. Jesus Heals a woman with 12 year Issue of Blood (9:18-22)
9. Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)
10. Jesus Heals 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)
11. Jesus Heals a Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)
12. Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

Healing of Multitudes (8:16-17)

(Matthew 8:16 NKJV) When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,

(Matthew 8:17 NKJV) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."

Demon-Possessed by Night / Don't wait until Darkness

The demon-possessed, those who were physically controlled and inhabited by demonic entities, not just demonic oppression, but demonic possession. What a horrible life, what a life of darkness, but.....the darkness was defeated by the light of His Word. Notice here that they are bringing the demon-possessed, when evening had come, after night overtook the light. Could it be because they were ashamed of their condition and therefore waited for the covering of night to bring them to Jesus, I really

don't know, but I do know those words are there by divine inspiration. Christian, Jesus will heal in the darkness, when the darkness had overtaken the light, but.....He will heal in the daylight, just as He healed the leper, the centurion's servant, and Peter's mother-in-law. We need not wait until the situation is dark, trying to hide our shame, the Lord would say to us to come now with whatever you are struggling with, come in the daylight, don't wait for it to get worse, but come now and let Me deal with it now. I need not say much more on that in light of recent news headlines out of Colorado (pastor of 14,000 exposed for gay lifestyle), come now, don't wait for it to get darker and darker, let Jesus deal with it today.

Isaiah 53:4 / Literally – Lifted off of Us – Bore our Pain

Verse 17 - that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses." - quoting Isaiah 53:4. The Hebrew literally says that He lifted off of us our sicknesses and then He bore our pain. This verse is a rich and powerful theological passage, worthy of it's own study, but I see here that one of the greatest expositions on this passage from Isaiah is to read it in the context of it's New Testament application, as we watch how Jesus fulfilled it. We will see this passage in today's study in how it applies to pre-Second Coming and post-Second Coming:
(Isaiah 53:4 NKJV) Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

Jesus – Expressed Image of God / 3 Healings / Pool of Bethesda

Jesus Christ is the expressed image of God. Anything you want to know about God you will find in Jesus. Do you want to know how God heals, then we look at how Jesus healed. There is a lot of confusing and misunderstanding of how God heals today, there are many misconceptions of healing, all because people don't study how Jesus healed. Some errantly teach that all should be healed, that none should be sick, that if you aren't healed then it is because your lack of faith; but those teachers seem to leave out the part than that if nobody should be sick, then nobody should die. In the last study we saw people being healed by personal petition to Jesus, in the case of the leper. We saw a person healed by intercessory request, in the case of the centurion's servant. Then we saw Peter's mother-in-law being healed as Jesus touched her with no recorded outside petition. Well here we read of Jesus healing all, all meaning all. Everyone that came, Jesus healed. But we will read later that at the Pool of Bethesda there all kinds of sick and lame that assembled there looking to be healed and/or to receive a hand out, and that Jesus came there in the midst of all of them, healed one man, and left. How could a God of love do that one may ask, but Jesus in His way chose to heal that one, why that one we don't know, but God could have if He wanted to, but chose not to.

(Colossians 1:15 NKJV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

(John 5:2 NKJV) Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

(John 5:3 NKJV) In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

(John 5:4 NKJV) For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

(John 5:5 NKJV) Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

(John 5:6 NKJV) When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

(John 5:7 NKJV) The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

(John 5:8 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

(John 5:9 NKJV) And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

Acts 3 / Jesus Past him / Healing continues after His Death

In Acts 3 we read the story of Peter and John on the way to the Temple to pray. They past pass a lame man that had been lame since birth. Peter and John lay hands on him and he is healed. Consider this, how many times, since this man was laid there daily, did Jesus walk by Him and choose not to heal him as Jesus went up to the Temple. You see, Jesus had an appointed time for his healing we can see in hindsight. The people, the priests, and the critics would be blown away as they would see that Jesus' healing was continuing even after Jesus' death and after His ascension into heaven.

(Acts 3:1 NKJV) Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

(Acts 3:2 NKJV) And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple;

(Acts 3:3 NKJV) who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.

(Acts 3:4 NKJV) And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us."

(Acts 3:5 NKJV) So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.

(Acts 3:6 NKJV) Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."

(Acts 3:7 NKJV) And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

(Acts 3:8 NKJV) So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them; walking, leaping, and praising God.

(Acts 3:9 NKJV) And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

(Mark 14:48 NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me?"

(Mark 14:49 NKJV) "I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

The Lord has Wisdom in Every Healing

The Lord has wisdom in every healing, and every not to heal. May we trust Him in that. We also see the exposition of Isaiah 53:4 continue when Jesus will say to the scribe, foxes have holes, birds have nest, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

The Son of Man – Nowhere to Lay His Head (8:18-22)

(Matthew 8:18 NKJV) And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.

(Matthew 8:19 NKJV) Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

(Matthew 8:20 NKJV) And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

(Matthew 8:21 NKJV) Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

(Matthew 8:22 NKJV) But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Scribe – Expert / Sticks with 12 / Equips the Called

Verse 19 - Then a certain scribe came and said to Him - A scribe was an expert in the Word and the Law. It is funny Jesus has an expert wanting to follow Him, but Jesus sticks with these twelve. Jesus could have had an expert, one already steep in knowledge, but He chooses to stick with a bunch of fisherman, out-casts, and nobody's. Jesus sticks with these 12, why, because they were willing to follow. Jesus doesn't call the equipped, He equips the call, so don't be afraid to step out in His name.

Son of Man / Daniel 7

Verse 20 - And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." - 32 times in Matthew Jesus will refer to Himself as the "Son of Man" (with this being the first time). Jesus is referring to and linking Himself to the book of Daniel chapter 7 which is a prophetic passage referring to the Messiah. The Scribe, the expert would know this:

(Daniel 7:13 NKJV) "I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him.

(Daniel 7:14 NKJV) Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.

Won't be Easy – No Home / the 2 Messiah's / We live on Other side of Cross

Jesus lets this expert know, it won't be easy, I have no home because this is not my home, for I Am just passing through. You see there was a struggle with the prophets and scribes who couldn't reconcile the contrasts of the Messiah in the Old Testament. Some even suggested that there would be 2 different Messiahs that came, because they couldn't reconcile how the Scriptures spoke of a suffering Messiah (the Messiah that would be Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Daniel 9, the Messiah that would be beaten and pierced), and a conquering Messiah (Genesis 3 crushing Satan's head, and Ezekiel 40 the Millennial kingdom). How could He be both they pondered (maybe even this scribe that has come to Jesus thought the same). We living on the others side of the cross and we clearly understand, His First Coming to suffer for the sins of the world, the Second Coming as He comes to establish His kingdom that will have no end, where every knee would bow and tongue confess Jesus Christ is Lord.

Messiah before you will Suffer / Stinging Words for Comfortable Life / People Today

Jesus is saying to the scribe, the Messiah you see before you is the suffering Messiah, not the conquering Messiah. This man was stung by these words because Jesus knew he wanted a comfortable

life, He wanted to follow the conquering Messiah, the living in victory everyday Messiah, but He knew well of the passages speaking of the suffering Messiah, and we read not of him following the Messiah. How many people in our day just want to follow the conquering Messiah, and want no part of the suffering Messiah. Jesus still has yet to take full control of His kingdom, and until He does there will be suffering: (2 Timothy 3:10 NKJV) *But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,*
(2 Timothy 3:11 NKJV) *persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me.*
(2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV) *Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.*

Not everyone Healed in Suffering Messiah / But will when Conquering Messiah Comes

Back to Isaiah 53:4, not everyone is healed when the suffering Messiah comes, but all will be healed when the conquering Messiah returns. I choose to suffer with Him now, and celebrate with Him later.

Rest His Head / Till His Work Complete

Verse 20 - but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head - Interestingly, Jesus says that He has no where to lay His head. We won't read of Jesus resting His head (in this exact Greek form) until John 19 when Jesus on the cross after His final words..... bowed (rested) His head and gave up His Spirit. Jesus didn't rest until His work was completed, till He said it is done.

(Matthew 8:20 KJV) *And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay (klino:G2827) his head (kephale:G2776).*

(John 19:30 KJV) *When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished**: and he bowed (klino:G2827) his head (kephale:G2776), and gave up the ghost.*

The 2nd Man – Bury the Dead / I'll follow after my Relationship is Over

Verse 21 -Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." - We often read this as the same man, but it is a second man that wants to bury his father first. The second man wasn't hindered so much by comfort, as He was by relationships. "I'll follow You, Lord, just as soon as I bury my dad." Now, please don't misunderstand. It's not as though his father died and was lying in the front room while this guy was saying, "Let me go home and bury my dad, and I'll come right back." No, he was saying, "As soon as my dad passes away, then I'll really start following You. But right now I feel obligated to that relationship. Plus, I get part of the inheritance (let me bury my father was a common saying at that time meaning, let me get my inheritance)." "Let the dead bury the dead, and you follow Me," Jesus answered because no relationship can stand in the way of those who are serious about following Jesus. Let the spiritually dead bury the spiritually dead, let those who are spiritually alive follow after Me. May I add, the spiritually alive should never try to hinder or get in the way of someone else following Jesus, yet we do see that so often as parents try to make sure their kids have a good education, marry someone who is financially well-off. They try to steer their kids to secure the things that will make them comfortable in this world because they are afraid to see their kids experience anything uncomfortable or even dangerous. Parents, get out of the way and let God lead, you make terrible Holy Spirits; point your kids to live a life seeking first the kingdom of God, and trust all the other things will be added unto them.

Still these 2 issues / Change Business – Uncomfortable / Cost a relationship / All Secondary

It's still those two issues, I believe, that keep people today from following Jesus. Following Him might mean some changes in business practices, leave positions of power and respect, give up some toys, live somewhere else. Or it might mean letting go of that unbelieving boyfriend or girlfriend. It might cost riches. It might cost relationships. And like these two men, people today still conclude that they like the benefits, but not the price. Let all earthly responsibilities and relationships be secondary to Me Jesus speaks here.

Peter from Bethsaida / Moved to Capernaum / Left House of Fishing / Left to be Closer

Let me add something here, speaking of following Jesus. In verse 14-15 we read of Jesus coming to Peter's house to heal Peter's mother-in-law. Now Mark tells us that Peter's house was in Capernaum. Yet John points out in his Gospel that Peter was from Bethsaida. That means that Peter moved lock, stock, and barrel—fishing business, in-laws, the whole thing. He moved from his hometown of Bethsaida, which means "House of Fishing," to Capernaum, where Jesus had His headquarters. Peter left the place of occupational prosperity to be closer to Jesus. I think it would do us well to remember Peter's example. I

am concerned about the number of people who move because of business reasons without considering if there is a group of people with whom they can worship and grow in the Lord.
(John 1:44 NKJV) Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

(Matthew 8:5 NKJV) Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,.....

(Matthew 8:14 NKJV) Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.

(Matthew 8:15 NKJV) So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

Lot based Decision on Economic Conditions / Great raise Cattle – Lousy Raise Kids

There was a man in the Old Testament who based the decision as to where he would live on economic conditions. He lifted up his eyes, saw green grass, and said, "This is a great place for my cattle." The man's name was Lot, and he got in a lot of trouble because the green grass was growing right outside of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was a great place to raise cattle, but a lousy place to raise kids. Lot lifted up his eyes, but he didn't lift them high enough.

Peter did Opposite

Peter did just the opposite. He said, "I want to be in the place where Jesus is ministering, in the place most conducive for me to follow, serve, and walk with Him." May the Lord give us such hearts in these days.

Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)

(Matthew 8:23 NKJV) Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.

(Matthew 8:24 NKJV) And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep.

(Matthew 8:25 NKJV) Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

(Matthew 8:26 NKJV) But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

(Matthew 8:27 NKJV) So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Tempest – Seismos / Storm a Shaker / Mount Hermon – Sea of Galilee / Cold meets Warm

The word translated "tempest" is seismos in Greek, from which we get our word "seismology"—the study of earthquakes. This storm was really a shaker! Keep in mind that the Sea of Galilee, where this story takes place, is six hundred eighty feet below sea level. Directly to the north, 9,280 feet above sea level, is Mount Hermon, which gets so cold it can be skied in the winter. So what happens is this: Cold air descends from Mount Hermon through a small ravine in the northern part of the valley, which funnels into the Sea of Galilee. As the cold air strikes the hot air below, it creates turbulence, and storms can erupt in seconds. Waves mount up, which in recent times have been recorded at higher than twenty-five feet, that makes the backside of the wave like 40 feet, that is one wild ride, up 25 and then dropping 40. Thus, this wasn't a little drizzle on a lake. We're talking about a sea that terrorized even these salty fishermen.

Shows Humanity of Jesus / 80 Times son of Man / Feel Tired

Verse 24 - *But He was asleep* - I love this because it shows the humanity of Jesus. He was tired because He was a Man. In fact, He refers to Himself as the Son of Man some eighty times in the New Testament, identifying with His humanity more than any other element in His personality. Next time you feel totally exhausted, remember Jesus can relate to you. When you are tired and worn-out from the day, the kids, the job, Jesus understands, He knows what it is to be tired and worn-out.

We Think Smooth Sailing / Warning to New Believers

Sometimes we think it is going to be smooth sailing because we are following Jesus, sorry to break the news to you. If you are a young believer in the Lord let me warn you beforehand, the storms will come.

Carpenter bails out Fisherman / Shake us in Familiar Territory / Keep us Looking to Him

I like this, the fisherman are taking the carpenter across the sea, but the carpenter has to help the fisherman. . God will allow storms in our life in familiar territory to keep us remembering that we need to

keep linked to Him. How often we can get into a place of self-assurance, and feel like we are ok Lord, we got it from here, you can rest, watch me work. God will allow storms in your familiar territory to move into that place of Lord, I need you in all that I do, please come with Me today. It says Jesus was sleeping, so it means He was sleeping, but if I was Jesus I'd be acting like I was sleeping, and then peaking with one eye and chuckling within watching these experts panic

In Midst of Storm – Midst of God's Will / He Led – They Followed

So here they are in this storm, and the fact is that they are in the middle of Gods will, even in the midst of the storm. He got in the boat and in verse 23 we see, they followed Him. He has lead them into this experience.

(Matthew 8:23 NKJV) Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.

Storms Rages – Jesus Sleeping / Ever Feel He is Sleeping in Your Storm / Relax – He is /

Verse 24 - And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep – The storm rages and Jesus sleeps; Ever feel like Jesus is sleeping in your storms. If you sense Jesus is asleep in the storm you're going through—relax! If He's not doing anything, it means He's not pacing. He's not anxious. He's not worried. He's resting. You can rest as well if you remember that at any given moment, Jesus can stand up, speak a word and—boom—the storm will stop. Why the storms in life rage, I don't know, why the calm seas tarry, I do not know, but what I do know is Acts 3, in His time, in His wisdom.

Mark's Account / You Don't Care

In Mark's gospel as he recants this story, it says they say, Lord don't you care. Not that we would ever do that ;-), but don't we say, oh Lord do you see what is happening in my life, in this situation, "don't you care!" I followed you, I served you, and this is what I get, you don't care!

(Mark 4:37 NKJV) And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

(Mark 4:38 NKJV) But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

Awake Him to Complain / ye of Little Faith – We are Going Over – not Under

Notice they don't awake Jesus to say, "ok you're on, show your stuff". They awake Jesus to complain, rather than call for His power. How we can be like that, how we spend more time complaining, than calling. Jesus says "ye of little faith." Why did Jesus say this to these men at this time? Mark tells us that Jesus previously had said to His disciples, "Come let us go over to the other side of the sea." He hadn't said, "Come let us sink to the bottom of the sea." He said, "Let us go over.

(Mark 4:35 NKJV) On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side."

Storm did not Awake Him – The Children's Cry / Renee & Camden / He hears our Cries

Do you notice that it is not the storm that awakes Jesus, but the cries of the disciples. He was sleeping right through the storm, storms don't bother Him. But what does bother Him, what does move Him, is when His children cry out. In our house we have "white noise" running in the background as we sleep, and it amazes me still, with the white noise, the dogs barking, neighbors bouncing balls off the opposing wall, my wife can sleep right through that (for the most part), but have baby Camden, 2 rooms away go, ahh, and Renee is up and on her way to his room. How much more does the Lord love us! He hears the cries of His people, and He is up and moving.

25 Foot Waves / Greek – Waves beaten Down / Instant Calm / he can Calm Your Heart Instantly

Verse 26 - Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm – It has been recorded that these waves in the Sea of Galilee can get as high as 25 feet, yet word here in the Greek says the sea was beaten back to levelness. The winds can cease immediately, but it will take quite some time for the waves to die down. Once the waves are moving in such a large body of water, the waves will not settle down immediately. But Jesus says be calm, and not just the winds calm, but so do the waves. From raging storm, to instantaneous peace. I can't guarantee you that your situation will change immediately, for His wisdom is beyond ours, but I can guarantee that He can calm your heart instantly in any situation. Notice also that Jesus spoke to them in the storm, before He calmed the storm. He desires to speak to you in the storm.

Mark's Gospel – Who can this Be / Demon-Possessed Answers / See only in a Storm / Lord of All

In Mark's gospel the other boats that were with them, they ask, who is this man that can even calm the sea. Next study the demon-possessed man will come running and say, "what have you to do with me Jesus, You Son of God". The demon-possessed man answers their question of who is He. They learned something that they would have never learned in a calm boat, they learned something that they could have only learned in a storm. He wasn't just a prophet and healer; He was the Lord over all Creation, of water, earth, and sky.

(Mark 4:41 NKJV) And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

(Matthew 8:28 NKJV) When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.

(Matthew 8:29 NKJV) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

Psalms 107 / Amazed who was in the Boat

How amazed they must have been when they realized who was in the boat with them.

(Psalms 107:22 NKJV) Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, And declare His works with rejoicing.

(Psalms 107:23 NKJV) Those who go down to the sea in ships, Who do business on great waters,

(Psalms 107:24 NKJV) They see the works of the LORD, And His wonders in the deep.

(Psalms 107:25 NKJV) For He commands and raises the stormy wind, Which lifts up the waves of the sea.

(Psalms 107:26 NKJV) They mount up to the heavens, They go down again to the depths; Their soul melts because of trouble.

(Psalms 107:27 NKJV) They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, And are at their wits' end.

(Psalms 107:28 NKJV) Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble, And He brings them out of their distresses.

(Psalms 107:29 NKJV) He calms the storm, So that its waves are still.

(Psalms 107:30 NKJV) Then they are glad because they are quiet; So He guides them to their desired haven.

(Psalms 107:31 NKJV) Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!

Logging in Oregon

I am reminded of the story a logger tells in Oregon. Maybe you have seen pictures of all the cut logs being transported to the saw mill via the river. Well a bystander was watching one day and asked the logger why he was holding some logs back, and sending some onward, and not just letting them all go together, they all looked the same to him. The logger replied, I am separating the high quality logs from the lower quality logs. The man was puzzled because they all looked the same to him. But the logger said I can see the difference between the logs that were grown down here in the valley, close to the water, because the butt end of the log, the grains of the rings of the log are wider apart and I can tell they didn't withstand any weather – it is good wood, but not the same quality as the other. But the trees that were grown up on the mountain top, the trees that had to break force their roots through the hard rock soil up on the mountain top in order to reach the nutrient rich soil, to draw water, they had to anchor deep to withstand the weather and storms, those logs have a tighter ring, and are of higher value because of their strength.

Producing Deeper Character / Building solid Buildings / He isn't Asleep – He is Building

There are times that the Lord allows things to come upon us, so that we will produce a deeper character, a high quality tree. What does He do with the high-quality lumber, He builds buildings that withstand storms, buildings that others can run into for refuge, buildings that family can dwell safely in. Jesus isn't sleeping through the storms. We need to know Him as the God of the calm, and the storms.

Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person chp1-4 / Principles chp5-7 / But Does have Power to Carry Out Principles / Election Year

Matthew is the gospel of the King. In the first four chapters, His Person is revealed as we looked at His lineage, birth, baptism, and wilderness trial. In chapters 5 through 7, His principles are recorded as we looked into His teachings on the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom. But the question arises: Does Jesus have the power to carry out those principles? Or is He, like so many of our leaders (as the election draws near and we are bombarded with all the campaigning), a nice person with good principles, yet impotent to really make a difference? In Matthew 8, and 9 we find the answer as we see the power of Jesus released. In the following two chapters, Matthew records twelve miracles which show Jesus not only had the rhetoric, but He had the dynamic to make things happen, He had the power to back His words, and what words they are.

12 Miracles of Matthew 8-9:

1. The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
2. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
3. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)
4. Healing of Multitudes (8:16-22)
5. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)
6. Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)
7. Jesus Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)
8. Jesus Heals a woman with 12 year Issue of Blood (9:18-22)
9. Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)
10. Jesus Heals 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)
11. Jesus Heals a Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)
12. Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

In Storm Questioned Asked

We are coming out of the storm, leaving the boat, and coming to the shore line. It was in the storm that the question was asked, who is this, and now they get their answer when they get to the other side, as the demons will declare who He is – Jesus, Son of God! Isn't that so true that it is in the storms of life we see the Lord in ways we had never seen before in the calm seas of life. He loves us enough to let the storms rise up against us, so we too see His glory and power in ways never before known to us. Who can this be that even the winds and sea obey Him? Before they knew Him as a prophet, a healer, then in the storm "Lord over water, earth, and sky, and know the demons will declare, He is the Son of God.

(Matthew 8:27 NKJV) So the men marveled, saying, "Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

(Matthew 8:28 NKJV) When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.

(Matthew 8:29 NKJV) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

(Matthew 8:30 NKJV) Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding.

(Matthew 8:31 NKJV) So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine."

(Matthew 8:32 NKJV) And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

(Matthew 8:33 NKJV) Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

(Matthew 8:34 NKJV) And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.

Mark & Luke Account / Naked – Chains – Cuts – Howling / Extreme Torment

Mark and Luke give us this same account. They give us details such as that these men were naked without clothes, that they were so strong that no chains could hold them, that these men continually cut themselves, and that their cries of torment and howling could be heard continually. Imagine how mutilated their bodies must have been, what a sight they must have been, and to hear their screams of anguish.

(Mark 5:1 NKJV) Then they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gadarenes.

(Mark 5:2 NKJV) And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

(Mark 5:3 NKJV) who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind him, not even with chains,

(Mark 5:4 NKJV) because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him.

(Mark 5:5 NKJV) And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

(Luke 8:27 NKJV) And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs.

Note – In Mark and Luke's account it only mentions 1 man, and not two. The reason probably is that the one man was the central spokesman and dominant voice in the encounter, therefore that is why he is focused on in the accounts by Mark and Luke.

Leaves Multitudes – Appointment to Keep / Crowds Growing – Jesus not Striving / Leaves for 2

Jesus leaves multitude because He has an appointment to keep. With each miracle and healing the crowds would no doubt be growing, but we don't see Jesus striving to keep His following, worrying about them following someone else, strategizing on how to grow it even bigger, but He says to His disciples, lets go. He leaves the multitude to go to the two. This was His destination, because as soon as He heals these two men, he gets back in the boat and crosses the sea again.

(Matthew 8:18 NKJV) And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.

(Matthew 9:1 NKJV) So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

How far Away is Your God – Crosses Sea to Battle for You / Rolls up Sleeve / My Child – My Fight

How far away, how distracted is your God. Let me tell you that Jesus leaves the multitude, crosses the sea through a storm, to go into a battle of spiritual warfare for you and for I. I love the passage in Isaiah 52, as it speaks of the Lord rolling up His sleeves, making His arm bare, showing His power to the enemies of His people. He rolls up His sleeves, with His hand slides Himself between us and the enemy. We do anything we can to avoid conflict, but the Lord, He gets in boat to cross the sea in a storm to engage in the battle. That's My child, meaning it is now My fight.

(Isaiah 52:6 NKJV) Therefore My people shall know My name; Therefore they shall know in that day That I am He who speaks: 'Behold, it is I.'

(Isaiah 52:7 NKJV) How beautiful upon the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

(Isaiah 52:8 NKJV) Your watchmen shall lift up their voices, With their voices they shall sing together; For they shall see eye to eye When the LORD brings back Zion.

(Isaiah 52:9 NKJV) Break forth into joy, sing together, You waste places of Jerusalem! For the LORD has comforted His people, He has redeemed Jerusalem.

(Isaiah 52:10 NKJV) The LORD has made bare His holy arm In the eyes of all the nations; And all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God.

(Matthew 8:28 NKJV) When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.

(Matthew 8:29 NKJV) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

3 Times NT – Enemies Declare / California Street Ministry

Verse 29 - "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? - The first 3 times in the New Testament that Jesus is referred to as the "Son of God", is by His enemies. So true is it that He is the Son of God, that even His enemies agree that He is the Son of God. There are certain things that even enemies have to agree with, they know to try to lie about it would make them look foolish. I remember street witnessing in California sometime ago, and I was sharing with a bunch of middle-schoolers after they had gotten off the bus, and I had like 15 of them surrounding me, listening and asking questions. Then one of the mothers pulled-up to get her son, and just loses it when she hears what I am talking about. She starts screaming, get away from him kids, get away from kids, don't listen to him, go home immediately. But what was interesting was that as she would say that, she keep saying, he is a nice man, but don't listen to him, he is a nice man but go home immediately. She was fueled by the enemy at that moment, but even then she still had to agree to a truth. I still remember as they walked away, her back was turned, a bunch of kids came running back saying, "hurry-up give me some of that literature in your hand". What seemed like Satan's victory was really God's ground, because tell a kid something to stay away from, and they just have to find out what is and why.

(Matthew 4:3 NKJV) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

(Matthew 4:6 NKJV) and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

(Matthew 8:29 NKJV) And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

Demons had Solid Theology / End Times – Godhead of Jesus Christ

To what time are the demons referring? To the day they would be cast into the bottomless pit, D-day, their day of doom. Notice that these demons had fairly solid theology. They understood eschatology, the study of end times, they knew there was a place appointed for them and that they were living off of borrowed time. They called Jesus the Son of God—which is more than the scribes or Pharisees did, they understood the Godhead and that Jesus was the Son of God.

(Jude 1:6 NKJV) And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

James – Even Demon Believe / Many will miss Heaven by 18 Inches

James says, "You say that you believe? So what? The demons believe and tremble" It's not enough to believe Jesus is the Son of God intellectually. Bunches of people will miss heaven by eighteen inches—the distance between their brain and their heart.

(James 2:19 NKJV) You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe; and tremble!

No Demon can Keep a Man from Jesus

Notice here, no demon can keep a man from Jesus Christ. The two men came to Jesus, and the demons cry out "what have you to do with us Jesus, Son of God". The demons may come kicking and screaming, but they can not keep a man from coming to Jesus Christ.

(Mark 5:6 NKJV) When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him.

Christian can't be Demon Possessed / Ray's Translation

A Christian can not be demon possessed, because Jesus has possession of you, and He refuses to share you with anyone. Satan has no power to touch you, because greater is He that is in you, than He that is after you (ray's translation).

(1 John 4:4 NKJV) You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

(Matthew 8:30 NKJV) Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. (Matthew 8:31 NKJV) So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine."

Mark says 2000 Pigs

Mark says that there were 2000 pigs they were cast into:

(Mark 5:13 NKJV) And at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

Satan too much Credit / Battle over – Insert New Coin / Need permission to enter Pigs

I think Satan gets way too much credit, and press; notice there is no battle going on here, Jesus isn't sweating and struggling with the demons, as soon as these demons see Jesus they know it is done, battle over, insert new quarter for extended play. The demons could not even go into a pig without permission from Jesus.

(Matthew 8:32 NKJV) And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

Why want enter Pigs – Notice how Satan Works / Pig Farming – Big Biz / Drug Dealers

Why would the demons want to enter pigs? I believe we see here a tactic of Satan and how he works, but it is all for not. You see, pig farming was the number one industry there, and Satan figures that he lost this area of demon possession, but now lets see if he can still work this to use against Jesus. Pig farming was big business there, however it wasn't allowable under the Jewish dietary law, so these people in this area are running an illegal business here for profit. If Jesus interfered with business, the people would drive Him out. These farmers would be the "marijuana farmers" of their day—hanging out on the rocks in Eastern Galilee, raising an illegal "crop."

Same Tactic Today / Preach Law – Not Lifestyle

Satan still uses the same tactic today. Ok he says I lost him, he gave his life to Jesus, but let me see if I can get him to upset people involved in illegal activity, sinful lifestyles, hey if you are sleeping with your girlfriend, getting drunk, smoking pot, you need to repent. True, they do. But use those things to show someone they have offended the Holy God, and the gloves go. They accuse you of legalism, of Bible thumbing, holier than thou, hypocrite – you've done the same. Same tactic today as in the text we read, Satan wants to get us to get people upset, so they won't seek our Father who is in heaven. I have found it much better to preach the Law, not the lifestyle. I just take them through the 10 Commandments, showing them their guilt, who can argue that they have never lied, stolen, used the Lord's name in vain, not kept the Sabbath, and the others. I use the Law, rather than preach against their lifestyle, and have found I can take the gospel much further in the conversation. Yes some still get mad, accuse me of Bible thumping, but as I said, I get to present the gospel much deeper, than by

Demons – Send to Illegal Activity / Off the Cliff – Satan Destructive / Suicidal Thoughts

Now notice, where do the demons want to go, they ask Jesus to send them into where the illegal activity is happening, send us into the swine, Satan and his demons love to dwell in the illegal activities. The whole heard of swine run off the cliff to their death. Demons are destructive, Satan is a murderer. He has come to kill, steal, and destroy. Suicidal thoughts, destructive thoughts, murderous thoughts are inspired by Satan and his demons:

(John 10:10 NKJV) "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Why Allow Illegal – to Make Point / Demons Intentions are to Kill & Destroy

Why did Jesus allow the demons to go into the illegal activities? Because He wants to make a point very clear to all the on lookers. The fact that the demons immediately drove the swine to destruction helps explain why Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs - because He wanted everyone to know what the

real intention of these demons was. They wanted to destroy the man just as they destroyed the pigs. Because men are made in the image of God, they could not have their way as easily with the man, but their intention was just the same: to completely destroy him. That is what Satan wants to do to you, your kids, your marriage, your relationships, your friendships, he wants to destroy them and you.

(Matthew 8:33 NKJV) Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.

(Matthew 8:34 NKJV) And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.

They Marveled & Repented / No Begged Him to Leave

And they came and marveled at Jesus' power, they thanked Him for freeing those two men from the demon-possession, and asked Him to stay in their land and to never leave them so that Satan would never be able to afflict anyone again, then they had a worship service and they tarried long into the morning, many committed their lives to Jesus, and a church was planted there, and to this day it is recognized as a church that has a passion for reaching the lost and hurting in the world, and they feed the hungry, take care of the widows and orphans – no that is not what it says does it. It says begged him to depart from their region.

Cared more of Pigs than People / Chose Economics over Salvation / Didn't want Change / Please Leave Schools – Gov't – Biz / Doesn't stay where not Wanted

"Leave, Lord. We care more about pigs than we do about people. The other gospels say that these people saw these men clothed and in their right minds, they all knew it was Jesus, yet they say, "please go". They chose economics over salvation. Jesus came and made a change in their community, and they didn't like the changes, and said you must go. Please leave our schools they said, please leave our government, please leave our businesses, and He did. "Jesus doesn't stay where He's not wanted, so He left.

(Mark 5:14 NKJV) So those who fed the swine fled, and they told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened.

(Mark 5:15 NKJV) Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

(Mark 5:16 NKJV) And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon-possessed, and about the swine.

(Mark 5:17 NKJV) Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

First Evangelist

In Mark's account it says that man begged Jesus to go with Him, but Jesus said no, you go tell your friends and family what great things the Lord had done for you, and the man did, not just in his hometown, but in the surrounding 10 cities. I can not tell for sure based on the chronology of the Scriptures which event happened first, this on or the woman at the well. In either case it is significant to me, because what we are seeing is the first evangelist, and it is not who we would have thought, a crazy man, or a woman. Yes there is a time to talk, present the gospel clearly and in its entirety, backed by Scriptures; but the heart of the gospel is our testimony, it is what makes us who we are, lost and doomed, but then Jesus.....can I tell you about the love of my life, ah what great things He has done in my life, and He will do it in yours! You see, it can be debated which is the greater miracle, that Jesus cast the demons out of the men, or that God would leave the multitude, travel the raging sea, enter spiritual warfare, for me and for you, that He might call us His own.

(Mark 5:18 NKJV) And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.

(Mark 5:19 NKJV) However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you."

(Mark 5:20 NKJV) And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled.

(John 4:28 NKJV) The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

(John 4:29 NKJV) "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

(John 4:30 NKJV) Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

Continue Chapter 9 – King Reveling His Power

But in chapter 9, Matthew will continue to portray Jesus the King revealing His power to radically change those who were open to Him.

Matthew 9

Jesus Heals the Paralytic (9:1-8)

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Heals Outcasts – Peace to Troubled – Peace to a Problem

In chapters 8 and 9, writing of the King and the release of His power, Matthew enumerates 12 miracles. In the first three, Jesus showed grace to the outcasts (a leper, a Gentile, and a woman). In the next two miracles after He is healing the multitude, He gave peace to the troubled (the disciples in the storm and those tormented by demons). Now we will see peace extended once again to a man with a very real problem, a man paralyzed.

Jesus Heals the Paralytic (9:1-8)

(Matthew 9:1 NKJV) So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

(Matthew 9:2 NKJV) Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

(Matthew 9:3 NKJV) And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

(Matthew 9:4 NKJV) But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

(Matthew 9:5 NKJV) "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?"

(Matthew 9:6 NKJV) "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"; then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

(Matthew 9:7 NKJV) And he arose and departed to his house.

(Matthew 9:8 NKJV) Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Touches – Outcast – Peace – Problem / Sin before Holy God

Jesus touched the outcasts, He brought peace, and now He fixes a serious problem, and that problem was not just paralysis, but the problem of sin before the Holy God.

(Matthew 9:1 NKJV) So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

(Matthew 9:2 NKJV) Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

Home City – Capernaum / 2 Greatest Places / Give me to this City / Imitate Christ

Verse 1 - and came to His own city – The city spoken of here is Capernaum. Jesus is from Nazareth isn't He you might say? Why say then this is His own city? Jesus established His ministry headquarters here in Capernaum, and I think that important to see for all of us. It has been said the 2 greatest places in the world is where you have been, and where you are going. We see here that Jesus' city was where His ministry headquarters was, where He was doing the work and will of His heavenly Father. Can I encourage you in that today, don't be waiting for, "when I get.....", when I get to my next home, when I get out of school, when this project is over, or that next job; don't wait, but make where you are at your own city, your ministry headquarters'. You'll be blessed beyond measure I can guarantee you that. And might I add, don't say give me this city, but say Lord give me to this city. As Paul the Apostle would say, and this is fro all things in our life, imitate me as I imitate Christ:

(1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV) Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

Behold – to Look – the Theatre / 16-62 / And Then / Still filling Books Today – your Life / No Bore

Verse 2 - Then behold – the word 'behold' in the Greek form, used here the 16th time in the Book of Matthew, of the 62 total times. It means, "to see, to look". It would be used in the theatre as to be captivated by the scene that is going on in front of you. This Book of Matthew is continually, "look at this, see this, today it would be like us telling a story and saying, "and then", "and then" and people hanging on every word of the story because they are so captivated by it. Matthew is writing and trying to capture all that Jesus did, and it is like He is saying, and then Jesus healed the leper, then you should have seen it He calmed the seas, and then you won't believe this one, these 2 demon possessed men came to Him and He cast the demons into these pigs and they ran off the cliff, and then.....we were at this Bible study and they brought this man who was paralyzed to Him. The Apostle John would say if they tried to write all that Jesus did all the libraries in the world could hold the books; we would run out of room, paper, and ink trying to tell all that He had done, in just those 3.5 years of public ministry. Well Jesus is still filling books today, and there are volumes of books in this room alone for each individual of what He has done in our lives.....and then He, and then He. And then my chest felt like someone was standing on it.....and then we said maybe a drive across country we will find the answers to life, and then a friend invited me to a Bible study, and then my daughters gave their life to the Lord.....oh how beautiful it is to reflect on the, "and then"! Take some time to think of the "and then" in your life; and set aside time every day to read of the "Great And Then", and you will experience the excitement of Him all over again, He will never be boring, nor will this word ever be boring when you read it as Matthew wrote, "and then, and then....."

(John 21:25 NKJV) And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

They Brought Him- Mark 2 / Imagine Scene / Study Distraction / Owner of House / Whatever Cost
Verse 2 - they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed -The other Gospel writers tell us the man stricken with palsy was brought by four friends who, because of the crowd, broke through the roof of the home in which Jesus was teaching in order to lower him down in front of the Master. Imagine that scene if it was today; here we are in our study and then instead of hearing kids carrying on in the children church, or a cell phone going off, or someone coming in the back door, or.....we hear sounds on the roof; as we continue to study dust starts to drop from the ceiling, and then a hole breaks through. That would be a little distracting to our study. Imagine the owner of this house, saying to himself I'm going to kill these guys, who is going to fix that hole. How about these men, let's get to Jesus at whatever the price, we will fix or pay for the hole later.

(Mark 2:2 NKJV) Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.

(Mark 2:3 NKJV) Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.

(Mark 2:4 NKJV) And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

(Mark 2:5 NKJV) When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

Live – Get to Jesus at Whatever the Cost

My how I wish we would live like that everyday. That we would live a life of I need to get to Jesus at whatever the cost, forget the inconvenience, what people think, the price.....if I can just get to Him how life will change for me that day.

Be of Good Cheer – A Bit Disappointed / Reality – Most Important Need / Romans 4

Verse 2 - Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you - Seeing this man lowered in front of Him, Jesus said, "Son, Be of good cheer! Your sins are forgiven." But I wonder if at this point, the four friends were a bit disappointed. I wonder if they thought, That's great, but we didn't lug him all this way and break open the roof just to hear some kind of spiritual statement. I wonder if they were hoping to hear, "Be healed," instead of "Be of good cheer." In reality, however, the most important need of the hurting man was forgiveness. In Romans 4, the apostle Paul, quoting David, said, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." In other words, the happiest man is the man who really knows he's forgiven.

(Romans 4:7 NKJV) "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

(Romans 4:8 NKJV) Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

What Words – Church Tradition (STD) / People Not Walking Today

And I suggest to you that, although his friends may have been disappointed to hear those words, they were exactly what this guy was craving to hear due to the fact that, according to early church tradition, this man was paralyzed because an immoral lifestyle (a sexually transmitted disease) that had taken its toll on him physically. So, too, I suggest to you that there are people today who are not walking because they are paralyzed by guilt over a sin or a series of sins that took place in their lives previously. And although they can walk physically, they cannot walk with the Lord in good cheer because they think, I've gone too far, I've too wrong, I've sinned too greatly. I suggest that these words were greater for this man to hear.....you are forgiven, than any other words he could have ever heard.

First Person NT Forgiveness / Significant – We can be Paralyzed / Forgive – Lift Off / Jesus says Walk in Freedom of Forgiveness / Lifted off at Calvary

This man is the first person we read of in the New Testament (Matthew) that is forgiven. I find that significant because the guilt of sin leaves us paralyzed, unable to move freely. Forgiveness is freedom. The word forgiveness means, "to send away", to release, to omit, departure, to lift off. Jesus says to this man, "your sins have departed you, they have been lifted off of you, you are free of them, now go walk in the freedom of forgiveness. So too the Lord would say to you, go walk in the freedom of forgiveness, your sins have been lifted off of you, they have departed you, rise up and walk. Beloved, whatever it is that you have done, carry it around with you no more, it has departed you based on the finished work of Calvary, and no matter if people try to remind you of who you once were, I wonder if as this man was lowered down people in the home recognized who he was, they knew his story. Maybe they said why is he here, he reaped what he had sowed, got what he had coming, I remember him when he was in his prime his total disregard for the Law of God. Jesus doesn't care what the people think of that man, Jesus says arise and walk, carry them no more.

Still Today – People Remind Me / Let them Carry your Sin – But Not You / Enjoy Freedom

I still to this day have people reminding me, or reminding others, of my faults and failings, even after I was saved, even after I was a mature Christian, but the Lord says to me that they are lifted off, forgiven and forgotten, and go tell others the same is true for them. He shouldn't be teaching they say, do you know what he once did (years and years ago)? You know what, if they feel the need to carry my sin around, be burdened by it as they gossip, that is their choice. But the Lord has spoken to me, it is lifted off of you, it has departed you, do not be paralyzed by them. I can teach on love and forgiveness because I have been forgiven of much sin, and has been shown much grace and love. I think one of the saddest places to be is saved so long, that a person has forgotten what a sinner they once were. I love reading these accounts in the gospel because they take me back and remind me, that even still today I am like that leper, I am like that demon-possessed man, I am like this paralytic – I need Jesus today, and everyday. Christian, hear those words of the Lord spoken to you, and if someone chooses to bring up your past failings, arise and walk right past them, do not let them paralyze you from enjoying the freedom of forgiveness today.....even if that sin was just yesterday. He will say, your sins are forgiven, but hear Him also say, "go and sin no more."

(Luke 7:47 NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

(Luke 7:48 NKJV) Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

(2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

(2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV) Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

Look at 4 Friends / How Far would you Go

Look at these 4 friends. How far will you go for a friend?

3 Barriers encountered bringing a friend to Christ:

1. The people blocked them
2. Material things got in the way
3. The distance was great

3 things they did to overcome the barriers:

1. They went around the people, actually they went over the people
2. They broke through the material things
3. They reached Him

Hanging Out Wrong People / Jesus saw their Faith / Satan says don't Get Radical / lay Pride Down

1.) We may say he is hanging out with the wrong people, or we may even say what will the people think of me – they'll call me a Jesus freak. Can you imagine what the people thought when the dirt started falling from the roof, then a whole popped open, then here comes this man being lowered down. People probably thought they were crazy, rude, brash, ignorant, disturbing,- Yet let it be noted, Jesus in verse 2 saw their faith, Jesus considers them men of faith. You may think people will consider you crazy, but know the truth, Jesus considers you a person of faith when you minister for Him. Satan will "don't get radical or you'll turn them off. Just be cool." We become so cool that we become the frozen chosen, saved but ineffective. If you care what people think of you, then you won't share. Go over the people, sometimes we have to lay down our pride to reach people with the gospel. Most of the time sharing the gospel is not popular - but eternity is on the line.

Material Things in Way / Money – Toys / Entertainment Shows / Don't Assume all is Good

2.) We may think material things can get in the way today. That the person loves their money, or the fine things in life too much to follow Jesus. If that is true we have to break through those things, show people that these things are only temporal, fading, and Jesus is the only thing that lasts. We must also not let those things keep us from sharing with the person. Do you ever watch those Entertainment shows that talk of the Hollywood stars? Do you notice that half of them lately are about divorce, addiction problems, death, or illness? You would think with all that fame and fortune their lives would be wonderful, but they

are just as needy as we are, maybe even more. A simple question can change someone's life - Hey how's things, not as a greeting, but really asking them, how are you. Its funny how all the people who think I'm a little overboard, but when they were going through an illness or divorce, they would come to my office and pour their heart out. Establish those relationships, because someday they may come back to hear more from you. You can have it all, yet still have nothing. Don't assume everything is all right in people's life just because that is what it looks like from the outside.

Distance too Great – Gone too Far / Don't ever give Up

3.) The distance is too great, they are too far gone. Oh they would never come to the Lord. Don't give up on them, don't quit, keep praying, and keep witnessing. I love hearing those stories about "the last person you ever thought would get saved - DID!

(Matthew 9:3 NKJV) And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

(Matthew 9:4 NKJV) But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"

(Matthew 9:5 NKJV) "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?"

(Matthew 9:6 NKJV) "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"; then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

His Statement is Clear – Anybody can say That / Only He with the Power can Say Both

His statement is clear, Jesus is saying, anybody can come and say your sins are forgiven, there is nothing that can prove if that really happened. But to say arise and walk, then all eyes will be upon you to see if you really have the power to do it. Hence the purpose of these miracles, Jesus is showing He doesn't just have the words, the rhetoric, but He has the power to do all that He says will do. If I can make you walk, then that means I also have the power to forgive your sins, and I can be all that you will ever need in your life.

Which is Easier? / To Heal – Simply Speak / To Forgive – Much More / He didn't Speak – He Did

Now, which is easier for Jesus—physical healing or redemption from iniquity? For Jesus to physically heal the paralyzed man, He simply had to speak a word, it was that simple as we have seen in the past healings of the leper, the centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law, but to forgive sin took more than just a word, to forgive this man, to forgive us, Jesus had to do more than speak. In fact He didn't speak, He remained silent, as a lamb led to the slaughter, He spoke not a word. Jesus would have to take the 40 lashes upon His back, He would have to take the bag over His face and be buffeted from all angles, He would have to take the crown of 1 ½ inch thorns upon His head, He would have to take the nails, endure those 6 hours on a cross on a hill in Palestine that Friday some 2,000 years ago, and worse of all – be separated from His Father in heaven for the first time in all eternity as He took on this man's sin, be plunged into hell – so He could speak these words to this man, to you and to I – your sins are forgiven.

(Isaiah 53:6 NKJV) All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

(Isaiah 53:7 NKJV) He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

Again a Warning / Jesus knows the thoughts of the Heart

Verse 4 - But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? – As we have said in every miracle, there is also a warning, and in this miracle God declares I know the thoughts and intents of every man's heart. Even if you don't speak it, and only think it, God say's I know your thoughts. Christian, set yourself free, and come clean with the Lord, lay it all before the Lord, so He can lift it off of you. Don't blame-shift, justify, or try to deny, but come clean before the Lord so that you may be made clean and whole.

(Matthew 9:6 NKJV) "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"; then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

(Matthew 9:7 NKJV) And he arose and departed to his house.

Friends Brought him – No Family /

Now the story tells us that his friends had brought him, no mention of his family being with them, whether that be mom and dad, brothers and sisters, or if he had a wife and kids. Imagine the scene as he would come home that night. Once again we see Jesus sending a message of hope to others through the touching of another, go home, don't stop at your old hang-outs, don't stop to play basketball, don't stop at the store to buy new threads to go with your new look, but go home and let them see what God has done for you (good word for all of us). I wonder how he entered the home that night, did he knock on the door and stand there waiting for the family to answer and fall over. Did he run in the house and do a flying jump into his father's arms, I don't know. Did he have a wife and kids? Did he walk in and grab his wife, draw her near, lift up his little boy and throw him in the air, I don't know. I know whoever was in that house would continually look at him and marvel, and say my what this Jesus has done for him, and this home. I know we so often look at the negative and talk about how someone gets saved and the family turns against them, think they are now odd, but there are millions of stories where this is the answer to prayer. A wife praying for her husband to come to Jesus, and when he does he is changed radically, and every time she looks at him she says, "my what Jesus has done in him and this home". A parent praying for that lost and rebellious child, and then it happens. Oh some of the greatest joys in life are when you get that phone call, or watch that person go forward and commit, and there is instant joy in the home.

(Matthew 9:8 NKJV) Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Glorified Father in Heaven / Let Light Shine

Note this, students. Every time Jesus did a miracle, people who saw it glorified the Father. Jesus was able to move in such a way that when people saw His miracles, they praised God.

(Matthew 5:16 NKJV) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Man in Taiwan / Just like Us – Father sends Gift – we Exalt the Deliverer or Gift

A man living in Taiwan who was really in love with a certain lady wrote her seven hundred flowery and lengthy letters in one year, sixty-two of which included proposals of marriage. The letters worked. The lady did indeed get married—but not to him. She married the mailman. Isn't that just like us? Here the Father loves us and sends good gifts to us, but we're so dumb we exalt the mailman instead of the author of the letter. If you're used by the Lord, people will either have a tendency to exalt you unrealistically, or to rail on you radically. Our goal should be to do what Jesus did—turn all the attention, all the glory back to the Father.

Life Restored (9:9-26)

Part 1 (9:9-17) – The Outcast are Received / Jesus eats with Sinners

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person chp1-4 / Principles chp5-7 / But Does have Power to Carry Out Principles / Election Year

Matthew is the gospel of the King. In the first four chapters, His Person is revealed as we looked at His lineage, birth, baptism, and wilderness trial. In chapters 5 through 7, His principles are recorded as we looked into His teachings on the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom. But the question arises: Does Jesus have the power to carry out those principles? Or is He, like so many of our leaders (as the election draws near and we are bombarded with all the campaigning), a nice person with good principles, yet impotent to really make a difference? In Matthew 8, and 9 we find the answer as we see the power of Jesus released. In the following two chapters, Matthew records twelve miracles which show Jesus not only had the rhetoric, but He had the dynamic to make things happen, He had the power to back His words, and what words they are.

12 Miracles of Matthew 8-9:

1. The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
2. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
3. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)
4. Healing of Multitudes (8:16-22)
5. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)
6. Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)
7. Jesus Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)
8. Jesus Heals a woman with 12 year Issue of Blood (9:18-22)
9. Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)
10. Jesus Heals 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)
11. Jesus Heals a Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)
12. Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

Heals Outcasts – Peace to Troubled – Peace to a Problem / Now Restores Life

In chapters 8 and 9, writing of the King and the release of His power, Matthew enumerates 12 miracles. In the first three, Jesus showed grace to the outcasts (a leper, a Gentile, and a woman). In the next two miracles after He is healing the multitude, He gave peace to the troubled (the disciples in the storm and those tormented by demons). He worked in the midst of a problem with the healing and forgiveness of the paralytic. And now in today's study we will see Him restore life, not just to a person who was physically dead, but those who were alive, but living as though they were dead, as we will see with the woman who had an issue of blood for 12 years, and the people were outcasts (sinners and tax collectors) enjoying the new life of being received by Jesus, even when the rest of the world shunned and despised them.

(Matthew 9:9 NKJV) As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

(Matthew 9:10 NKJV) Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

(Matthew 9:11 NKJV) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

(Matthew 9:12 NKJV) When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

(Matthew 9:13 NKJV) "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

(Matthew 9:14 NKJV) Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"

(Matthew 9:15 NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

(Matthew 9:16 NKJV) "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

(Matthew 9:17 NKJV) "Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

Matthew Called – Jesus Eats with Sinners (9:9-13)

(Matthew 9:9 NKJV) As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

Matthew – Levi / Levi dedicated to Service – Matthew going the way of World / Get all Can

Matthew, the author of this Gospel, was also named Levi, which meant he sprang from the Levites, the priestly class, the tribe dedicated to worshipping and ministering. Matthew was a Levite, but instead of worshipping at the temple, instead of a life committed to serving the Lord, fulfilling his calling of God, he instead was working for the Roman's, sitting at the receipt of custom collecting taxes. Matthew left his calling of God, the serving of the Lord (as the tribe of Levi was called to do), to go and get all that he could in the world. Go for it, and go for as much as you can get. The Lord, however, has a way of seeing good in people, and He saw potential even in a man like Matthew.

(Mark 2:14 NKJV) As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

(Luke 5:27 KJV) And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

Jews didn't Trust Publicans / Despised – Traitor / Tax Collection – Spear of Sword – 10%

Now the Jews didn't trust the publicans (tax collectors), nor the democrats for that matter. Matthew would be despised by the Jewish people. He would be considered a traitor because he worked for the Roman government. The way it worked then was that the Roman government had a tax quota for each person, they would then hire a tax collector (who had assigned to him a Roman soldier, arrayed in full battle attire, breastplate, full-length spear, very intimidating and threatening). The Tax Collector would add his tax upon the Roman tax, and if necessary use the power of spear behind him to collect. So if Rome's tax quota was 10%, the tax collector added another 7% for himself, and 3% for the soldier, and taxed the already struggling Jewish people 20%. Matthew was greatly hated and despised by his fellow countrymen. Yet.....

Matthew Account – Jesus saw a Man / Other Gospels / Jesus looks past the Yuck / Follow - Love

Verse 9 - He saw a man - Verse 9 is Matthews's account of Jesus calling him. Matthew says that Jesus saw a man. The other gospel writers say that Jesus saw a publican, a tax collector, but Matthew says that Jesus saw a man. Matthew realizes that Jesus looks right through what everyone what everyone else hated about him, Jesus looks past the yuck, the junk, the selfishness, Jesus see past those things, and He sees a man. Then Jesus says to that man, follow Me, I'll take you as you are, I'll love you through all those things, and wait till you see what I will do with you when I restore you to new life in Me.

(Luke 5:27 KJV) And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

Same for You and Me / Take you as you Are – Start My Work in You / Doesn't see what World Sees

That is what Jesus has done for you, He has seen through the yuck and the junk, and He sees a man, a woman, a boy, a girl, and He says follow Me, I'll take you just as you are, and wait until you see what I will do with you once you start to follow me. He doesn't see what the world sees, He has a way of seeing through all of that into seeing a man, a woman!

Follow Me Matthew / Others may Spit or Despise

"Follow Me, Matthew. I'll take you. Others might spit on you, turn their backs on you, and avoid you. But I'm willing to work with you and to work in you." Luke's Gospel tells us Matthew arose and left all to follow Jesus. Matthew, however, doesn't mention this in his own writings. He simply says, "He arose, and followed him." Matthew a wonderful example of Proverbs 27, he lets someone else praise him:
(Proverbs 27:2 NKJV) Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.

Matthew – Gift of God / Left All – Lost Nothing / Except Sin & Shame

Matthew means gift of God, which is what Matthew meant to God, that it is what He considers you, His gift. Matthew arose and followed God. He left all and lost nothing. He lost nothing except His sin and shame.

(Luke 5:27 NKJV) After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me."

(Luke 5:28 NKJV) So he left all, rose up, and followed Him.

(Matthew 9:10 NKJV) Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

Mark Gospel – Matthew's House

Mark a, tells us this is Matthews's house:

(Mark 2:15 NKJV) Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.

Opened Heart – Opened Home – Opened Hand

So first Matthew opened up his heart to the Lord, and then he opened up his home. Later as we know, he opened up his hand and began to do what he had once done for a living, writing down details so all will know. But then he will start writing down a new record, the teachings and deeds of Jesus Christ.

Be Encouraged / God Uses what in Hand / Moses – David – Peter & James -Matthew

This encourages me, cause I see the Lord will use whatever is in our hands presently to do His work in the ministry. Whatever your thing is, that's what he will use.

- As God called Moses in the wilderness, He said, Moses what's that in your hand...a rod...great I'll use that.....lets go talk to pharaoh.
- David what's that in your hand...a rock and a sling...great I'll use that...lets go kill a giant
- Peter, James, John what's that in your...a net...great I'll use that...lets go catch some men
- Matthew what's that in your hand....a pen...great I'll use that...write this down

God Uses anyone Willing / Doesn't Matter Opinion of World – Matthew Hated

God uses anyone that is willing...doesn't matter what the opinion was of the world around them, Matthew was a tax collector, he was hated, yet he got to write down the greatest events to happen in this world.

So Opened Home – to Sinners / What kind of Sinners – Street People

So first Matthew opens up his heart, and then he opens up his home. He opens his home to a bunch of sinners. Who are these sinners? They are the prostitutes, the street people, the immoral lifestyles, the thieves, and Matthew opens his home to them.

Home Fellowship at Finest / Not Who's Who of Capernaum – Jesus Challenged / Crutch - Hosp

Home fellowship at its finest! People who were lost and outcast having a place to be accepted and restored, I doubt this was the who's who of Capernaum, as Jesus will be challenged for who He is hanging out with. These are the kinds of people that the well-off people talk about; maybe you have heard

this once you started hanging out with Jesus after maybe a life of addiction or hardship. They say Jesus is just a crutch, they (you) needed something and Jesus is your next “thing”, a “fad”, something you’ll be into for a while, because you are so needy, Jesus is just a crutch. Well they are partially correct, Jesus is a crutch, but He is also a whole hospital, He is the trauma unit, the ICU, the heart center, the cancer ward; Jesus is the Chief Surgeon of this hospital and He does more than give out crutches and Band-Aids, He is restoring and healing people day-by-day.

(Matthew 9:11 NKJV) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Eating – Becoming One / God becoming one with Sinners

In that society it was believed that if you ate with someone then you were becoming one with them. They would have bowls with food, and you would dip your bread in the same bowls, sometimes at the same time, and they believed you were becoming one with that person. So they couldn’t believe Jesus who claimed to be God would become one with sinners. Yet He does, He does become one with sinners like you and I, praise the Lord, He does, He did, as He would take on your sin and my sin, so that our sin may be put away, and that we may have fellowship with Him, and the Father in Heaven.

Still Today’s Tactic for Division

By the way, how this tactic of division is still alive and well today. These Pharisees (religious experts) didn’t ask Jesus, the leader of the movement; instead they go to the disciples. Based on the context we have seen about the Pharisees, they were not asking for information, but out of critiquing. They simply were trying to cause division among Jesus’ disciples, trying to cast doubt about Jesus’ character and integrity. So too, we see that today, the phone calls and the emails about that person, but never to that person. Should you get those phone calls or emails, just say, and this person whom you are questioning or challenging, what did they say when you told them these things. If they say I didn’t talk to them, then politely say, I think it best we not discuss these things until you talk with them, tell them that may clear a lot of these issues up for you, you may not have all the facts. Really, doubt they will, but at least you won’t be feeding into it.

(Matthew 9:12 NKJV) When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

(Matthew 9:13 NKJV) "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Go and Learn – Saying to Day

Verse 13 - But go and learn what this means – this was a saying at that time for someone to go and read this, think it through. Many times it was a dig at them, it was saying, “hey you should already know what this mean”. Jesus was quoting Hosea 6:6:

(Hosea 6:6 NKJV) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

None Righteous – Coming to those who Recognize Need / Coming those want to Know / Those who know need Cleansing / Want to Know Me / Dip Bread Together – Become One

There are none righteous, but the Lord says, “I am coming particularly to those who recognize their need—to the publicans, the prostitutes, the sinners, and the street people.” I am coming to the people who see their need for cleansing, who see there depravity, their emptiness, I have come for those who want to know Me, to be one with Me, who I can dip bread in the same bowl with, look into each others eyes, smile at one another, laugh together, cry together, to love together.

(Romans 3:10 NKJV) As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

(Romans 3:11 NKJV) There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

(Romans 3:12 NKJV) They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

As a Church – Turning off Sinners / Compassion and Concern

I wonder if we as the church today are like that. I wonder if the church, which should be representing Jesus, is now comfortable with the religious people, but is turning off the sinners, the street people, and

the common folks. Jesus said, "I don't want sacrifice. I want mercy—compassion and concern for everyone."

Hope they can Relate / You Represent Life – Not Holier than Thou / More Matthew Parties

I hope unbelievers relate to you well. I hope they don't look at you as being holier-than-thou. I hope people enjoy your company because you represent life and joy, that there's a quality about you that attracts people—believers and sinners alike. Such was true of Jesus. And such was true of Matthew, as he said to his friends, "Come on over to my house and meet the One who has shown such grace and mercy to me." We need more "Matthew parties," where people open their hearts and homes, saying, "I want you to be exposed to the One who's changed me."

Excited about 2007 Home Fellowships

I am excited about our year 2007, as we and a church will change our mid-week Bible study here at the church into Home Fellowships – "Matthew Parties". Not only will we have fellowship one with another, but a great opportunity to invite the neighbor next door, that co-worker. We have opened up our hearts to Jesus, now we can open up our homes.

John's Disciples Come to Jesus (9:14-17)

(Matthew 9:14 NKJV) Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"

Speaking John Baptist – Much Fasting / I Must Decrease

Speaking of John the Baptist and his disciples, which obviously there was much fasting with John's ministry, but John is now telling his disciples that Jesus must increase and John must decrease, go follow Jesus,

(John 3:30 NKJV) "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Thought Fast More – Not Less / Notice Difference from Pharisees

So they get to Jesus and say hey they don't fast like we do with John, what is up with that, this doesn't make sense, we thought we would fast more than less. Notice, the difference here with these men, they truly want to know what is right, what to do, they want to be right before Jesus, so unlike the Pharisee's, they go right to Jesus so they can be right on, and moving on, and have a they can possibly have of Jesus.

Only 1 Mandatory Fast

Now there was only one mandatory fast prescribed in the Torah and that was for Yom Kipper, and all other fasts were voluntarily. So big change here for John's disciples that come to follow Jesus, and the religious leaders for some writings say the Pharisees use to fast three times a week.

Jesus not Patching up Old Religious System / Starting New

Jesus saying I am not here to patch up an old religious system, I have come to do something totally new. So it is new wine going into new wineskins. Salvation is not is keeping the Law, it is putting all our trust in Jesus Christ

(Matthew 9:15 NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

(Matthew 9:16 NKJV) "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

(Matthew 9:17 NKJV) "Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

New Wine Fermenting / Old System will Burst

New wine, when it fermented would give off gas and if it was in an old wineskin, that skin wouldn't expand because it was rigid and eventually it would burst. Jesus is saying I am doing something totally new here, the old system, the old way would burst trying to hold this new wine I am doing.

How Important to See that Today / Wine represents Holy Spirit / Churches become Rigid

How important for us to see this in our everyday life. Wine in the scriptures represents the Holy Spirit, the moving of the Spirit of God. How often churches and people refuse to get new wineskins to hold the new wine. People remain rigid, inflexible to what the Spirit of God wants to do a fresh and new; they won't allow God to work. Some people even burst when faced with change. Jesus says when He starts a new work, get out the new wine skin, get flexible so you can move with the Spirit. As pastor Chuck says, blessed are the flexible for they will not break.

Jesus saying Remove way of Thinking / Study Me

So Jesus saying I am starting something new, remove your way of thinking, open yourself up to see something new. How people need that, how many people think they have salvation in their way of religion, what they were taught by someone else, what has been their practice and tradition. Jesus is saying to them, look at Me, study Me, and you will see the New Wine. So too it is for every man today. As for me I was living in a religious system, doing what I was taught; I had a wineskin, but it was empty. It was only when I picked up this book, started to study Jesus for myself that new wine was put before me. I could throw out the old wineskin, and fill it with this new wine. And most wonderfully, there is a not just a new cup before me everyday, but the Lord has a whole wine cellar, and He says come and open the vats and let the new wine flow. Praise Him!

Conclusion

Life restored

Well, Jesus restoring life, to Matthew, to the disciples, to you, and to I. Though we may be breathing, life doesn't come until we partake of the New Wine – Our Great God.

Quote of death

Next study we will see people faced with death. Much can be learned from the way people react to death closing in on themselves or on someone close to them. Fifteen years before his death, Mahatma Gandhi wrote: "I must tell you in all humility, that Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul. It fills my whole being, and I find a solace in it that I find nowhere else." Three weeks before he died, however, he made this last journal entry: "My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very much longer. Perhaps a year, maybe a little more. For the first time in my fifty years, I find myself in the slough of despond and in total depression."

Life Restored (9:9-26)

Part 2 (9:18-26) – Jairus Daughter / Woman with Issue of Blood

Part 2 / Last Study – Sinners & Tax Collectors / Can be Alive – Yet not Living / Today

We are picking up here for part 2 of our study on Jesus restoring life. We saw in our last study Jesus restoring life to the outcasts, the sinners and the tax collectors. The people shunned and looked down upon by society. We spoke on how people can be alive, but yet not living. We talked how Jesus comes and makes all things new, and that living here on earth doesn't begin until He comes, and He says "follow Me", and we get up and follow Him. Well, in this passage of Scripture, we see Jesus restore life to a child that was dead, and a woman who considered as good as dead, for she had a 12 year continual flow of blood from her body, and she was cut-off from all society, left to live a life of isolation and loneliness.

(Matthew 9:18 NKJV) While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."

(Matthew 9:19 NKJV) So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples.

(Matthew 9:20 NKJV) And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

(Matthew 9:21 NKJV) For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."

(Matthew 9:22 NKJV) But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

(Matthew 9:23 NKJV) When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing,

(Matthew 9:24 NKJV) He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him.

(Matthew 9:25 NKJV) But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

(Matthew 9:26 NKJV) And the report of this went out into all that land.

Jesus Heals woman with Issue of Blood (9:18-22)

(Matthew 9:18 NKJV) While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."

(Matthew 9:19 NKJV) So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples.

Near Death

Mark's gospel said she was at the point of death, but has not actually died.

(Mark 5:22 NKJV) And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet

(Mark 5:23 NKJV) and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live."

Luke 8 – Name was Jairus / Synagogue – 586BC – Every Neighborhood / 10 Leaders – 1 Ruler

In the eighth chapter of his Gospel, Dr. Luke records this same miracle with much greater detail. He tells us the man's name was Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue. Before the year 586 B.C., virtually all Jews lived within one hundred miles of the temple, so they all worshiped there. But in 586 B.C., the Jews were carried away into Babylon and held hostage for seventy years. No longer able to worship in the temple, they established synagogues in every neighborhood with ten or more Jewish men. The synagogue then became the place of assembly for the Jews where they would worship and study the Scriptures. They would place a long pole in front of that building or location and it was a sign to all that this is where a synagogue was (it is where we get our idea of a steeple on a church – a sign of this is where people meet to worship and study the Scriptures) Each synagogue had ten leaders, called elders. Of those ten, one was elected by the other nine to be the ruler. The ruler of the synagogue was a man of tremendous importance. Not only was he in charge of the synagogue, but he would also settle civic disputes within the neighborhood. Synagogue rulers had power and prosperity, influence and impact. Jairus was such a man. Yet he was willing to risk it all and come to Jesus because death had crept into his family, even if

the rest of the religious leaders, those other 9 elders, all the congregation said “you what”, this man Jesus does those things by the help of the devil, He is a cult, you have lost it.

(Luke 8:41 NKJV) And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house,

(Luke 8:42 NKJV) for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him.

Daughter 12 / Luke's Gospel / 12yrs Laughter & Joy / Suddenly death at the Door

Luke also tells us that Jairus' daughter was twelve years old. For twelve years, his daughter had brought light and laughter into his home, until suddenly, she was taken with sickness and was at the point of death. Power and prosperity meant nothing now, as they things would be put into their proper perspective – my true riches is dying. I can imagine his wife, pleading with him, do something. His wife looking to him for answers, that is my daughter, do something, you are the ruler of the synagogue, you meet with God on behalf of the people, met with him now to get help for my girl. Yet even as the ruler of the synagogue, he would feel powerless and helpless. So he embarks out to find the One all the country side is talking about, the miracle worker.

Daddy's Little Girl / Imagine his Journey to Jesus – Remembering Her / Running – Smile – Daddy!

She was his little girl, his daughter, no doubt as he made his way towards Jesus, hoping and praying for a miracle, he was remembering her running to him when he came home from work, arms flung wide open, big smile on her face, yelling daddy, daddy. He would remember the pictures that she would make for him in Saturday School. The coffee cup that said, “My Hero”, the t-shirt that said “best daddy in the world”.

Wanting to Hear those Words – I Love You / Camden / Heavenly Father

Remembering and missing those words she would speak to him, I love you daddy, oh to hear those words again. My Camden is 5 months old today, such a long way from the 2 weeks in ICU (especially those first 3 hours). Now as I get face to face with him, I talk to him, his face lights up, big smile, I tell him I love you Camden, and he has that wonderful smile, and you can see his tongue quivering, he wants to speak back but doesn't know how yet. As I look at that quivering tongue, I know words are coming soon, and I always think, I can't wait to hear him say those words back to me, I love you daddy. Oh how my heart will melt when I hear those words. To think of Jairus, how his heart hurt and grieved to hear those words again from his little girl, I love you daddy. You know, how our Heavenly Father wants to hear those words from us, how they melt His heart, to hear us say I love you Daddy.

Parents – Slow Down / Father says the Same to Us

Can I make a side-point with you parents, slow down and cherish every moment you can with your children today. My baby is growing like spring grass. I say Camden slow down, you are growing too fast for your daddy, but I know I can't slow Camden down from growing, but what I believe I hear the Lord speak to me is this, “Ray you can't slow Camden down, but you can slow yourself down”. I can't slow him down, but I can slow myself down. I don't want to miss a day of him, for you only get this day once; and parents for you and for me I pray we enjoy and cherish every moment we possibly can. By the way, that is what the Heavenly Father wants to do with you also.

People's Reaction to Death / Ghandi – British Scientist

You know, much can be learned from the way people react to death closing in on themselves or on someone close to them. Fifteen years before his death, Mahatma Ghandi wrote: “I must tell you in all humility, that Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul. It fills my whole being, and I find a solace in it that I find nowhere else.” Three weeks before he died, however, he made this last journal entry: “My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very much longer. Perhaps a year, maybe a little more. For the first time in my fifty years, I find myself in the slough of despond and in total depression.” When Jairus came face-to-face with death, he knew what to do. He went to Jesus. He ran the risk of losing his prominent position, his wealth, and his reputation in order to save his daughter's life.

There was a British scientist, very skeptical of religion, but well aware of the reality of death. So he embarked on his research on life after death. His name was GB Hardee. He approached the subject from 2 fronts when he examined the religions; first, has anyone ever overcame death, and if so, did they

provide a way for me to do the same. He said, I checked the tomb of Buddha and it was occupied, I check the tomb of Confucius and it was occupied, I checked the tomb of Mohammed and it was occupied, I check the tomb of Jesus and it was empty. So I said to myself, there is one who conquered death, so I asked the second question, did He make a way for me to conquer and overcome death. So I opened the Bible and I discovered that He said, because I live, so too shall you live. So here is a man faced with death, faced with his mortality, became a believer.

Jairus – Willing to Risk it All/ Prominence – Power – Possessions / Knew of Miracles of Messiah

Jairus was willing to risk his prominence, his possessions, his power, because the religious leaders were not fans and supporters of Jesus. Jairus knew the price it would cost to come to Jesus, but he was willing to risk it all. Jairus knew of Jesus' miracles, as word of Him was spreading abroad, healing lepers, calming storms, casting demons out of people. Jesus was doing all that was prophesied that the Messiah would do.

*(Malachi 4:2 NKJV) But to you who fear My name **The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.***

*(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, **And by His stripes we are healed.***

(Isaiah 35:4 NKJV) Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

*(Isaiah 35:5 NKJV) Then the eyes of the **blind** shall be opened, And the **ears** of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*(Isaiah 35:6 NKJV) Then the **lame** shall leap like a deer, And the **tongue** of the dumb sing. **For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.***

News of Jesus – Filled the Countryside / Compassion on Hurting / Jesus Singularly Seeks You

Oh how he wanted to see streams of life in the barren desert he was now living. News of Jesus was flowing through the land, there is a man who has compassion for the hurting, a man who had a heart for the hurting, and a man who had the power to do something about it. Jesus will come to his daughter; Jesus will stop for the woman in the midst of the crowd, and I want you to know that today if you are hurting, for whatever reason, that Jesus will singularly seek you out to meet and minister to your need, for He has compassion for the hurting. He has compassion for people, and has the credentials to do something about it, for He is the King, and the King has come. Jairus comes to the One with compassion, and the credentials to do something about it; he was willing to risk it all. But along the way they get interrupted.

(Matthew 9:20 NKJV) And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

Culture – Being Punished by God

The culture of the day believed that a woman with a flow of blood was being punished by God

Leviticus 15 – Cut-off / Luke – Spent all Money / Garbage Dump / Outside the Window / Temple

Her life was no different than the leper we studied she by the Law (Leviticus 15) would be cut-off from society. She could not be employed, she probably had to go to the garbage dump scrounge for food because the other gospels tell us she spent all her money and inheritance on doctors to no avail. Having an issue of blood she could not be employed by anyone because everything she touched would be considered unclean. That means she couldn't be around her husband, she couldn't touch her children, she lived a life of isolation, outside the window of the home looking in, watching her family eat Christmas dinner at the table, passing the food one to another, in front of the fire with candles flickering on the table; she had no one, and she wasn't even allowed to go to the Temple to worship because she was unclean. She probably even thought and felt that God was upset with her, abandoned her. she felt no one loved her, no one cared for her.

(Leviticus 15:25 NKJV) 'If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her usual time of impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her customary impurity. She shall be unclean.

(Mark 5:25 NKJV) Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,

(Mark 5:26 NKJV) and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.

I Met Her 1000 times / Maybe your Neighbor

I know this woman; I met her a thousand times in my life, I met her in every State I have lived in. She may even live on your street; she may even be your next door neighbor.

Notice Parallel / 12yrs Full of Life – Dying / 12yrs verge of Living

Notice the parallel: A twelve-year-old girl, full of life, light, and laughter, was suddenly dying, and a woman, who, for the same twelve years, full of darkness, disease, and depression, was on the verge of being healed.

(Matthew 9:21 NKJV) For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."

Belief Power in the Hem

In Matthew's day, it was believed that there was certain power in the hem of a garment belonging to a rabbi or spiritual leader. "If I could just touch the hem of his garment." This woman probably didn't have the strength to wrestle Him in faith, or to grab hold of Him in belief. Yet she knew if she could even just lightly touch Jesus, she would be healed.

(Matthew 9:22 NKJV) But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

Another Account – Who Touched Me / Jesus knows when Faith Touches Him

Another gospel account says that Jesus asked, "who touched me". All the people pushing in and around Jesus as He performs His miracles, the disciples said all these people pushing in around you, yet you ask who touched you? You see, people push, faith touches. Jesus knew when faith had touched Him.....if only I can touch Him, then I shall be made well.

(Mark 5:27 NKJV) When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment.

(Mark 5:28 NKJV) For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

(Mark 5:29 NKJV) Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

(Mark 5:30 NKJV) And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

(Mark 5:31 NKJV) But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

Calls her Daughter – Only one in Gospel / You are not Forgotten – Outside Looking In / More than Healed when Touched by Jesus

Jesus calls her daughter. The 12 year old girl was Jairus' daughter; this woman is Jesus' daughter. This is the only time Jesus calls anyone daughter in Scripture (at least the only recorded time), no doubt for this specific illustration of His caring for those who are hurting, outcast, and hopeless. Jesus says you are more than healed, you are loved, you are known, you are not alone, you are not outcast, you are not without family, you are not without a God, you are not outside of the Temple, for you are My daughter, and I am all those things to you, and you to Me. She was more than healed, way more than healed, and that is what happens when Jesus touches us.

Luke's Gospel – Go in Peace / Go from Doctor – Disappointment – Hopelessness

The other gospels say that Jesus said go into peace. After 12 years, from doctor to doctor, disappointment after disappointment, from hopelessness to hopelessness, Jesus says go into Peace.

(Mark 5:32 NKJV) And He looked around to see her who had done this thing.

(Mark 5:33 NKJV) But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.

(Mark 5:34 NKJV) And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

Jesus not Afraid to be Touched – He can Handle It / Ceremonially Unclean / Camden Spewing

Peace from the problem and peace with Jesus. Jesus isn't afraid to touch you, as we spoke with the leper, or be touched by you, in the case of this woman. Jesus can handle your thing, whatever it may be. He isn't afraid to touch or be touched, He is not turned off by you, He can handle whatever it is that needs

to be dealt with. Bring it to Him. People would be saying to Jesus in this situation, just like the leper, You are touching something that will make you ceremonially unclean, defiled, but Jesus didn't care, He touched anyways. When Camden throws up on me I don't hold him away from me and say take him Renee, oh how gross. No I hold him closer, are you ok baby, as I wipe his mouth with a towel or my shirt I am not thinking of his spit-up, but how my baby is doing. That a picture of Jesus, He takes all that we spew upon him, sometimes that is sin and shame, sometime it is heartache and despair, and He takes it all, drawing us closer, holding us tighter, soiling His robe, and He says are you ok My child, as He wipes us clean, and comforts our needs.

Maybe say I Love to be Touched – But Don't Feel Him / Be like Woman – Reach Out / Make the Effort – Unbelief- Busyness – Entertainment – Activities / Let me Just touch Him

Perhaps you say, "I would love to have Jesus touch me, but I don't feel His touch." Then be like this woman. If you're not feeling His touch upon you, reach out and touch Him. Have you made the effort to press through the crowd of unbelief, of busyness, of entertainment, of activities—the crowd of all that stands between you and the Lord? Press through and say, "I just want to touch the hem of His garment. I know if I can touch Him, I'll be helped."

She Expended Energy to Break Through / Poor theology – Incomplete Knowledge / Father Honors

This woman expended the energy to break through the crowd and touch Jesus. Was her theology correct? No. Was her knowledge complete? No. She was acting out of superstition. But the Lord didn't say, "Since your theology is all messed up, or you haven't read 3 chapters and prayed today, I won't help you." No! He's a Savior, a Father who heeds the cries of His children, even though their phrases are amiss, or their theology's not right. God honors the person who in desperation is seeking to touch Him.

Think Jairus – Impatient / Ever feel that Way – Why Blessing There – Not Here / Jesus Lessons

Now, do you suppose by this time, Jairus was growing a little impatient? "Come on, Lord. My daughter is dying, and You're talking to some lady who's touched Your garment?" Do you ever feel that way? "Lord, I see You're blessing this person and You're blessing that person. Great! But, Lord, what about me?" I suggest to you that in seeing the healing of this woman, Jairus was being prepared for the healing of his own daughter, for the other gospel's say that before they made it to Jairus' home, word will come that his daughter has died.. You see, whenever the Lord delays in moving and seems to be working in other people or in other places, be observant of where He is working and what He is doing because therein lies lessons for you as well. Keep your antennae up, your eyes wide, and your journal open to record information the Lord knows you will need shortly.

(Luke 8:48 NKJV) And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

(Luke 8:49 NKJV) While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher."

*(Luke 8:50 NKJV) But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; **only believe**, and she will be made well."*

Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)

(Matthew 9:23 NKJV) When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing,

(Matthew 9:24 NKJV) He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him.

(Matthew 9:25 NKJV) But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

(Matthew 9:26 NKJV) And the report of this went out into all that land.

Who are these Minstrels / They had a Handbook

Who were these minstrels? In Jesus' day, when someone died, the bereaved would hire professional mourners and wailers. Even the poorest of families would hire two minstrels, two flute players, and one screamer. But the wealthier one was, the more mourners he would hire. Because Jairus was so wealthy, there were perhaps twenty, fifty, perhaps even one hundred people at his home weeping, wailing, and mourning. Then Jesus arrived. "Give place," He said. "Make way. The maid is not dead. She sleeps." Matthew writes, "And they laughed him to scorn." It wasn't a chuckle; it was a deep belly laugh. It wasn't a giggle; it was a guffaw. After all, they had been with her. They had checked her pulse. They had watched her die. No doubt about it, she was gone. These professional mourning's even had a handbook on how

to mourn. There was a list of 39 rules on how you were to rip your clothes. If the person was direct family you were to rip your clothes right over your heart, if you were a relative you were to rip your shirt over your shoulders, and if you were a distant relative or friend you would rip it around the waist. So if you came into the room you could tell who was who.

They Mocked – We Professionals / Think have it all Figured Out

They mocked Jesus, they ridiculed Him, they basically are saying, “we know what death looks like, we are professionals, we do this for a living, you are such a fool to say she only sleeps, it is done and there is not changing it”, they are saying. How many people think they got it all figured out, that what it is, it is, and God can not do anything about it. They are the one’s who are playing the fool, and they will be mocked and laughed at by Satan, who said you fell for the lie, you thought you had it all figured out, yet you were only playing the part of a fool.

Death in Different Context / Funeral of Butterfly / 1 Cor 15 – Metamorphosed / Worm for Wings

Jesus put death in an entirely different context when He said, “Don’t worry. She’s not dead in the way you think. She’s simply sleeping.” Imagine a funeral taking place in the church with hundreds of caterpillars all dressed in black marching slowly down the floor of the amphitheatre, carrying the cocoon of their beloved, departed brother. Meanwhile, a beautiful butterfly is fluttering above them, looking down in utter disbelief. “What are you guys mourning for?” he shouts. “I’ve been metamorphosed!” In 1 Corinthians 15, when Paul says we shall be changed, “metamorphosed” is the Greek word he uses. When we die, we get rid of these caterpillar costumes and become the butterflies we long to be, we trade the worm for the wings.

(1 Corinthians 15:51 NKJV) Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;

(1 Corinthians 15:52 NKJV) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Jesus touches the Dead – Not Afraid

“Give place,” Jesus said. “She’s not dead. She’s asleep.” Then He went in and took her by the hand. To a Jew, touching a dead body was defiling. It was like touching a leper. But Jesus was not afraid to touch defiled people. And He’s not afraid to touch you.

Other Gospel – She arose and Ate / Jairus – Nain’s Son - Lazarus

The other gospel says after she arose Jesus said give her something to eat, and she ate. The Scripture records three accounts of people who were raised from the dead by Jesus: Jairus’ daughter, the son of the widow who lived in the city of Nain, and Lazarus.

- Following her resurrection, Jairus’ daughter was hungry.
- Following his resurrection, the widow’s son began to speak.
- Following his resurrection, Lazarus came forth walking and they took his grave cloths off of him.

(Luke 7:11 NKJV) Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd.

(Luke 7:12 NKJV) And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her.

(Luke 7:13 NKJV) When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep."

(Luke 7:14 NKJV) Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, arise."

(Luke 7:15 NKJV) So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother.

(John 11:1 NKJV) Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

(John 11:2 NKJV) It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.

(John 11:3 NKJV) Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

(John 11:4 NKJV) When Jesus heard that, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.".....

(John 11:17 NKJV) So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.....

(John 11:23 NKJV) Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

(John 11:24 NKJV) Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

(John 11:25 NKJV) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.

(John 11:26 NKJV) "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?".....

(John 11:38 NKJV) Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it.

(John 11:39 NKJV) Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

(John 11:41 NKJV) Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me."

(John 11:42 NKJV) "And I know that You always hear Me, but because of the people who are standing by I said this, that they may believe that You sent Me."

(John 11:43 NKJV) Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!"

(John 11:44 NKJV) And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

Same 3 Characteristics / Hunger – Talk Differently – New Clothes & New Places

I suggest to you the same three characteristics are found in those who have been spiritually resurrected and born again.

- Like Jairus' daughter, they hunger for the Word, the spiritual manna of the Scriptures. Bible studies are no longer a bore, but something we hunger and thirst for. We hunger after better things.
- Like the widow's son, they talk differently. The things they enjoy talking about are no longer what they once were. We love to talk about the Lord, and quit talking about certain things that only produced dead.
- Like Lazarus, they walk differently, no longer bound by sin. No longer going to those places that had no life.

For Believer Today – Mockers will Say / Jesus moved Mockers – Before Moved in Daughter

Also, for the believer today, know this, whenever Jesus wants to work in your situation, there will be mockers, saying, "It's not going to happen. What a joke. The Lord's not going to help you. He's not even real to you. He doesn't care anything about you." And these little voices inside of us, the voices of unbelief, of demons, or even of well-meaning friends, say, "Grow up. Don't expect a miracle."

The laughers, the scornors, and the mockers were moved out before Jesus went in. Move out the mockers, gang. Believe the promises of God, quote Scripture, rejoice in advance, and anticipate His blessing, and when those mockers come into your life, move them out, don't give them audience, separate yourself from their counsel, from being on the inside of your walls, you tell them you'll have to wait outside, while I wait on the inside with Jesus, watching and waiting for Him to move.

Jesus Restores Life

So Jesus, restoring life. Restoring Jairus' daughter who had brought 12 years of light and joy into the family, and restoring life unto this woman who for 12 years lived on the outside looking in. Two daughters, two mighty moves of God. Jesus showing His compassion, and His credentials.

The Blind See, The Mute Speak; See & Tell the Harvest is Ready (9:27-38)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person chp1-4 / Principles chp5-7 / But Does have Power to Carry Out Principles / Election Year

Matthew is the gospel of the King. In the first four chapters, His Person is revealed as we looked at His lineage, birth, baptism, and wilderness trial. In chapters 5 through 7, His principles are recorded as we looked into His teachings on the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom. But the question arises: Does Jesus have the power to carry out those principles? Or is He, like so many of our leaders (as the election draws near and we are bombarded with all the campaigning), a nice person with good principles, yet impotent to really make a difference? In Matthew 8, and 9 we find the answer as we see the power of Jesus released. In the following two chapters, Matthew records twelve miracles which show Jesus not only had the rhetoric, but He had the dynamic to make things happen, He had the power to back His words, and what words they are.

12 Miracles of Matthew 8-9:

1. The Healing of the Leper (8:1-4)
2. The Healing of the Centurion's Servant (8:5-13)
3. The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law (8:14-15)
4. Healing of Multitudes (8:16-22)
5. Jesus Calms the Storm (8:23-27)
6. Jesus Cast the Demons out of 2 Men (8:28-34)
7. Jesus Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)
8. Jesus Heals a woman with 12 year Issue of Blood (9:18-22)
9. Jesus Raises the Ruler's Daughter from the Dead (9:23-26)
10. Jesus Heals 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)
11. Jesus Heals a Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)
12. Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

Verse 27

Let's pick it up in verse 27.

Jesus Heals the 2 Blind Men (9:27-31)

(Matthew 9:27 NKJV) When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

(Matthew 9:28 NKJV) And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

(Matthew 9:29 NKJV) Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

(Matthew 9:30 NKJV) And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it."

(Matthew 9:31 NKJV) But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

2 Come Together / How Met – Do You Remember Mother’s Face / Relate Each Other / That Day

Verse 27 - two blind men followed Him - I like this, 2 blind men come together. They come together and they cry out together. I wonder how times they sat on the street corner together begging for change of the passer-byers. I wonder how they first met; you’re blind? Me too! How old were you when it happened they may have asked, what was the last vision your saw? Do you remember what the sky looks like, your mother’s face. Maybe one would say, my last vision was my mothers smiling face, or my last vision was the tears in my mothers eyes as she looked on as my vision faded, all she could do was watch helplessly, we are both blinded now, as I can not see my surround because of my physical limits, my mother can’t see her surroundings because of her broken heart limitations, her little boy is blind. These two come together, because they could relate together of their pain and struggles. Imagine the day, when the one came to the others, you’ll never guess what I heard, there is a man who is healing lepers, the lame are walking, issues of blood are stopped, the dead are raised.....could He give sight to the blind, could this be.....the Son of David! So the two of them together will make the journey, to find Him.

Don’t Care Whose House / 7-11 / They Push Through – Expend Energy

Verse 28 - And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him – I love it, these guys don’t care whose house it is, Jesus is in there and we are going in. Maybe they said lets just walk into the house and if someone says, “hey what are you doing in my house, we’ll just say, this is a house, sorry we’re blind and thought this was a 7/11”. They like the leper, like the paralytic coming through the ceiling, like the woman with the issue of blood, they push through the crowd at whatever the energy and expense to get to Jesus.

Blind Bart / Throws it all Aside – Reckless Abandon

I like the account of another blind man (Blind Bartimaeus) who when He hears that Jesus is passing by starts to yell out to Him, Jesus Son of David have mercy upon me, the people tell him to shhh, but he yells out even more. Here comes Jesus, here is my chance, my only chance for change in my life. In the case of that blind man it says that he throws his coat aside and comes to Jesus. His coat was his warmth, maybe even his home, he had no means of income to just go buy another (he begs just for his daily food), and he throws it aside, he comes to Jesus with reckless abandon, not thinking oh no what if this doesn’t work, I’ll still be blind and not be able to find my coat, on top of blindness I’ll now be homeless, no warmth in the night air, I’ll be shivering and shaking, I’ll have totally nothing; yet he throws it aside with one thought, I must get to Jesus.

(Mark 10:46 NKJV) Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging.

(Mark 10:47 NKJV) And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

(Mark 10:48 NKJV) Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

(Mark 10:49 NKJV) So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

(Mark 10:50 NKJV) And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

(Mark 10:51 NKJV) So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?" The blind man said to Him, "Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

(Mark 10:52 NKJV) Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

Not Just Power of Jesus – People like You-Me / Come Reckless / Measure Faith – Measure Touch

These accounts are not just about the power of Jesus, but of real people just like you and me who were willing to throw it all aside, leave it all, risk it all, to get to Jesus. Christian, do you want to live a radical Christian life, then come to Jesus with reckless abandon, not worrying about the what the world thinks or says, what the price may be to follow Him, but come like these people come, and he will touch you like never before, like anything you have ever known, for He will say to us what He said to these 2 blind men, according to your faith let it be to you. I suggest to you that the measure of faith (reckless faith if I may say) is the degree that you will be touched by Him.

(Matthew 9:29 NKJV) Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

Verse 30 / Focus on Miracle than Message / First Recognize Matt 1:1 - - 2 Sam 7

Verse 30 - See that no one knows it." - Why did Jesus say, "Don't tell anyone?" Again, I believe the reason is because He knew the tendency of people to focus on the miraculous more than the Message, on the gifts more than the Giver. These guys couldn't help spreading the word. I can understand that. I mean, they were blind and now they could see. They wanted people to know! Jesus tells the church today to tell everyone, and we tell no one, but He tells these men to tell no one, and they tell everyone. Amazingly, they are the first people we read of in the gospel account of Matthew who recognized and professed Jesus as what we started the gospel account with, verse 1, Jesus, the Son of David. These blind men are the first we read of anyone announcing Jesus as the Son of David, the Promised Messiah, the King who would come whose throne would never end (2 Samuel).

(Matthew 1:1 NKJV) The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

(2 Samuel 7:16 NKJV) "And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever." "

(2 Samuel 7:17 NKJV) According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

Blind See – The 20-20 miss Him

These blind men saw it clearly, yet so many with perfect 20-20 vision couldn't, and the same holds true to day. All the people that have been given all they need to see Him, miss Him totally as He walks right by them. It is interesting, that in all the gospel accounts, the first people to call Jesus by His Messianic title (son of David) were blind. I like the account of the blind man being healed in John's gospel; he says weren't you listen the last time I told you how he healed me, why do you want to hear again, do you too want to become His followers. Once I was blind, now I see, our personal testimony – our eyes were opened to see the Messiah:

(John 9:24 NKJV) So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, "Give God the glory! We know that this Man is a sinner."

*(John 9:25 NKJV) He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner or not I do not know. **One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see.**"*

(John 9:26 NKJV) Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

(John 9:27 NKJV) He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

Verse 31 / Notice the All – Look how far 2 Testimonies can Go / Take the Opportunity

Verse 31 - But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country – The news spread about what Jesus had done for these two men through "all" (notice that "all" there). Look how far the Lord took 2 personal testimonies, through all that particular country. If He can spread the testimony of 2 men through all of a country, we can be assured that He can at least spread our testimony through our family and friends. Take the opportunity this day.

Jesus Heals the Mute and Demon Possessed Man (9:32-34)

(Matthew 9:32 NKJV) As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed.

(Matthew 9:33 NKJV) And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

(Matthew 9:34 NKJV) But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

Sentence Structure / Stadium Evangelism / Beggar bringing Others to Bakery Shop

Verse 32 - As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed - I think based on the structure of this sentence that the "they" spoken of here refers back to the last subject, and that would be the two blind men, not the people who were in the house. So here these 2 blind men are going back and finding people who were just like them, in need of being touched. We think an evangelist is Billy Graham and big stadiums full of people to hear the gospel presentation. This is evangelism right here, it is a beggar who has found bread, going to find other beggars and bringing them to the bakery shop giving away free bread.

Blind Relates to Blind / Impaired – Addict – Depressed – Athletic – Car / Use as a Bridge

The blind relates to the blind, the impaired to the impaired, the addict to the addict, the depressed to the depressed, the athlete to the athlete, and the car buff to the car buff. You will be surprised how relatable

you are to that person just like you; use what you are relatable to as a bridge to them. Jesus still uses this same formula 2,000 years later, so try it, be reckless, see what happens.

Try It / Last Days

If they get saved great, if everyone rejects, rejoice because that means we are in the last days. Personally, even in the last days, I still believe God will bring a great harvest of souls. As we will see Jesus will say the harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few. Those that will be saved, will be saved, the number will be the same; only if the laborers are few, that just means more for the laborers, more for us. It was funny, on Friday night we were out in this neighborhood doing a ding-dong-drop, and we see this group of like 20 peoples walking and singing Christmas carols. Ends up they were a local church, obviously saying lets go spread Christmas joy and spread the gospel, so we stop and say this is great, what are you guys doing, and the funny thing is that nobody would stop and talk to us, they all just kept walking, nobody wanted to talk to us. I think they all thought, we never expected anybody to actually want to talk to us, they weren't prepared for it. The people are out there, we just need to believe it.

(2 Timothy 3:1 NKJV) But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

(2 Timothy 3:2 NKJV) For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

(2 Timothy 3:3 NKJV) unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

(2 Timothy 3:4 NKJV) traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

Verse 34 – Religious Leaders Attack / Jesus responds with Verse 35

Verse 34 - But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." – So they, the religious people, can't attack Jesus by what He is doing, because the blind are seeing, the mute can speak, the lame walk, the dead live again; so since they can't attack His fruit, they have to resort to the weapon of the tongue, and try to sow discord by accusing Jesus of being an agent of Satan. I love what Jesus does, I love how Jesus responds; He doesn't respond with words Himself, rather He responds with actions. Verse 35, He teaches and preaches the gospel of love, and He heals every disease and sickness.

ALL – Sickness & Diseases / God interested Every Detail

I like that too, every sickness and disease. Do you know that Jesus, our wonderful God, is just as concerned about your headache, as you heartache; He is just as concerned about your cough as your cancer. He is the God, not a God, who is concerned and interested in every detail of your life, from your laying down to your waking up.

V35 Jesus answers His Critics

So Jesus answers His critics, verse 35.

Jesus Heals the Multitude (9:35-38)

(Matthew 9:35 NKJV) Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

People Ask Today – Why not Every person Healed – Heals but not Same Way / He Messiah

People ask, "Why aren't blind eyes opened, AIDS victims healed, and the paralyzed walking today? It happened then. Why can't it happen now?" God still heals, but not in the same way. At this point, Jesus was giving the Jews the opportunity to acknowledge Him as their Messiah (the Son of David), but they rejected Him when they nailed Him to the Cross. Jesus was fulfilling prophecy so there would be no doubt He was the Messiah, for Jesus did what was prophesied that the Messiah would do (Malachi 4, Isaiah 53, Isaiah 35).

*(Malachi 4:2 NKJV) But to you who fear My name **The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings;** And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

*(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, **And by His stripes we are healed.***

(Isaiah 35:4 NKJV) Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

*(Isaiah 35:5 NKJV) Then the eyes of the **blind** shall be opened, And the **ears** of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

(Isaiah 35:6 NKJV) Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

We see Miracles Today – Sneak Preview of Coming Attractions / Revelation 21

Consequently, although we do see miracles today, they're not the same as the ones He performed physically when He walked the earth for He left no doubt He was the Messiah. He had the lineage, He had the principles, and He had the power. No man then, no man since then, is 3 for 3, only Jesus. The miracles we read about in the Gospels that are happening today, are "sneak previews of coming attractions" when He will rule and reign, when all will be right, when everyone will be healed, when we will escape this fallen world.

(Revelation 21:4 NKJV) "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

(Revelation 21:5 NKJV) Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

(Revelation 21:6 NKJV) And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts."

(Matthew 9:36 NKJV) But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Moved Compassion / Compassion and Credentials

Verse 36 - *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.* – Jesus was moved with compassion. The Greek word for compassion means "to have the bowels yearn". Let me give you my living translation, and that is compassion is to see something that moves in your heart so much, that you cannot stand-by and watch, you are so moved by it, it moves you into action, that you will give of yourself to change the situation. Jesus has the compassion for the hurting, and He has the credentials, He is the God to do something about the hurting. The King has come, to them and to us, the theme of this gospel:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Scattered – Confused / Santa Claus

Verse 36 - *because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd* – The condition of these people are that they were weary (tired of the emptiness of the world), they were scattered (I know there is something more to this life, but which religion, which denomination is the correct one), and they had no shepherd (I'm tired of going it alone, how I long to be loved and cared for). The ole Santa Claus question in the fundamental churches, I'll leave that to you to seek the Lord on, but what I do see every Christmas is the cry of the human heart looking for a father-figure, that loves them, thinks of them, and desires to bestow gifts upon them.

(Matthew 9:37 NKJV) Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

(Matthew 9:38 NKJV) "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Looking – Jesus says Pray / Not Planting – but Picking / Don't let Satan Whisper / White Crops

Looking at the multitudes, Jesus said to His boys, "Pray. The harvest is plenteous." He didn't say, "It's time for planting." He said, "It's ready for picking." I sense the same thing is true today, don't you? The harvest is ready. Don't let Satan whisper in your ear, "Your neighbors won't listen. Your relatives won't respond." No, the harvest is ready. Another gospel Jesus says the fields are white. Farmers say that when the when the field is white, not golden, the harvest must be gathered now, for it is on the verge of spoiling, time is short, time is of the essence.

(John 4:35 NKJV) "Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!"

Jesus says Pray – Chapter 10 they Go / Prayer leads to Action/ Prayer produces Compassion

Verse 38 - *Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest* – I understand the Great Commission, but how do I do something about it, it seems so overwhelming to me. I love it, for He

says to pray about the harvest to His disciples, and next chapter it will see that the ones who were praying, were the ones that ended up going. Prayer always leads us into action. It is impossible to pray about something, and not be moved into action, we will say I must do something about this situation, prayer produces compassion. God uses prayer to prepare us. So, Jesus says to you today:

(Matthew 28:18 NKJV) And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

(Matthew 28:19 NKJV) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

(Matthew 28:20 NKJV) "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

(Matthew 9:38 NKJV) "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Fitting to Close – the Church Move

How fitting for us, to close on this verse today, with the announcement that we have today of the church moving out of this location, into our new location that we believe will better enable us to reach this community around us.

Matthew 10

The Ambassadors to the King (10:1-42)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Principles Recorded – Power Revealed – People Released / Rag-Tag / First Enabled

After seeing Jesus' principles recorded and His power revealed, here in chapter 10, we see His people released as He sends forth His disciples. Jesus was so radical. He entrusted His message not to the well-educated and impeccably trained, but to a rag-tag bunch of renegades made up of a tax collector, political rabble-rousers, and fishermen. For you here today know that the Lord will never ask you to do anything He does not first enable you to do by the power of His Spirit.

Sending out Ambassadors to the King / Ordination Sermon / Grasp or not go Far or Often

Jesus is sending out His ambassadors to the world. Being that Jesus is the King, that then makes them Ambassadors to the King. Do you realize that today, that we are Ambassadors to the King, that is how highly He regards us. What Jesus gives to these 12 before He sends them, and gives the same to us today, is an “ordination sermon”. The Lord says to us today, go therefore, but before you go here are some important things for you to know, grasp, and apply; otherwise you won't go very far, nor will you go very often. Important message today, for we are all disciples and commissioned, for we are the King's Ambassadors.

(Matthew 10:1 NKJV) And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

Chp 9 - Pray

Back in chapter 9 we ended with Jesus telling them to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send out laborers.

(Matthew 9:37 NKJV) Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

(Matthew 9:38 NKJV) "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

Prayer gives heart of God / Aligns with God's Heart – They now have Compassion

Prayer gives us the heart and mind of God. Prayer will always move a person into action. A person can't pray and remain unmoved; the heart is moved to the point where we say, “I must do something about this”. Those missionaries I prayed for, here is twenty dollars to aid your work. That brother I prayed for the last 3 weeks, what are you doing today, lets get a coffee and chat. As for these disciples, they prayed and their hearts are moved, and are now positioned to want to do something about what they have seen, their hearts are now aligned with Jesus heart as it was in verse 36 of chapter 9, moved with compassion because the people were weary, scattered like sheep having no shepherd. They, through prayer, are ready to hear the calling of verse 1.

(Matthew 9:36 NKJV) But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Pray for Sunday School Workers

By the way, pray for our Sunday school, not asking you to teach, just asking you to pray about it

(Matthew 10:2 NKJV) Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

(Matthew 10:3 NKJV) Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

(Matthew 10:4 NKJV) Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

After night of Prayer

Luke says that Jesus prayed all night before He selected these 12. So after all night of prayer this is what He comes up with:

(Luke 6:12 NKJV) Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

(Luke 6:13 NKJV) And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

- *Peter* - open mouth and insert foot, You better watch him with a sword or you might lose an ear. You ever think about that, Peter swings the sword at the High Priest and misses so badly he cuts the ear off of the High Priest servant. Fisherman shouldn't play with swords. So Jesus picks Peter, "I never knew the Man". Ever feel that way, wonder what I'll mess up next.
- *Andrew* - was known as the younger brother of Peter. Maybe some of you feel like Andrew—always in someone else's shadow. Your older brother, your older sister, or someone else is always the star. Jesus chose someone you can perhaps relate to—Andrew—who was always in Peter's shadow.
- *James and John* - Jesus picks James and John, later known as the "Sons of Thunder" because they want Jesus to call fire down from heaven on any cities that resist evangelism. Not the best way to build a church. They were the ultimate turn or burn preachers. They had explosive tempers. Who here hasn't let their tongue sing a few people at times.
- *Bartholomew* -Remember that Bartholomew is another name for Nathanael, the skeptic who asked, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" How we think we have all the answers.
- *Thomas* - the doubter. Oh ye of little faith.
- *Matthew* - was a tax collector, a professional rip-off artist taking advantage of people.
- *James* - the son of Alphaeus, is an unknown, since there's nothing more we know about him from Scripture. Perhaps you feel that way. You're somewhat shy and retiring, and you don't make your presence known. But the Lord sees you just as He saw James and says, "Yeah, I can use you."
- *Simon* - Then there was Simon the Canaanite, a political rabble-rouser. The Gospel of Luke tells us that Simon was a zealot. He was involved in a group trying to overthrow the Roman government.
- Judas, who would betray Him

Look at 12 – Not who I would Pick – Jesus Did / He can Use Me and You

You look at these 12 and you say this is not exactly who I would have picked out of the thousands that were following Him. I sometimes wonder if Jesus prayed all night because He kept asking God, "are you sure about this?" Even a traitor was chosen by Jesus. Were the disciples superstars? Hardly. How I appreciate the quality—or the lack of quality—of these men because it gives me hope that Jesus can use someone like me.

Difference between Disciple and Apostle

Hey verse 1 they are called disciples, and verse 2 they are apostles. What are they? The answer is both; and the same for us in a sense. A disciple means "learner", and an apostle means "sent forth with a commission". You have to understand and have the message before you can be sent forth with it.

(Matthew 10:5 NKJV) These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

(Matthew 10:6 NKJV) "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

(Matthew 10:7 NKJV) "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Gospel – Sing Out / We have New Song in Hearts / Not crybaby Cowboy Song / Present as Such
Go to Israel, the Jews first. Tell them the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Tell them the King has come. The Greek word for preach is kerusso, it means “to sing out. That’s the word for preach. Sing it out. Sing out the gospel! God has given us a new song, in our hearts to sing, a new song, praises for the King. Don’t turn sharing into some crybaby cowboy song where the dog dies, the girlfriend leaves, and the ranch burns down. This gospel, this song, is a wonderful, it is a joy to be alive, love song. Present it as such we you share it. It isn’t I got bad news you are going to hell, but I have great news heaven’s doors have been opened for you, let me tell ya how to walk through them.

(Matthew 10:8 NKJV) "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

(Matthew 10:9 NKJV) "Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money belts,

(Matthew 10:10 NKJV) "nor bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; for a worker is worthy of his food.

Impossible if not Empowered / Given Freely / Maybe feel Bankrupt / Pray for Blessings to Bless

These would have been impossible tasks had not Jesus already empowered them to do these very things (verse 1). Notice they are doing the very same thing Jesus did in chapters 8 and 9; that is the beauty of being His Ambassadors, ministering in His name, for we become just like Him. Whatever God has given you—gifts, abilities, money, talent—has been given to you freely by His grace. Now let these gifts freely flow through you to help those around you. You might be saying, “I feel so bankrupt. I don’t feel like I have a lot to give.” But the Word tells us that we have not because we ask not (James 4:2). Maybe we should be spending a little more time in prayer, saying, “Lord, I need to be blessed. I need to be empowered so that I might be a blessing to others.” Blessings are like the measles—you can’t give ‘em unless you got ‘em!

*(James 4:2 NKJV) You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. **Yet you do not have because you do not ask.***

*(James 4:3 NKJV) You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, **that you may spend it on your pleasures.***

Don’t take Wallet / Give-a-thon is Contrary to the Word / Root of all Evil / Box in back

Don’t take a wallet loaded with money, nor have a give-a-thou to raise money, nor say God is going to kill you if you don’t receive 5 million dollars by the end of the month. Don’t say there is someone here today that God has told me will write a check for 10,000 dollars. I was at a program and the man did that, said that, I immediately started looking around wondering who it was because I knew it wasn’t me. This money plea is so contrary to the word (I am not saying raising support is wrong, just making that 50% of your message is a little much). I read an article by an unbeliever who was slamming the church and it’s continual money plea, and the guy said if money is the root of all evil, then why does the church beg for if so much. Ahh, just put a box in the back, and if ya run out of money, then just know God isn’t in it, and go try something else. Where God guides bet provides.

When Healing – Think invited for Dinner / People will respond to you Blessing Them

When the disciples went out healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead, don’t you think someone might have asked them over for dinner? I do. I think what the Lord is saying here is, “If you’re going about doing good, preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and cleansing the lepers, the workman is worthy of his food. I’ll take care of you. The people will respond to you, and blessings will flow freely to you because you are giving freely.” Whatever ministry you are involved in, know this: When God guides, God provides. People will be blessed, touched, and encouraged. And they will want to be a blessing in return.

(Matthew 10:11 NKJV) "Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out.

(Matthew 10:12 NKJV) "And when you go into a household, greet it.

(Matthew 10:13 NKJV) "If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

(Matthew 10:14 NKJV) "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet.

(Matthew 10:15 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Common Practice – Shake Dust / God sends Message

There was a common practice among the Jews in that day that when they came back from travels outside of the borders of Israel (they were on business or something in Gentile towns), they would stop at the border and shake the dust of their shoes in fear of bringing Gentile dust into the Holy Land. The more devout Jews would do it again before they came into Jerusalem in fear of they crossed the path of a Gentile on the way to Jerusalem. So Jesus is using their practice as a statement to them; God, yes the God of love and grace, sends piercing statements to people, when you reject Me, then I will shake you off the dust of My feet, you have condemned yourself.

1 Cor 10:31 / Results / Video Reel – New Jerusalem / Still Today – Preaching and Trashing

This is important to understand for us today; 1 Corinthians 10:31 whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Satan, or our flesh, or the world has masterfully discouraged Christians from sharing the gospel by putting the pressure and expectation upon us to get results. To say 100 people got saved at our outreach, or I went street witnessing and 3 people prayed to receive the Lord. But after a few no-hitters, a few zero altar calls, people get discouraged and say I do not want to do this, or I'm not called. Christian, a no is just as much a result as a response of a yes. The yes is exciting for us, but it is no more glorifying as a "no". These people who rejected these Apostles would stand before the Lord, silenced, for they could never say you never told Me. God would run the video reel of the Apostles being rejected, mocked, run out of town. God would say on May 20, 31AD, I sent my servant to you with my message of love and forgiveness, and you rejected them, you saw the sandals being dusted off, and God was saying as you think of the Gentile now I think of you, do not plan on coming into the New Jerusalem. You see even in a no response God receives glory because the person can never challenge that He is a God of love, a God that cares.. So too, sadly for many, they will have all eternity reflecting on the CD they threw in the trash and cursed the church that mailed it to them.

(1 Corinthians 10:31 NKJV) Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

(Matthew 10:16 NKJV) "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

God gives both Wisdom and Faith / LA Gang – Bulletproof Vest

Wise yet harmless - God gives us both wisdom and faith and we should use them together, I have shared the gospel right into the middle of 20 gang bangers in Los Angeles. Sounds very bold I know, but the fact is there was a police officer 10 feet away from me. It was at a street fair in LA, and we were right out in the open under the lights. I was with the police one day here in Maryland, and I was talking to a man at a place we were called to, and the man was looking at my chest and poked it, he said well chaplain, a bullet-proof vest, where is your faith, I said my faith is right here with my wisdom, God has given me both.

(Matthew 10:17 NKJV) "But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.

(Matthew 10:18 NKJV) "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.

(Matthew 10:19 NKJV) "But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak;

(Matthew 10:20 NKJV) "for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

Didn't happen this Journey – but later all Died or Tortured

This persecution did not happen on this particular missionary journey, but before it was all over, every disciple church history tells us we tortured, and/or tortured and killed for their testimony.

They come Against You / Opposition brings Opportunity – Brought before Kings

The religious system and the government are going to come against you. But it's for a purpose. "Opposition," Jesus is saying, "brings opportunity. You'll be brought before magistrates, judges, kings, and leaders as a representative of Me."

Swiss Cheese / I'll get back to You – Round 2

Verse 19 - do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak - I am glad this verse is here, for my brain is Swiss cheese and no matter how I try to memorize Scriptures somehow it finds those holes and slips right through and out. It is ok if you forget, for when I am in a discussion setting, say family or friends, and I can't answer a question, then I say I'll get back to you on that. It gives me a reason to have another spiritual conversation with them. That is the Lord I am sure; that if He hasn't brought what we are to say, then He is setting up round 2.

Study Show Approved

Now we are called to study to show ourselves approved, so there is a responsibility to be ready in season and out of season. So we should be ready with at least the 5 basic verses that encapsulate the gospel. At least have them bookmarked in your Bible. As you go through them the spirit will move through you and you will recall them and present them clearly and in a way for the person to understand them, because the Spirit will be moving in them.

(2 Timothy 2:15 KJV) Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

(2 Timothy 4:2 NKJV) Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

5 P's

PERSONAL:

(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

PROBLEM:

(Romans 3:23 NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

PENALTY:

(Romans 6:23 NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PROVISION:

(Romans 5:8 NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

(John 3:16 NKJV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

PROFESSION

(Romans 10:9 NKJV) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

(Romans 10:10 NKJV) For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

John 6:44

Now remember John 6:44, as the Spirit is moving through you, the Spirit is also moving upon them

(John 6:44 KJV) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

(Matthew 10:21 NKJV) "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

(Matthew 10:22 NKJV) "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved.

(Matthew 10:23 NKJV) "When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

Prophecy came to Pass – 10 waves of Persecution / Dipped in Wax

This prophecy of Jesus came to pass as the church went through ten tragic waves of persecution under ten Roman emperors. During this time, perhaps as many as 175 million Christians were killed (some estimated it as high as 300 million). Until the rule of Constantine, Christians were systematically scourged, beaten, and burned. Caesar Nero had believers dipped in hot wax so he could ignite them and use them as torches in his palace gardens. By the way, last year it was determined that close to 200,000 of our brothers and sister in areas resistant to the gospel gave up their life for their belief.

Today – Know feeling / It Hurts / Lost Son when you Found Religion / Just Living the Word

For many here today though, you know the feeling, how painful it is when family friends distance themselves from us, not sure what to think of us, maybe even get hostile towards us. I know some brothers who say their parents have told them I lost my son the day you got religion. Some have said I count you as good as dead. It is painful, sorrowful; we love them and miss that intimacy with them. Jesus said it will be so, and if that is so for you, then be encouraged, the word is living, and you are living out the Scriptures. You are not just reading scriptures, you are living the Scriptures.

Time to Move on /

Verse 23 - When they persecute you in this city, flee to another - There is a time to move on. When is that time, pray to the Lord of the harvest, and He will tell you.

Wise as serpent, innocent as doves,

(Matthew 10:24 NKJV) "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

(Matthew 10:25 NKJV) "It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!

Ministry comes with Problems / Think Wrong Place / Jesus says Expect It

All ministries will come with problems (there will always be problems when dealing with people). We in the USA mentality can think if it gets hard then we are doing something wrong or in the wrong place. Jesus says not say, in fact He says expect it, and you are in good company.

Beelzebub – Accuse you of Opposite who You Are / Hurts to serve and love – But be like Jesus

Beelzebub (also a name used for Satan) was name of a Philistine deity (it was the Lord of the flies). This is what some would call Jesus, the Lord of the flies. Jesus was called the opposite of who He really was. So He says don't be surprised when they call you the opposite of who you really are in the spirit. It can be painful and discouraging to give of oneself, to love and care, to seek to help the lost and hurting, to serve someone and then they turn on you and say you are uncaring, selfish, carnal, mean, etc, etc,

Verse 26 – The Truth will be Revealed

Jesus says in verse 26 that in time all things will be revealed. Jesus says don't fear their words.

(Matthew 10:26 NKJV) "Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

(Matthew 10:27 NKJV) "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.

What tell in Devotions – Speak Out

"What I am telling you in the dark, speak in the light. What I am telling you in the quiet times, in your morning devotions, in your evening watches, spread abroad."

Now will Give Series of Encouragements – Not to Fear

Jesus will now give a series of encouragement to His people to not fear. To not fear what people think and say about us, to not fear calling ourselves Christians, to not fear professing Him Lord publicly.

(Matthew 10:28 NKJV) "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

(Matthew 10:29 NKJV) "Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.

(Matthew 10:30 NKJV) "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

(Matthew 10:31 NKJV) "Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

When Falling & Hurting – God is Watching

Be assured that when you're falling, stumbling, or hurting, the Lord is watching and caring.

Jesus talking to 12 about Fear / He gave them Authority to do Miracles / Jesus not Pounding Them

Jesus is talking to the 12, He is talking to the 12 that He has given authority to, to the 12 He has given the power to raise the dead, heal the sick, cast out demons, and cleanse the lepers. The 12 that walked with Him and yet He gives them a dissertation on not to fear. If Jesus knows the need to speak to them about fear, then we need not go home and feel like losers, like failures before the Lord because we were afraid to share our faith, or when someone says can you believe those Christians, the nerve of them, and we remain silent and go home feeling 1 inch tall. Jesus knows it is hard in the flesh to stand before our family and friends. Jesus isn't judging here, He is not pounding on them or us, what He does here is give them and us the keys to having victory over fear, the fear of what people think of us.

Keys to Victory over Fear – Eternal Perspective / Raise Dead – Sparrow - Hair

The fear comes when we look at things from the earthly perspective. Jesus speaks from eternal perspective and put people who come against us in the proper perspective. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind:

(2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

(2 Timothy 1:8 NKJV) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,

(2 Timothy 1:9 NKJV) who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began,

- *In verse 28* -Jesus has the power to raise the dead. That is who is on your side, in your corner to champion you on. Jesus is saying no one can take your life unless I allow it.
- *In verse 29* -He says He sees the sparrow fall to the ground. Saying you are never alone, I know exactly where you are at. Funny the critics at Harvard said this is a contradiction with Luke's gospel (12:6) that says you can buy 5 for the price of 4; fools, that is not a contradiction that is a sell.
- *In verse 30* – He says I think of you so much I know ever detail of your life. I am so intimately involved in every detail of your life that I numbered you're the hairs on your head. Not counted them, though He knows that too, but He numbered them. It is said that the average person has 140,000 hairs on his head, and when one falls out Jesus says, number 123,467 just fell out.

Don't Worry – All Temporal

The Lord says don't worry about your job, your relationships, or what people think of you for it is all temporal.

(Matthew 10:32 NKJV) "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

(Matthew 10:33 NKJV) "But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Verse Misunderstood / Peter Denied

This verse is often misunderstood. People ask, "Does this mean the Lord will deny me if I don't stand up for Him?" No. The very night Jesus was led away to be crucified for Peter's sins, Peter was cursing, swearing, and denying Him. Yet after He died, Jesus found Peter and said, "Peter, feed My sheep. Feed My lambs. Keep going, Peter." Jesus did not damn Peter, disown Peter, or disqualify him from service.

(John 18:25 NKJV) Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not!"

(John 21:17 NKJV) He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

Luke 12 – Rejecting the Holy Spirit / Dan 3 – Stand with you In Fiery Trial

Luke 12 gives us the understanding of this verse. Jesus will stand against anyone that has rejected the witness of the Holy Spirit, that He is the Son of Man (the name for the Messiah – the One that would save man from their sin that separates them from the Holy God). Those that have received the witness of the Holy Spirit, has received Him as their Lord and Savior, Jesus will stand beside them, will fight for them, no matter who the opposition is. Therefore He says “Do Not Fear”, for I am with you in the midst of the war. That makes me think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the fiery furnace. That is what this verse is saying, I will be with you in the fiery trials.

(Luke 12:8 NKJV) "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God."

(Luke 12:9 NKJV) "But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God."

(Luke 12:10 NKJV) "And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven."

(Daniel 3:23 NKJV) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

(Daniel 3:24 NKJV) Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

(Daniel 3:25 NKJV) "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

(Matthew 10:34 NKJV) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

(Matthew 10:35 NKJV) "For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';

(Matthew 10:36 NKJV) "and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'

(Matthew 10:37 NKJV) "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Inevitable – Light makes people Uncomfortable / Can't Value Family higher than Me

It's inevitable. If we are the light we should be, we're going to cause people who are living in darkness to feel uncomfortable. Jesus says, "There's going to be some severance, some tension, some difficulty if you're standing up for Me and living for Me. But if you value family or friendship more than you value Me, you're not worthy of Me."

Reminder – Upset with Light not Light Reflector / John 3:19 / Love Sin – Sex – Power - Pride

Reminder Christian, it isn't you that upsets them, it is what you represent. You are light, and that light reveals who they really are. They are not upset with the Light reflector, but the actual Light. John 3:19 is the verse that sums up why a person doesn't come to the Lord. They love their sin (maybe it is sex or drugs), they do not want to bow the knee and give up the throne, they want to stay in power and call all the shots of their life on their own. It may be pride, the pride that refuses to say they are wrong, that they have done something wrong. Whatever the case, it is because they do not want the light to reveal who they really are:

(John 3:19 NKJV) "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

(John 3:20 NKJV) "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

(John 3:21 NKJV) "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

(Matthew 10:38 NKJV) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:39 NKJV) "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Cross Romanticized / today the Gas Chamber / Jewelry / Message Contrary to Today's Self

Verse 38 - And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me - The cross has been romanticized. Today it would be the gas chamber, the electric chair. Image re-wording the songs today, not too many people would be wearing electric chair jewelry. The message of the cross is death to

self, and how contrary that is to today's Talk Shows, the Mental Health Profession, the Self-Esteem books.

Christian Life not Self Sacrificing – But Sacrificing Self / Conforming - Transforming

The Christian life isn't self-sacrifice, it is sacrificing ourselves. It is not Lord I can't do this, this, and that because I am a Christian. It is Lord I give myself, now please conform Me into your image. The struggle for us is that we keep trying to hold on to stuff, the struggle is letting it go, and giving all of ourselves to Him. Freedom comes in letting go, not holding on to.

(Romans 12:1 NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

(Romans 12:2 NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Be Miserable think of Self / Freedom Comes in Letting Go

If you want to be miserable, turn inward; but if you want to have life, Jesus—the Author of life—says, “Die to self. Live for Me.” Freedom comes in letting go, not holding on to.

This Verse is the Great Commission

This verse is the Great Commission. Die to self and all the other stuff will fall in place.

(Matthew 10:40 NKJV) "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

(Matthew 10:41 NKJV) "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

(Matthew 10:42 NKJV) "And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

Reward at the End / Hebrews 6

There is a reward at the end. “Anyone who honors you will be honored by Me. Even if they give you a cup of cold water, they are going to be profited and blessed presently and eternally.” In the Book of Hebrews, we are told the Lord is not unfaithful to forget our works of righteousness (6:10). When you do something for someone else, they might forget about it. But when you do something in the Name of the Lord for the people of the Lord, He promises He will not forget, and you will be rewarded. When? Perhaps now—but even better, in heaven.

(Hebrews 6:10 NKJV) For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Good Passage to Read before Witnessing

This is a good passage to read regularly, to remind us that not all will go easy as we live for Christ. Also, a good passage to read before mission trips, witnessing to family or friends, or to co-workers.

The Life Set-Apart (10:38-39)

Topical Study

(Matthew 10:38 NKJV) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:39 NKJV) "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Now let's turn to Exodus 29.

The Year 1500BC

The year is approximately 1500BC, and God through His mighty hand has delivered the children of Israel from the 400 year bondage of slavery there in Egypt. God, the Mighty Warrior God, single-handedly, without a sword being lifted defeated the greatest military, of the most powerful nation the world had ever seen to this point in human history. God delivers them through the parting of the Red Sea, and He begins them on the journey to the land that He had promised them through their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is showing Himself personally to them, that He will be their God, and they shall be His people. He is establishing them as a nation, a people, so that all other nations and people see what life can be to those whose God is the Lord.

Tabernacle – Shekinah Glory / Garments / Before the Lord – God to the People

Up to this point He has given them instruction on how to build the tabernacle, where His Shekinah Glory would settle (a cloud by day and a fire at night), a place where the people would come to meet with Him. He also gave instruction on the garments that the High Priest would wear who would come into the Tabernacle to minister to Him, and to intercede for the people before God, and to represent God to the people. And now, here in chapter 29 we will read of and study the actual setting apart of these men who would come before God, the setting apart of them for the Lord.

1 Peter / Royal Priesthood / Still Applicable / Reason we Exist - Reason a Church / Matt 10

This message is applicable for us, for we are a Royal Priesthood, His own Special People, that we might proclaim the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, (1 Peter 2:9-10).

3,500 years later this message still applicable to a group of people meeting in a middle school in Pasadena. I chose this to be our first message in this new building, for in it I see not only the reason we exist individually, but the reason we meet and exist as a church, as we will see here in chapter 29, God setting His people aside for Himself. It is this very passage here in Matthew 10, a life set-apart for God: *(1 Peter 2:9 NKJV) But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (1 Peter 2:10 NKJV) who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

(Exodus 29:1 NKJV) "And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests: Take one young bull and two rams without blemish,

(Exodus 29:2 NKJV) "and unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour).

(Exodus 29:3 NKJV) "You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.

(Exodus 29:4 NKJV) "And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and you shall wash them with water.

Before Offer – Had to Offer for Self / Jesus Order of Melchizedek

Before they could offer unto the Lord, they had to first make an offer on behalf of themselves; they have to be cleansed of their sin, and set-apart for the Lord. Jesus was a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, He needed not make an offering for His sin for He was sinless. But Aaron and his sons were mere men, and needed an offering before they could serve.

Before Minister – Before Tell - Had to be Washed / Ephesians 5

A word for us today, that before we can minister unto others, we must first be ministered to by the Lord. Before we tell someone else what they need to hear or be doing, that we must first sacrifice unto the Lord, wash ourselves with the Word, cleanse ourselves. We see the correlation to baptism, and the washing away of the old sins and stepping into the new life:

(Ephesians 5:25 NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

(Ephesians 5:26 NKJV) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

(Ephesians 5:27 NKJV) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Most Gracious – Those that Recognize / What He has Done – Not what they Do

The most gracious people you will ever meet (and forget about other people, let's be only concerned with ourselves) are the people who recognize their depravity, recognize they are nothing without Christ; those who remember where they came from. They realize that their relationship is about what Jesus has done for them, not what they do for Jesus.

Note – All Passive / They Just Need Lay Hands / Same for Us Today

What you will notice as we go through this study is that Aaron and sons did nothing, they just received; Moses is the one who washes them, Moses is the one who dresses them, Moses is the one who makes the sacrifices for them. All they will have to do is lay their hands on the sacrifice as a transferring of guilt on to the innocent sacrificial animal. Same for us today, we just receive, and accept from the Lord, we must only be willing to receive, and then leave the rest up to the Lord.

Testimonies – Pulled From / Praying Worship Music / Broken Vessels – Steel Walled

I was talking with a brother who I had asked to share his testimony with the church, and we talked about how wonderful it is to share our testimony because it takes us back to where we once were without Him. We couldn't wash our sins away, someone else had to do it for us, we couldn't robe ourselves in righteousness, someone else had to do it. Part of my devotion time I often select worship songs (by the leading of the Lord) and I pray them as I listen to them; this week I was praying one of the songs and it was truly from the Lord, as it was a song about a personal sin, a specific sin, and that sin just happened to be mine before saved (I listened to it over and over again – 3 times), and the Lord through the song broke me all over again. I am glad to be broken, I am glad to be humbled by the Lord, sometimes I forget after 15 years, for I find love flows through broken vessels much more greatly than it does through strong steel-walled tubing.

Cakes in the Basket – Moses in Basket / Moses in Age Group Alone / We are the Offering

Speaking of being broken, imagine Moses here, putting the cakes, the bread, and the wafers into the basket, and no doubt reflecting back to where he came from, where he was pulled from, a basket floating down the Nile, being sent down the Nile with a hope, or being left to be killed like all the other male children. Moses reflecting back on the basket and being blown away; from a basket to standing before God in the form of a burning bush, and He speaks to me; from a basket to standing before the Pharaoh of the greatest nation in the world, and telling him, thus says the Lord; from a basket to watching the finger of God write the moral and spiritual law for the foundation of the whole world. Do you realize, there was no other Hebrew men Moses' age, he was in an age group all by himself. When Moses was say 80 he would meet fellow Hebrew men who were 81, maybe 79, but not 80, maybe not 79, maybe not even 78 for we know not how long the killing of male Hebrew children went on when the decree went forth from the madman who was Pharaoh. Where the Lord brought Moses, and I imagine as Moses would place cakes in a basket, he would have to be blown away thinking I am putting together and offering for the Lord, in the same manner I once was; as my mother placed me in that basket, and said Lord into thy hands I commend this child to you, He is yours now to do with as you will. As we, realizing we ourselves are the offering, our lives spared and set-apart to be, as we will read that we are a sweet smelling aroma. . How life will be changed for all, when we reflect back on where we came from, and how now we are the offering.

(Exodus 29:5 NKJV) "Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod.

**(Exodus 29:6 NKJV) "You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban.
(Exodus 29:7 NKJV) "And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him.**

Oil representing the Holy Spirit / Oil – After the Covering / Not what we Do – He has Done

Oil, representative of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures. But notice, the anointing only comes after the covering. It is not what man does, but what God has already done.

Anoint – Set apart for Use / To Paint / Covers the Flaws

Anoint here means to consecrate, set apart entirely for use. I like one of the other meanings, it means “to paint”, and I can relate to that; God covering my flaws and imperfections, covering me with His Holy color of Red, washing me in the blood, and leaving the tint of red behind so that when He looks at me he no longer sees the vile sinner Ray Bollas, but a new man, a person, that He has set apart for Himself.

(Exodus 29:8 NKJV) "Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them.

(Exodus 29:9 NKJV) "And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

3 Offerings / Sin (Covering) – Burnt (total Surrender) – Consecration (Set-Apart) / The Trap

Their shall be 3 offerings made by them; a sin offering (for the covering of sin), then a burnt offering (for a life surrendered), then a consecration offering (a life set-apart for God) made. Important for us to look into these 3 offerings ourselves, for how they still apply to us today. Maybe you'll read this and be a little confused, which one is the consecration, which one is the surrender, they seem to say the same thing; It is true in that sense, they do say the same thing in many ways, but different at the same time. Many a Christians make the mistake of thinking they are separate, trying to make them separate, missing the point that the 3 of them are seamlessly woven together. Many want to make the sin offering, covering of the sin, and it is true our sin has been totally consumed and taken away positionally by Jesus Christ (we are forgiven), but there is the process of holiness and righteousness where the Lord wants to deal with our sins personally and bring us into a life that is completely surrendered to Him, and a life that is set-apart for Him to do with as He desires for us, for His plans for us are nothing but what is the best for us, and the kingdom of God.

Sin Offering

(Exodus 29:10 NKJV) "You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull.

(Exodus 29:11 NKJV) "Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

(Exodus 29:12 NKJV) "You shall take some of the blood of the bull and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and pour all the blood beside the base of the altar.

(Exodus 29:13 NKJV) "And you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe attached to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that is on them, and burn them on the altar.

(Exodus 29:14 NKJV) "But the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering.

Laying of Hands – Represents transfer of Guilt to Innocent / Animal not Involved in Sin – No Jesus

The laying on of hands represents the transferring of guilt and shame unto the innocent sacrifice, the acknowledgement and understanding that I really should be dying, the innocent animal played no part in this sin, it was my sin and my sin only. It is called “substitutionary atonement”. Isaiah 53, says God laid the iniquities of us all upon Jesus, the innocent who had no part in the sin, taking the punishment;
(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.
(Isaiah 53:6 NKJV) All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

(Romans 6:23 NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Made at Altar – Front of Tabernacle / Can not enter without Death First / Cross of Calvary

The sacrifice would be made at the bronze altar which was the first thing a person would see when they walked into the courtyard of the tabernacle. There was only one gate for entrance into the courtyard of the tabernacle, and immediately before the person was the bronze altar, then beyond that was the bronze laver for cleansing, and then would be the entrance into the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. Every person would see and know that a person could only enter into the place of the Lord through the shedding of blood. We could never have entered into the Holy place, or the Holy of Holies, without passing the altar of sacrifice, the cross of Calvary.

Jesus Sacrificed Outside the City / Hill called Golgotha

Verse 14 - you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It is a sin offering – Interesting that Jesus was crucified outside the city, on a hill called Golgotha.

Bring It all – Inside Out

This might seem graphic, cut open the animal, pull out the entrails, the kidney, the liver, pull out all the internal organs and place them on the altar. The idea here that you are bringing all the inward parts to be consumed by the fire; how easy it is for us to bring the outward appearance for changing, looking like we have it together – but sin is in our heart, that is left untouched, as we don't touch the deepest recessed parts of our heart, and say here it is Lord, deal with it, consume it.

Why did we Come Here Today / Let Bible Study Us / Leave Nothing Undone

The Lord says bring those things before Me that I might consume them. Can we be serious and honest with ourselves today, why did we come here tonight? Is it out of obligation, out of habit?. Let those that came here today look at these things and say, Lord may I leave nothing uncovered. May I expose all to you, and let you have your way, so that I might be wholly set apart for you, and that I might walk in holiness and purity as you desire for all your children. We have come here, we have made the effort, lets not leave here short, let's not leave here with anything left undone. Let's not study the Bible, let's not come here to read the Bible, but let us let the Bible study us, open us up, and reveal to us what needs to cut open, put on the altar, and consumed by the fire of God, His purifying fire. That is why we meet, that is why we come here, that is why we exist, that the Word of God may examine us, bring these things to the surface, placed on the altar, and then consumed, so that He might change us and conform us, so that we might move on closer, into the Holy of Holies, and we can experience His Shekinah Glory.

Deal With It / Inner Recesses / Prayer at End

Let it be consumed, put it on the altar, and let it be consumed. Don't just deal with the surface, but reach down into your very bowels, the inner recesses of your heart, don't leave here the same as you came in. Hear the Lord as He speaks to you right now. We will close with 5 minutes of prayer for each of these 3 offerings, and there you can put on the altar to be consumed.

Burnt Offering

(Exodus 29:15 NKJV) "You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram;

(Exodus 29:16 NKJV) "and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and sprinkle it all around on the altar.

(Exodus 29:17 NKJV) "Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put them with its pieces and with its head.

(Exodus 29:18 NKJV) "And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It is a burnt offering to the LORD; it is a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

Sweet Rest / Aroma to the Lord – Not man / Looking forward to Rest -

The Burnt Offering is also called the Sweet Savory Offering. Sweet aroma in the Hebrew means "sweet rest". The aroma is unto the Lord, not to man. As the aroma is lifted up to the Lord, He smells it and looks forwards to the rest that will come through the sacrifice of Jesus, who is our rest.

(Hebrews 4:10 NKJV) For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

(Hebrews 4:11 NKJV) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Imagine Millions – A Reminder of His Death to Come / But He Couldn't wait to Die / Come

Imagine, this, millions upon million of sacrifices being made, all a reminder, all a shadow of what is to come, the cross. The graphic nature of what we have read, a body being ripped apart, blood being poured out, blood being sprinkled, and God would smell it and consider it sweet, it would bring rest in His heart why? Because He looked so forward to that day when sin and death would be conquered once and for all. He looked forward to the day when He could say don't come to the altar, come to the throne, boldly come, heavens gates are opened wide for you. What a God, a God who says I look forward to dying for you. Could you imagine if we knew how we were to die, and we had a constant continual reminder day after day of our death to come (whether car accident, heart attack) how we would be distressed by the continual reminder, yet the Lord says oh how sweet that day will be, that day when they will rip my back open with 40 lashes, when they buffet my face, when they will take those nails and nail me to a tree, then hang me there for 6 hours, I look forward to that day so I may say to them – It is Done! I look forward to saying, "boldly come before the throne of grace".

(Hebrews 12:1 NKJV) Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

(Hebrews 12:2 NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(Hebrews 4:16 NKJV) Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

He Loves You

My how the Lord loves you. What a blessing to say that every week to you, "He loves you!" May those words be your sweet aroma, and your sweet rest.

Complete Surrender

For us, the burnt offering as we study throughout the Scriptures, speaks of complete surrender; none of the sacrifice is taken outside the camp, it is wholly consumed by the fire. For us, rest will only come on this side of eternity when we completely surrender. When we say, I am done, Lord your ways are my ways, your words are my way, I surrender all to you. I am done trying to make things happen in my flesh, I am done doing things my way, I am done calling the shots, My way doesn't work, that has been clearly proven, I am done saying it must be my way, I surrender all to you.

Why did we Come Here Tonight

Again, I ask, why did we come here tonight. We will have a time of prayer at the end of this study, and we will make our burnt offering to the Lord. May tonight we surrender all, so we may have rest. For that rest is freedom, and we will feel that weight and pressure lifted from us, and we can leave here tonight we a whole new walk with our Lord.

Consecration Offering

(Exodus 29:19 NKJV) "You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram.

(Exodus 29:20 NKJV) "Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put it on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar.

Consecration – Set Apart

Consecration is the setting apart, the setting aside wholly for a purpose.

Ear – Thumb – Foot / Man's Wisdom / Sin – Surrender – now Consecrated / Hear Amazing Things

Interestingly that the blood gets put on the tip of the ear; for how the first thing that changes when we get set-apart for the Lord is that we start to hear things differently. The things we hear coming from the world suddenly starts to sound foreign to us. We hear them for what they are now, contrary to God and His ways He has purposed for man to live. Man's wisdom becomes foolishness to us. Once the sin offering is made, the way is open for us to be totally consumed by Him to a place of surrender; then once surrender comes we start to see and hear things differently, hear things we never heard before (the more

we surrender, the more differently we hear). We are open to receive His instruction, we are open to hear things we never dreamed we could hear from heaven, I love you, I call you son and daughter, your sins are washed cleaned, I long for you, my thoughts of you outnumber the grains of sand on the shore and the stars in the heaven.

Hand

After the ears are touched, then the hand is touched. Once He has won our attention and affection it changes all that we do with our hands. I am going to take these hands and open the Bible and read it to my children. I am going to take these hands and touch my spouse in a deep loving way. I am going to take these hands and take the hand of my child and walk with them and hold them in my arms and make sure they are first in my life. I'm going to take these hands and put a pair of suitcases in them and get on a plane and go to Nicaragua and tell them about Jesus. The hands are touched, and all that we do with them are set-apart for Him.

Toe – New Direction / New Delight / Led to places to Fall Deeper in Love / Serve Him

Then the toe is touched, speaking that where we go has changed; we chose not to go to those places, God has our ear and we are hearing new directions, and our heart delights in His directions for they lead us to places that let us see more of Him, understand His way, and understand His deep love and passion for us, and then to take that same love and pass it on to others. These feet take us to this place to worship Him, to bless others, to encourage others, to serve others. These feet take us to a place where our ears can hear of Him, and our hands can be used as His hands.

Why Come here Today

What did we come here for tonight?

(Matthew 10:38 NKJV) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

(Matthew 10:39 NKJV) "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

Prayer:

Sin Offering – Inside Out Revealing & Confessing

Burnt Offering – Total Surrender

Consecration – Totally Set Aside

Matthew 11

Questions from Prison (11:1-11)

Last Words OT

The last words spoken by an Old Testament prophet, the prophet Malachi, who said:

(Malachi 4:5 NKJV) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

(Malachi 4:6 NKJV) And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

Then 400yrs Silence

And then, 400 years of silence; the days turned into years, the years into decades, and the decades into centuries. Imagine the hearts of man, as questions, and most likely despair sets in as they wonder where is the Lord, has He forsaken us, has He brought a curse upon us, is this Roman oppression and occupation of the Holy Land that curse. God do hear us anymore, do you even care about us, are we still your chosen nation?

Then Comes John

But then comes John the Baptist on the scene, and excitement fills the land, the questions arise, John are you the Messiah, or is this Elijah, spoken of by the prophet Malachi, is the Messiah arrival near, is it possible that we will soon be set free from our oppressors, that the Messiah will establish His kingdom on earth, and we will rule and reign with Him. And then comes Jesus, and heralds Him as the Messiah, the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world:

(John 1:29 NKJV) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Jesus does what Prophesied

Jesus does all that was prophesied the Messiah would do, He is healing the sick, even to the point of resurrecting them from the dead; the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf can hear, and the poor are being feed:

*(Malachi 4:2 NKJV) But to you who fear My name **The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings**; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.*

(Isaiah 29:18 NKJV) In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.

(Isaiah 29:19 NKJV) The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.

*(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, **And by His stripes we are healed.***

(Isaiah 35:4 NKJV) Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

*(Isaiah 35:5 NKJV) Then the eyes of the **blind** shall be opened, And the **ears** of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*(Isaiah 35:6 NKJV) Then the **lame** shall leap like a deer, And the **tongue** of the dumb sing. **For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.***

Things don't Always Go as we Think / Questions from Prison

But things do not always go as we think they should, and John the Baptist is one of the greatest examples we will ever read about concerning that matter. For here is the fore-runner to the Messiah, after 400 years of silence, and now John is silenced as he has been thrown in prison by King Herod. I titled this message, "Questions from Prison", and maybe you can relate to that title, maybe that is where you are today. Lets see what the Word of God has to say about those experiences in life.

(Matthew 11:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

Last verse chp10 / Prophet not Honored in Hometown / Matt 13

If I was asked my opinion when they were breaking chapters and verses in the Bible, I would have made this the last verse of chapter 10, the chapter on the "Ordination Sermon" before Jesus sent out the 12. I find it interesting that after Jesus sent out the twelve, He taught in their home cities. Jesus would later say a prophet is not without honor except in his own country. In other words, a prophet can go anywhere and be listened to by everyone, except by those who grew up with him or those who thought they really knew him. When He returned to His hometown of Capernaum, Jesus' neighbors said, "Don't we know You? You're the carpenter's son. We know Your brothers and sisters." And they didn't believe in Him.

(Matthew 13:55 NKJV) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

(Matthew 13:56 NKJV) "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

*(Matthew 13:57 NKJV) So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "**A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house.**"*

(Matthew 13:58 NKJV) Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Ace Hardware / Yes Witness in Hometown – but Don't Miss Opportunity to Go Elsewhere

Men maybe you can relate to this; I remember when I first got married, now here I am use to work at the Space Center launching rockets, and when I would do home repair projects, and we would have to go to Ace Hardware, Renee would ask the 19 year old stocking shelves what I needed to do the job, and how I should do it. A prophet is not honored in his hometown. Here, Jesus goes into the apostles' home cities, knowing that if the disciples had been sent to those who knew them, the response would be, "You think you guys are apostles? What a joke!" Does this mean you shouldn't be a witness at home? No. We must witness there. But if the Lord leads you to Mexico, to the Philippines, Norfolk, you just might find yourself enjoying an extra measure of fruitfulness.

(Matthew 11:2 NKJV) And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples

(Matthew 11:3 NKJV) and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

(Matthew 11:4 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

(Matthew 11:5 NKJV) "The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

(Matthew 11:6 NKJV) "And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

Herod – Brother's Wife / John not Worried – Ish 61 / Nasty Prison

Herod, the ruler of Israel, had taken his brother's wife as his own, and John the Baptist boldly and pointedly indicted him for his sin. Herod retaliated by imprisoning John. John probably wasn't worried initially. He probably thought, That's okay. Messiah's on the scene. He'll spring me out of here in no time. Don't the prophecies declare He shall open prison doors and set the captive free? I won't be in here long! No problem! But there he sat, week after week after month (estimation he is in here now for close to 10 months) in that dingy, damp dungeon. The dungeons in those days were no prisons of today with air conditioning, hot showers, 3 meals a day, and cable television. These prisons were cold, damp, because the floor was the bathroom, and a common trench ran through all the cells. The rats, the flies, the snakes all called it home too. Most cells you could not stand up in, not stretch fully out, continually cramped, always a wretched stench, and always dark and dim.

*(Isaiah 61:1 NKJV) "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, **To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;***

(Isaiah 61:2 NKJV) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn,

(Luke 4:17 NKJV) And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

(Luke 4:18 NKJV) "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

(Luke 4:19 NKJV) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

(Luke 4:20 NKJV) Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

(Luke 4:21 NKJV) And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

So here is Forerunner / Sends word to Jesus / You the One I Preached About – The Dove

So here is the forerunner of the Messiah, the one they waited 400 years for, imprisoned in an outhouse. And he sent word to Jesus (Questions from Prison): "What's going on? You're Messiah, aren't You? That's what I was preaching. I even saw the dove of the Spirit descend upon You. Why, then, haven't You established Your kingdom? Why am I still in prison?"

Ever Feel that Way – Imprisoned / Why Haven't Worked this Out / God Distant / Your Calling

Do you ever feel like that? Do you ever ask, "Lord, why am I still imprisoned? Why haven't You set me free? Why haven't You worked it out, Lord? Week after month after year has gone by, and here I sit." John did. Ever feel like God is being distant from you, that He can't hear you, or He is just plain ole being silent to your cries. Realize this in the context of this story, Jesus knows John is in prison, and we are told that when He heard this, He went the other way. Ever fell like God called you to do something, you were absolutely positive about it, and maybe things started out great, lots of energy and excitement, but then things start not going so well, and you begin to question and wonder if that was really God, or just me. Maybe you think, I really thought by this time in my life I would be in a different place, I'd be more mature, I'd be more knowledgeable, I'd be being used by God in such a great way, but here I am with more questions than answers.

(Matthew 4:12 NKJV) Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee.

John Did – So Sent Question / Other People Asking / Jesus Doesn't Explain Himself

John did, so he sent emissaries to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah. If not, they would start looking for another. John asks the question, and you know that others may have been asking, but at the very least be thinking, Jesus why don't you go help John, why do you allow him to sit in that filth, that stench, the cold, dark, and damp cell. We don't understand how you could allow this to someone like John, John the one who baptized you! Notice something in this story, Jesus doesn't try to explain Himself or defend Himself. He didn't do it for John, and I can tell you with full assurances, that He will not do it for us either. What does He do, verse 4:

Jesus Responds – What See & Hear

*Verse 4 - Go and tell John the things which you hear and see – Jesus' response, go tell John what you are seeing and hearing. Jesus knew John knew what the prophets said the Messiah would be doing. Jesus miracles are all prophesied in the Old Testament of what the Messiah would do (Malachi 4, Isaiah 53, Isaiah 35). The Messiah would heal the sick, open blind eyes and deaf ears, and the lame will walk. (Malachi 4:2 NKJV) But to you who fear My name **The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.***

*(Isaiah 53:5 NKJV) But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, **And by His stripes we are healed.***

(Isaiah 35:4 NKJV) Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you."

*(Isaiah 35:5 NKJV) Then the eyes of the **blind** shall be opened, And the **ears** of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*(Isaiah 35:6 NKJV) Then the **lame** shall leap like a deer, And the **tongue** of the dumb sing. **For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.***

John Told – But not see Personally – Live by Faith / Think if We Could See / Judas Sees

John will be told what the Messiah was doing but he didn't get to see them personally. He will have to go by what he has read, and what he has heard, not what he has seen. John will have to live by faith. Faith is the things hoped for, the things not yet seen. We so often think if I could just see a miracle, have a vision, have the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, then that will really solidify my faith and launch me into the deep waters of my Christian walk, I will be unmovable, and I will be a mighty witness for Him. Well while John is in prison struggling with doubt, being asked by God to live by faith not by sight, at the same time Judas is living by sight, seeing all these great miracles, personally performing them, raising the dead, the lame walk, blind see, lepers cleansed, and the sick healed, he will get to eat with Jesus, walk with Jesus, and sleep under the same tree as Jesus..... yet he will not come to a saving faith. Example for us, that we need to let go of that, waiting to see God work, and that we right now open our hearts to what He has said in His word and what we hear of Him doing, and let Him do His work in us.

(Hebrews 11:1 NKJV) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

(2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV) For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Don't Live Christian Life Waiting Tomorrow

Don't live a Christian life of waiting for tomorrow, live the Christian life of what He has given you today.

Most Common Belief – Messiah Set them Free / Still Today – Rebuild Temple & Peace

The most common belief the Jewish people held at this time concerning the coming Messiah was that He would overthrow the oppression of the Roman Empire, set Israel free, and He would rule the world and the Jewish nation would be His helpers. They weren't looking for a Messiah that would be despised, rejected, and crucified; they were not looking for a meek and mild Messiah, but a bold and mighty Messiah. That's really not hard to see for still today, ask a Jew how they will know the Messiah when He comes and they will say, "He will bring us peace with our enemies, and help us rebuild our temple". They will be deceived as Judas was, for these will be things the Anti-christ will do for them. Even as believers we still can have that thought, I am His child, He should crush anything or anyone that brings opposition against me. Now He will Christian, but that will be His Second Coming, right now the Messiah is still working much the same as He did in His First Coming, and that is with grace. He is allowing the wicked to continue in their ways as His Spirit continues to call out to them for repentance. The fallen world still effects us, because we are in this world but not of this world. Many Christians don't think much differently than the Jews did and still do; and that is that the Messiah will and should make life smooth sailing.

Most Common Opinion of Judas / God gives Contrast between Judas & John

The most common opinion of why Judas betrayed Jesus is that Judas expected Jesus to overthrow the government and establish His kingdom, and when it became clear to Judas that was not going to be the case, he said forget this suffering servant stuff, that is no life for me, I'm going get what I can while I can. John the Baptist on the other hand is living out Chapter 10, and all the trials and hardships that Jesus said would come upon His followers. God here is giving us a contrast for comparison and examination so we too can decide who we shall follow (this passage of John's troubles is divinely inserted here to follow the teachings of chapter 10, Jesus ordination sermon, the advance notice that hardships will come against those who profess and stand by their faith). Judas chooses to align himself with the people of the world, sells out for 30 pieces of silver. John, stands against the world, refuses to deny Jesus and pays the ultimate earthly price. Starting in verse 7 Jesus tells what He thinks of John; in Mark 14, Jesus tells what He thinks of Judas. He says better if this man had never been born. That is conclusive for anyone who says Judas repented and went to heaven, for Jesus would never have said it would be better if he was never born.

(Mark 14:20 NKJV) He answered and said to them, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.

(Mark 14:21 NKJV) "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Romans 8:18 / John lived it before Paul Wrote It / Paul gained Strength through John Baptist

Paul says, I consider the suffering, the absences of things, the un-comfortableness of this present world not worthy to be compared of the glory that shall be revealed in me. John the Baptist lived it before Paul ever spoke it. I am sure Paul gained strength in his trial by the life example John the Baptist lived out before him.

(Romans 8:18 NKJV) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

(Romans 8:19 NKJV) For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

(Matthew 11:7 NKJV) As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"

Flimsy – Wavering – Public Opinion / John was the Wind

"Did you go out to see someone who was flimsy and floppy, blowing in the wind and reading the latest public opinion polls before deciding what stance he should take? No! Far from being a reed shaken by the wind, John was a wind shaking the reeds!"

(Matthew 11:8 NKJV) "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

Camels Hair – Chopping on Grasshopper

No. John wore camel's hair and dined on grasshoppers. John wasn't looking to be lifted up, but to lift up the Christ. John didn't care about worldly possessions or matters, only the eternal kingdom and matters.

(Matthew 11:9 NKJV) "But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.

(Matthew 11:10 NKJV) "For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'

No Wimp / The one Prophesied by Malachi – 400 Years prior

Neither flimsy reed nor pampered, but mighty, John is the one who was prophesied by Malachi four hundred years previously—the messenger who would come before Messiah.

(Malachi 3:1 NKJV) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

(Matthew 11:11 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

John greater than Abraham – Moses – Elijah / Jesus doesn't Tell John – You da Man / Gives Better

In Jesus' estimation, John the Baptist was greater than Abraham, greater than Moses, greater than Elijah, greater than David. Jesus doesn't tell John all these things. Imagine if the disciple came to John telling him these things, wow John, Jesus says you are the man, you are a rock, and you are the greatest prophet ever. But John does not get this information, He got better. Better? Yes better! Jesus sends information back to John about Jesus, not John, Jesus gives him information to focus his eyes and thoughts and heart on - Jesus, not himself. For when we get our eyes off of Jesus, unto ourselves, it is then life (and circumstances) gets out of perspective. Jesus gave John 20/20 vision, perfect vision of what he needed to get through his trial, He gave him Jesus, for Jesus is everything and the only thing we need.

Questions from Prison / Seek Him when Feel Cold, Alone, Dark / Warmth – Light - Comfort

This is Jesus' answer to us when we have questions from prison, He answers us with Himself. Seek Jesus when you feel imprisoned, when you feel cold, alone, in the dark, and he will give you Himself, and He is all of those things; warmth, light, love, friendship, and comfort.

Modern Day John Baptist Story / Nadejda Sloboda – 1960 - Russia

I am reminded of a modern day story of John the Baptist, it was the former Soviet Union, 1960, and her name was Nadejda Sloboda. The story comes from the book "*Jesus Freaks*" and the title of her story is, "*I Rest in the Arms of God*":

"You must come to my house tonight and listen to the radio with us," Nadejada whispered to her neighbor. "I have never heard anything like it before. A man is preaching God's Word from the Bible. I don't know how it happened, but these broadcasts have changed my life!"

Nadejada Sloboda was the first one in her village to be converted through Gospel broadcasting in Russia from stations in neighboring countries. Soon, her love for God and her zealous witness brought others to Christ. Although she wasn't a pastor, she formed a church in her village. As time passed, this church grew so mightily that the police had to surround the village to keep people of the nearby collective farms from coming to hear the Gospel message.

For this, Sister Sloboda was sentenced to four years in prison. Her five children were forcibly taken away to an atheistic boarding school. Her husband was left alone. In prison, Sister Sloboda told other prisoners about Christ. For this, she was confined in an unheated, isolated cell, where she had to sleep on the cold, concrete floor without a mattress. Prisoners find it impossible to sleep in such conditions: Even the walls are too cold to lean against comfortably. Some report that by standing with just their forehead touching the wall, they could manage to sleep enough to survive for a few days. Yet Sister Sloboda was kept in this cell for two months! Not only that, during the day she was put to hard labor with the other prisoners. The Communists expected that the lack of sleep combined with the hard labor would completely ruin her health and break her resolve to stand for her faith. Yet she never weakened.

Everybody asked, "How can you endure it?" She answered, "I fall asleep on the cold concrete floor trusting in God and it becomes warm all around me. I rest in the arms of God."

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Deuteronomy 33:27. *Humanly speaking, we know that no one likes to suffer physically. But I know that if the lord leads me into it, He will give me the strength to survive it.* Pastor Li De Xian-China 1990

Isaiah 9:6

Jesus' answer to us when we have questions from prison, He answers us with Himself. Seek Jesus when you feel imprisoned, when you feel cold, alone, in the dark, and he will give you Himself, and He is all of those things; warmth, light, love, friendship, and comfort. Christian may we all capture the heart of what the prophet Isaiah was saying to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; It is more than a Child was born, but unto us a **"SON"** was given. And all that He is, is given to us.

(Isaiah 9:6 NKJV) For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:7 NKJV) Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Wonderful: His wonderful love for us, agape love, unconditional love. A never changing love, always enduring love, a heart that is always beating with love for you and I.

Counselor: Wisdom untainted by the world and its foolishness. Words that stem from heaven to earth, words that will comfort us, lead us, and minister to us, in any season we are in. Words that are steady and true.

Mighty God: not an impotent and weak God, but the Mighty God who holds not only our very breath in His hand, but the entire universe created and held together by His word. Mighty God!

Everlasting Father: To be our father means we are His sons and daughters. And our Dad is not some passing by, I'll get with ya when its convenient for me dad, but an Everlasting Father who is intimately involved in ever detail of our life, and a Father that is everlasting – past, present, and future.

Prince of Peace: *(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.* A God who says I know where you are, and what you are going through, and I will give you peace, for I will give you Myself, for I am the Prince of Peace.

And just as He gave John, so He desires to give us when we have our questions from prison, let me give you the best, let Me give you Myself. And we are to be like John, send our questions from prison, so that He may send us His best, Himself.

(Jeremiah 29:12 NKJV) Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

(Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV) And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

Greatest Sermon – Million of Martyrs to Follow

I believe John was not done preaching from prison. The story of His death would be one of his greatest sermons, a sermon that would bring strength to countless millions who would be martyred themselves. We often think Steven was the first martyr for Christ, but truly it was John. So millions would be told to denounce their witness, and millions would gain strength thinking of John's refusal to compromise on the word. A witness for all us today, as we too can look at his life and say I don't care what is acceptable by the world, I chose to call black-black, and white-white, and sin-sin; even if it cost me your friendship.

One More great Sermon – Behold the Lamb of God

But John I believe got to preach one more great one, and this is just me and my imagination, but it doesn't have to stretch too far. I wonder what was it like in Abraham's bosom when Jesus showed up there immediately after the cross. Now in Revelation and Zechariah it speaks of what appears to be that Jesus will bear the scars of the cross for all eternity. That the only person who may be handicapped in heaven will be Him. Revelations says as Jesus steps forward, that it looked as if He had been slain. Revelation Chapter 1 says when Christ returns, they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and Zechariah gives details of what will be asked "what are these wounds in your hands? And his response very gracious, The wounds that I received in the house of my friends. Now, after the cross Jesus went

into hell, not hell where the Devil is, but what is called Abraham's bosom, He preached the good news to those who had died believing and waiting for the Promised Messiah. I wonder what it was like the day Jesus descended into Abraham's bosom, bloodied, bruised, pierced, looking as a lamb as if it had been slain, and all of souls in Abraham's bosom would stop, silence would fall, all eyes would fall upon Jesus, silence so silent that it would be deafening, and then John the Baptist (the greatest prophet ever) would step forward, raise his hand, with his finger point, and thundering through the silence he would say to them.....Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!

*(Revelation 5:6 NIV) Then I saw a Lamb, **looking as if it had been slain**, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

(Revelation 1:7 NKJV) Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

*(Zechariah 13:6 NKJV) "And one will say to him, **'What are these wounds between your arms?'** Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'*

*(Ephesians 4:9 NKJV) (Now this, "He ascended"; what does it mean but that He also **first descended into the lower parts of the earth?***

*(Luke 16:22 NKJV) "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to **Abraham's bosom**. The rich man also died and was buried.*

(Luke 16:23 NKJV) "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

(John 1:29 NKJV) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Romans 8

(Romans 8:18 NKJV) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

(Romans 8:19 NKJV) For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.

Questions from Heaven / Answered with God – For Unto us a Son is Given

Questions from prison, answered not by God, but answered with God. For unto us a Son is given!

Resistance and Rest

(Matthew 11:11-30)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person – Principle – Power / Now Resistance

In chapters 1-4 we saw the person of Jesus Christ revealed (His birth and baptism), then chapter 5-7 we saw His principles recorded (the Sermon on the Mount), and then in chapters 8-11 we saw His power released (as He performed miracles and sends His disciples out to do the same). Now in chapter 11 we begin to see a shift in Jesus’ ministry, as we begin to read about resistance, challenges, and attacks that will be brought against Him and upon His followers.

Last – Questions Prison / Resistance to Kingdom – Resistant Heart – Rest for the Weary

Last study we read of John the Baptist and his “Questions from Prison”, and we saw how in our prison experiences Jesus gives us the best for us, as He gives us Himself in all those situations. So we pick up here in verse 11 as Jesus speaks about:

- the resistance that comes upon the kingdom of heaven,
- the resistant heart to the word and works of God,
- but the wonderful rest promised to all who are weary and weak.

(Matthew 11:11 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (Matthew 11:12 NKJV) "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.

Least – Greater than CEO or Billy Graham / Twinkling Eye – Greater than All

Verse 11 - "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he - The greatness is yet to come, the least in the kingdom is greater than the greatest that will ever walk and live on this earth. Don't worry if you never become the CEO of your company or the next Billy Graham, in a twinkling of an eye you will surpass them all.

Under Attack (Herod – Babies & JB) / Taken by those Pressing Ahead

In the original Greek language, this can be translated two ways. It could mean that the kingdom of heaven is being attacked by violent men—for indeed it was. John was in prison, and he was about to be beheaded. Herod had killed perhaps thousands of babies in his drive to murder the Christ Child. Bloodshed and violence abounded as the kingdom emerged, so it could be that this verse speaks of the kingdom of heaven suffering violence by enemies trying to overtake it with force. Or, it could be rendered another way with equal accuracy. That is, that the kingdom of heaven is taken by men who are aggressively, enthusiastically pressing in and laying hold. It is not for those who just sit back apathetically and say, “ok, whatever will be will be.” Rather, it is taken by those who, with fervency in prayer, an exercise of faith, and an expenditure of energy lay hold of the promises of God violently and aggressively

The word here for violence means to press into, to seize aggressively.. So in both meanings of this verse find illustration in John the Baptist.

(Luke 16:16 NKJV) "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it."

Jesus Declares – Matt 10 / 2 Tim 3:12

Jesus says there will be persecution, He spelled it out clearly in chapter 10 (and we see that John the Baptist is living out everything spoken of in chapter 10), and persecution is confirmed in the Epistles:

(2 Timothy 3:12 NKJV) Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

(2 Timothy 3:13 NKJV) But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

(2 Timothy 3:14 NKJV) But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

JB said – He must Increase / Herod thinks John in Prison – But it is Herod / Bosom – Follow Me

John spoke the words, and then he lived them *"He must increase and I must decrease"*, and so it was as John decreased to point of being imprisoned while Jesus' ministry explodes. John will give his life for his witness; but the thing about evil men attacking a follower of Christ, although Herod and the evil ones believed they had John imprisoned, it is really they who were, imprisoned to their bondage of sin and death, the struggle within them that they were trying to calm anyway they could, even attacking another person. They thought they brought death upon John, and enslaved him to the grave, but as we closed last week the Savior showed up in Abraham's Bosom and said, "Follow Me". This gift of salvation the Rescuer gives us is a freedom so free, that not even slavery and death can take it away.

(John 3:30 NKJV) "He must increase, but I must decrease."

JB in Prison – Ask How can Be / People look on Ask – How / Jesus says by Violence

John the Baptist is in prison and we like John can ask how can this be, how can I as your follower be in this prison. We, like those looking at John in prison can ask the Lord, how can this be, how can you allow these things to happen in the world you say you control. How can you allow evil to continue (war, rape, terrorism, cancer, floods), and Jesus would say, "Violence".

We look on As Peace / Jesus say look on as War / No picnics in Baghdad

We look around us, and the things that happen around us, in terms of peace, as if we live in a time of peace. But Jesus says you need to look on at the things that are happening around you as times of war and violence, for these are the things that happen during war. No one is having picnics in Baghdad, they live everyday in the environment of war.

Christianity not Easy / Ever Think – Look at Cross / Romanticize – Full on Frontal Assault

Christianity is not easy, it never will be easy, and you and I will live a life of defeat and frustration, questions and doubt, if somehow we think it should be easy, that is a lie from the pit to discourage you. That somehow we should live in a time of peace environment. Christianity is not easy, and if you ever think that it is, than go to the heart of Christianity, and that is the cross. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence. The cross has been romanticized, we make jewelry out of it, but the cross was violent. There is nothing romantic about the beating Jesus took, the scourging, the nailing, the 6 hours of suffering on that Hill in Palestine, it was pure violence. Romantic in His love for you and His love for me, but nothing romantic about the physical part of the cross, it was pure violence. Jesus did a full-on frontal assault on sin and death; He overtook them by force, by violence. He bled out every drop of His Divine blood, as that spear pierced His side, His blood poured out upon the earth, blood upon the battlefield, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and is taken by violence. Christianity is not easy, never has, never will, don't look for or expect times of peace. As long as our King is at war, then so too will we be. The earth is not a playground, it is a war zone. Jesus in the ordination sermon there in chapter 10 said to us, pick up your cross and follow me. Get ready for war!

(Matthew 10:38 NKJV) "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."

(Matthew 10:39 NKJV) "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."

JB <> / Prophetic – Ministry – Personal / Allow the Struggles – We Decrease – He Increases

There is none greater on earth than John, but kingdom of heaven suffers violence. Listen Christian, in your war and struggle just as John suffered, John said *"He must increase, and I must decrease"*. Those words go further than the prophetic picture of Jesus, they go further than our application of being used in

the ministry, these words are life for all of us. Those words of John are the very words that every Christian needs to speak. He must increase and I must decrease. Until we chose to decrease, He can never increase in our lives. I refer you back to our study on picking up the cross and following Him, and the 3 offerings of Exodus 29 we spoke of, the sin offering, the burnt offering (surrendered life), and the consecration offering (a life set-apart wholly to the Lord). And, I add unto that, allow the struggles, allow the laying down of our wants, our comforts, our pain-free life we all desire; allow them, face the opposition that comes upon us, so that we may decrease, so that he may increase. Embrace them, face them, and they will decrease us, and as we come down, He will rise up, as we lay down our must haves and desires, His glory will raise up for us to see clearly.

(John 3:30 NKJV) "He must increase, but I must decrease.

(Matthew 11:13 NKJV) "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

(Matthew 11:14 NKJV) "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.

(Matthew 11:15 NKJV) "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Endorsing Ministries

Jesus referring to Malachi 4:5, and what we see here is that John endorsed Jesus' ministry (behold the Lamb of God), and here we have Jesus endorsing John's ministry (yes John is the one promised that would prepare the way for the Lord). We will talk more of this in a future study.

(Malachi 3:1 NKJV) "Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight. Behold, He is coming," Says the LORD of hosts.

(Malachi 4:5 NKJV) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Jesus goes on to Point out Critical Hearts

Jesus will now go on to start pointing out some of the resistant hearts that are coming against Him. He is pointing out the hearts of the critics. He is showing those critical people where their hearts truly are, and will give them opportunity to change their heart.

(Matthew 11:16 NKJV) "But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,

(Matthew 11:17 NKJV) "and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'

(Matthew 11:18 NKJV) "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'

(Matthew 11:19 NKJV) "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by her children."

Thank God Friend of Sinners

Verse 19 - a friend of tax collectors and sinners - Thank God that He is a friend to sinners

John's message Repentance & Denial / Jesus – Joy & Healing / John Demons – Jesus Drunkard

Continuing His discussion of John the Baptist, Jesus asks, "What can I say about this generation? John came as an ascetic, neither eating, nor drinking, but chomping on grasshoppers and living on honey, and you called him crazy. Jesus is saying John came and preached a message of repentance for judgment is to come. John lived a life of self-denial and sacrifice, and everybody said the guy is over the edge, under the influence of demons. Jesus comes, brings joy through healing, preaches a message of joy, salvation has come for you to escape the judgment. Jesus walks with the people, eats with them, laughs with them, and they say He is a glutton; He is under the influence of Satan (call Him Belzeebub).

Nothing Makes you Happy – Cake / You are Bible-Thumper / Drunkard / All Excuses

Nothing makes you happy." People want their cake and eat it too. You did not want a holy man, nor do you want a personal man. How a picture of both the world and the church is this. The unbeliever says quit preaching to me, you are Bible thumbing, legalistic. Then they find out you have cable television and say I thought you were a Christian. They find out you have a glass of wine with dinner and say oh yea and you call yourself a Christian. They are just making excuses not to face the Savior and the sin issue!

(John 3:19 NKJV) "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

(John 3:20 NKJV) "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

(John 3:21 NKJV) "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Nailed about Nothing

These types of people don't want to be nailed down about anything, they want no absolutes. Jesus makes it real simple, He gives the absolute of life, He nailed it them at the cross.

Wisdom Justified by her Children

Verse 19 - But wisdom is justified by her children. – Jesus says the wisdom you follow will justify who you are, the life you have. I am amazed at all the wisdom the marriage books give, yet the divorce rate continues to climb. Millions of pages of wisdom, millions of hours in counseling, yet the divorce rate continues to climb. The Lord says husbands love your wife, wives submit to your husband, and you know what? Amazing how strong those marriages are. Millions upon millions reject the counsel of the Lord, and their wisdom leads them to destruction, but for those that receive the wisdom of the Lord, that wisdom leads them to eternal life. Wisdom is justified by her children.

(Matthew 11:20 NKJV) Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

(Matthew 11:21 NKJV) "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

(Matthew 11:22 NKJV) "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

(Matthew 11:23 NKJV) "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

(Matthew 11:24 NKJV) "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Indicts even Hometown / Still today Ruin – Ocean City left after Hurricane

In addition to Chorazin and Bethsaida, Jesus indicts His hometown of Capernaum. Those living in Capernaum saw His works, they heard His message, but they did not respond. If you go to Israel, you can go to the sites of Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin. These cities, once hugely prosperous, are now nothing but archaeological digs. By all logic, these cities should be thriving today. The location is beautiful. The climate is primo. The water is abundant. The resources are many. But these cities were judged and destroyed not very long after this statement was made, and they were never rebuilt. It would be as if Annapolis, Ocean City, and St. Michaels Island were wiped out and never rebuilt. People would say, "Why not? Those are lovely spots geographically." Yet centuries have come and gone, and these three cities are still dead.

Picture of Human Heart / Dead City – Judgment will Come

Jesus is giving a picture of a human's heart. Reject the words of Jesus Christ, if any of you say, "I don't believe in this Jesus stuff, you're a dead city. If you refuse to respond to the mighty works of Jesus Christ all around you and to His Word constantly before you, judgment will come upon you.

Degrees of Hell / Un-tolerable to Think I Could have Escaped

Some think this may refer to degrees of severity in hell, I Really don't know for sure. To me, hell is hell, and it is going to be just pure hell. But one of my personal opinions is how horrible it will be for those who endure for eternity weeping and gnashing of teeth, where the worm dies not and the fire is never quenched, where it will be so dark you can feel it, and possibly the only thing a person hears are the screams and anguish of those around them, though they can not see them, and this is for all eternity. The 70-80 years we live here on earth are a blink compared to eternity. Know this, all people will and do have eternal life, whether they receive Jesus or not, the difference is the quality of that eternal life, heaven or hell. I believe part of what will be intolerable is these people who all day and everyday will

reflect back on the opportunity to receive Jesus, but rejected. Maybe remembering the mocking of you when you shared and pleaded with them and they called you a bible-thumper or a wine-bibber. Throwing the Cd in the trash and writing the letter of rebuke. Rejecting the prophet in his hometown, oh if only I would have listened to my son, my wife. That will be hell, knowing you could have escaped the torment, but in your pride you refused to bow your knee when you had the opportunity..

(Matthew 11:25 NKJV) At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

(Matthew 11:26 NKJV) "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

Living Relationship – Right in Middle / No need of Temple – Closet - Devotion

Verse 25 - I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth - Notice the living relationship Jesus has with the Father, that right in the middle of this scene He breaks out in praise to God. He doesn't need to wait to get to the temple, to His prayer closet, or His morning devotion, He breaks forth right where He is at into spontaneous praise and worship.

Compartmentalized Christianity

How important for us to make sure that we do not "Compartmentalized our Christianity". By that I mean how easy for us to say alright, Sunday I worship, have morning devotions from 7-730am, devotions over and now 8-5 I work for the boss man, come home watch some television, and now read 3 chapters before bedtime. How we can get into that trap, things with God, things we think we do on our own. A living relationship is where we look for Jesus in every situation, invite Him into every situation and event, and speak to Him while in them. Almighty Lord, I have 100 things I need to accomplish at work today, join me please and help me. Then when things flow better than usual we find ourselves breaking out in spontaneous praise, oh I thank you Lord you have blessed me in my work. When things struggle, when resistance comes from the boss man or co-worker, oh I thank you Lord you haven't made me as big a jerk as he is. Whatever it may be; let's take a walk together, lets sit and watch the ducks on the ponds, when we live a life in the manner, one compartment, you and I in everything I do, we will find ourselves enjoying this living relationship with the Lord.

Babes See – Wise Blind

Verse 25 - You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes - The babes, the simple revealed to and received. The wise, the mover and shakers, the esteemed and the exalted, the leaders, were not able, or not willing to receive. Look at the condition of the world, this nation, by the wise, our leaders.

- Before the day is done 41 people in this Nation will be murdered (we are not much better than the car bombs going of in Iraq).
- Look at the wisdom of the world, 5000 high school student will contract a STD before this day is done. Close to 3500 babies will be aborted today in the USA.
- On a whole, marriage counseling by the world will result in 1 out every 2 marriages failing.
- And, across the sea, you have a nation that believes their next life (reincarnation) they will be born an ant or a fly or a cow, but in this life they have nuclear weapons.
- Other nations have nuclear ambitions so they may wipe a whole nation out of existence.

Only Gospel makes Sense / Jesus responds to Wise & Prudent – Verse 27

The only thing that makes sense is the gospel, a God crying out His love to mankind, everything is just pure emptiness. Jesus responds to the wise and prudent. You make everything so complicated, let me make it simple for you, verse 27.....

(Matthew 11:27 NKJV) "All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

Jesus Expressed Image / My Finite Mind

Jesus is the expressed image of God, Jesus said, "he who has seen Me has seen the Father", and "I and the Father are one". Jesus is the expressed image of God, and if you want to know what God is like, we need only look at Jesus. I am thankful for that because God is so immense my finite brain could never comprehend Him. But I can comprehend Jesus because He became man to show me God's nature, and that it is a nature of love.

(Colossians 1:15 NKJV) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

(John 14:9 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

(John 10:30 NKJV) "I and My Father are one."

Spans Universe between Fingers

God is so immense. The Milky Way galaxy is approximately 100,000 light years across. Traveling at the speed of light, 186,000 miles per second, it would take 100 million years just to get across the length of the Milky Way galaxy. And yet the Word says our Lord spans the universe between His thumb and His little finger (Isaiah 40:12)! Big! Enormous!

(Isaiah 40:12 NKJV) Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, Measured heaven with a span And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales And the hills in a balance?

God is Going to Get Me

People usually see God in one of two ways, He is waiting to get me, or He is waiting to get me. He is waiting to get me for I am a sinner, or He is waiting to get me because He loves me and paid for me

How Know?

How do we know such a vast God? Through Jesus Christ. A God of such great love that He would leave His throne, dive head-first into the cesspool of sin, a full-on frontal assault, for you and for me, that we might know Him, and be one with Him, so that He might say "Come unto Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest....."

(Matthew 11:28 NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Rest for the Weary – Come Unto Me **(Matthew 11:28-30)**

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person – Principle – Power / Now Resistance

In chapters 1-4 we saw the person of Jesus Christ revealed (His birth and baptism), then chapter 5-7 we saw His principles recorded (the Sermon on the Mount), and then in chapters 8-11 we saw His power released (as He performed miracles and sends His disciples out to do the same). Now in chapter 11 we begin to see a shift in Jesus' ministry, as we begin to read about resistance, challenges, and attacks that will be brought against Him and upon His followers.

Last – Questions Prison / Resistance to Kingdom – Resistant Heart – Rest for the Weary

We have read in this chapter of John the Baptist and his “Questions from Prison”, and we saw how in our prison experiences Jesus gives us the best for us, as He gives us Himself in all those situations. And then the last study the resistance and violence the kingdom of heaven suffers, but here in verse 28-30, we read of the wonderful rest Jesus offers and promises us. Jesus has already told us that resistance is inevitable, that Christianity will ever be easy, but in the midst of those things He will say there is a place of rest, a haven that will take you through these things. We aren't promised escape, but we are promised provisions while in them.

(Matthew 11:28 NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Desire to Give Rest

Jesus reveals the heart and nature of God, and His desire to give us Rest

Gives John His Answer – Himself / Answer to Man's Struggles

Jesus gives John the answer he needed, as He gives Him Himself. Notice Jesus' answer to man's struggles.

- You who labor-Come unto Me
- Heavy laden- Come unto Me
- In bondage - Come unto Me
- Yoked to an addiction - Come unto Me
- Harsh situation - Come unto Me
- No rest, anxiety, fearful, worried - Come into Me

Judge Joe / Weariness from Life Itself

Although it took place in the 1930s, it remains one of the most mystifying missing person cases in FBI files. After spending an evening eating out with friends, a forty-five-year-old New York judge hailed a taxi and was never seen or heard from again. The FBI immediately became involved. They suspected a kidnapping by someone who held a judicial grudge against him. But that didn't seem to pan out. They then suspected Mafia activity because he was an outspoken enemy of the Mafia. But again, that led nowhere. To this day, there is only one clue that remains. When his wife returned to their apartment the evening her husband disappeared, there on the table was a check for a large sum of money made out to her and a note attached to it in her husband's handwriting which simply said, *I am very, very tired. Love, Joe.* The question remains—were those words merely a comment made at the end of a particularly trying day? Or was his note saying, “I'm tired; I'm fatigued; I'm weary; I give up”? To this day, we can't be sure. For lack of further evidence, it is presently believed he rode off in a taxicab to an unknown destination where he took his own life because weariness had weighted his soul. I think all of us from time to time can relate to that kind of weariness. I'm not speaking of physical fatigue—the kind of fatigue you feel after mowing the lawn or playing a set of tennis. No, I'm speaking of the weariness which comes from life itself.

Average Day

If you are of average weight and height, here is what you will go through in an average twenty-four-hour period:

- Your heart will beat 103,689 times.
- Your blood will travel 168 million miles as your heart pumps approximately 4 ounces per beat.
- You will breathe 23,040 times, inhaling 438 cubic feet of air.
- Your stomach will take in three and a half pounds of food and 2.9 quarts of liquid.
- You will lose seven eighths of a pound of waste.
- If you are a man, you will speak 4,800 words, and if you are a woman, you will speak close to 7,000 words.
- You will move 750 muscles
- And exercise 7 million brain cells.

No Wonder Tired / But Weariness not Sure can Go On

No wonder we're tired! But there is a weariness much more draining than physical fatigue. It's the kind of weariness you feel when you just don't know if you can go on another day.

- It's the weariness a father feels when his child is doing wrong,
- the weariness a friend feels who has been abandoned or misunderstood,
- and the weariness a wife feels whose husband has rejected her.
- It's the weariness that can take a toll on even the most seemingly successful individual—even on a successful judge.

Verse 28 - Come to Me

There is One who Says – Come / Lord Universe Invites All

There is One, however, who said, “Come to me, all you who are weary...” (I like the NIV translation better, I think it better captures the Greek meaning, which is to be weary). Come unto Me the Lord says, all you who are weary.

(Matthew 11:28 NIV) "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Amongst Resistance – Invites / Depressed – Despair – Divorced – Diseased – Death - Discouraged

How I appreciate that! The Lord of the universe invited anyone who is weary to come to Him. If I were the Lord, I don't know if I would make that kind of invitation. He is speaking to individuals personally, saying, “Come to Me, any who are weary, any who are laboring.” Would you have called this group of people? I'm not sure I would. If I were giving an invitation, I don't think I would have said, “Come unto me all you who are laboring and weary—feeling as though you're depressed to the point of death, despairing because of divorce or disease, death or discouragement.”

Would you Have Invited / Celebrate – Wealthy – Wise / Jesus' People are the Weary

No, I think I would say, "Come unto me, all you who are happy—let's celebrate life together! Let's lift each other's spirits!" Or maybe I would have said, "Come unto me, all you who are wealthy. Come and share your prosperity!" Or maybe, "Come unto me all you who are wise. Let's dialogue and philosophize and interact intellectually." Come all you who are healthy, because sick people can be a real downer, quench the celebratory atmosphere. But the personal invitation Jesus extended to people individually as the nation rebelled and resisted against Him corporately was: "Anyone who is weary, come to Me. Those are My people—the weary ones."

Come – Don't have to Run – Church – Sermon – Counseling - Book

Come unto me...

- Jesus didn't say, "Run to Me." So often in my weariness, I can't run. I can only stumble to Him or crawl before Him. But that's okay. He just said "Come" any way we can.
- He didn't say, "Go to church."
- He didn't say, "Listen to a sermon."
- He didn't say, "Get some counseling."
- He didn't say, "Read a book."
- Take these 12 steps – just 1
- He said, "Come to Me."

Verse 28 - all you who labor

What Causes Labor / Israel in Egypt – New Pharaoh Enslaves Them / Bricks NYC to LAX

Come unto me, all ye that labour... What causes us to be weary in our labor? I believe the answer is found in Exodus 5. The people of Israel were in Egypt. Four hundred years previously, they left the Land of Promise due to famine and headed south to Egypt where there was plenty to eat. They lived there for a while, enjoying the abundance and prosperity. But suddenly the situation changed when a new Pharaoh came on the scene (who didn't know Joseph), looked at the Jewish people, and said, "We've got to control these people. How? We'll enslave them." So for hundreds of years, the people of God were enslaved by the Egyptians, baking bricks in the blistering, burning sun for the construction of Pharaoh's monuments. It has been documented that the Israelites baked enough bricks to build a wall ten feet high and five feet thick from LA to New York City. When Moses said, "Let my people go," Pharaoh answered, *(Exodus 5:7 NKJV) "You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves.*

(Exodus 5:8 NKJV) "And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.'

(Exodus 5:9 NKJV) "Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

Labor same Hebrew Word as Greek / Ever feel Stuck in Egypt – Enslaved – Endless Bricks

The Hebrew word translated "labour" in verse 9 has the same meaning as the Greek word translated "labour" Jesus used in Matthew 11. Egypt is a picture of the world in the Scriptures. Do you sometimes feel like you're stuck in Egypt, endlessly making bricks for Pharaoh under the blistering sun? Maybe you've said, "I'm going to Egypt. I'm going to labor to get ahead in my career," or, "I'm going to work hard for this material thing." And for a while, it seemed enjoyable. But then, just like Pharaoh, it turned against you, and the very thing you thought would be wonderful is now a taskmaster—cracking the whip and enslaving you.

Not Sin / Old Age

It is not that the things you are doing in this world are even sin; they are just physically and mentally exhausting. They say that your memory goes the older you get, but now as I have age some myself, I think it is that our minds have to manage so much information, we can't help but miss a point here and there. I personally find all the information I have to manage more taxing and exhausting on my body than any physical work I have to do. We deal with all the thinking we have to do at work, then come home with a couple hours before bed to manage the household finances, get the kids to soccer, clean and do laundry, figure out the taxes, then hopefully get 6 hours sleep and start it all overin 6 hours. No wonder we are tired.

Jesus says Come those Realize the World is Slave driver

“Come to Me,” the Lord says. “All you who are weary from labor, all you who have realized Pharaoh is a fake and Egypt is a rip off, come to Me.”

Verse 28 - and are heavy laden

Heavy Laden – What does it Mean

Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden... What does it mean to be heavy laden?

(Isaiah 1:4 NKJV) Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward.

(Isaiah 1:5 NKJV) Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints.

(Isaiah 1:6 NKJV) From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.

Beat Up & Bruised – Sin Loads you Down

The Lord says to His people, Israel, “You’re beat up and bruised and hurting and desolate and destroyed because you have been laden, loaded with iniquity.” You see, Pharaoh makes us labor, but sin makes us heavy laden. Sin weighs us down. David went through a season of sin on more than one occasion.

During one such time, he wrote,

(Psalms 38:3 NKJV) There is no soundness in my flesh Because of Your anger, Nor any health in my bones Because of my sin.

(Psalms 38:4 NKJV) For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

(Psalms 38:5 NKJV) My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness.

(Psalms 38:6 NKJV) I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

(Psalms 38:7 NKJV) For my loins are full of inflammation, And there is no soundness in my flesh.

(Psalms 38:8 NKJV) I am feeble and severely broken; I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.

Sin makes one Tired / Pharaoh or Sin / Jesus says Come

Sin will make you tired. What does Jesus say? He says, “Whether you’ve been seduced and sucked in by Pharaoh’s mentality—working for the world and finding it to be nothing but bricks and weariness—or whether you’ve been heavy laden with iniquity, come unto Me.” Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. How?

Verse 29 - Take My yoke upon you

Yoke made by Carpenters / Yokes made individually for each Ox / Designed for Lead Ox

Take my yoke upon you...How fitting that Jesus would say yoke. Yokes were made in those days by carpenters, and Jesus was the Master Carpenter. To yoke two oxen together, the skilled carpenter designed the yoke to fit each ox individually. Since there was always a lead ox yoked together with one who would follow, the yoke was designed in such a way that the lead ox would pull the greater weight. The follower, or assistant ox, was just to go with the flow.

Used Analogy / Not Only Come – but Yoke / Let Me Lead – Don’t try to Figure it Out

Take My yoke upon you...Jesus used an analogy well known to the people who listened to Him when He said not only, “Come unto Me,” but, “Yoke with Me. Let Me be the lead ox. Go with My flow. Don’t try to figure out or change My direction. Let Me lead you.”

We say Lord my Way – He says no Follow Me

So, too, as we impudently and impetuously say to the Lord, “Lord, let’s go my way,” He answers, “No. We’re going My way.”

- I am the Light of the world,
- The Rock of your salvation,
- The Creator and Sustainer of your soul.
- I am the Alpha and the Omega,
- The One who knows the beginning from the end.
- Trust Me

That we would Live a Yoked Life

Oh that we would put in the forefront of our minds, that we are yoked to Him, and that we would live, “A Yoke Life”. Where you lead me, there I will follow, now Lord may I seek you to hear and find where you are taking leading me.

He would Yoke to Us

We always look at this verse as us being yoked to Jesus, but do you realize this, that Jesus, God, the Creator of all things is willing to be yoked to us. He is willing to bind Himself to us. How amazing the very thought of that is to me, that Jesus is willing to bind Himself to someone like me. What love He has for you and for me.

Fingertips

The other night in Children’s church, Renee was telling the class that God holds the whole world in His hand, and Jonah who is 8 asked, if God holds the whole world in His hand, then why can’t I see His fingertips. So, if anyone has that answer let me know!

Verse 29 - and learn from Me

Learn of Me / Only Autobiography by Jesus / Meek & Lowly – Not Mighty & Majestic – but Meek

Come unto Me, all ye that labour 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... This is the only autobiographical statement Jesus ever made. He didn’t say, “Learn of Me because I am majestic and mighty,” or “Learn of Me because I am powerful and prominent.” He said, “That which you discover when you learn of Me will refresh you, for I am meek.”

Meekness – Power Under Control / Learn of His Power – See His Gentleness / Burned out in Egypt

What is meekness? Meekness is strength under control. When I study the Scriptures and learn of Jesus, I am always amazed at His goodness, His grace, His kindness, His gentleness, and His meekness. Jesus says, “Come to Me—you who have been burned out by Pharaoh, you who have been wearied by the folly of sin. Yoke with Me—don’t try to maneuver Me, steer Me, or demand of Me. Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly.”

Blessings of Page after Page / Increase Knowledge – Faith – Trust - Rest

Oh the blessing of the word, page after page learning of Him, growing in His knowledge, which then increases my faith, which then increases my trust in Him, which then leads to rest from the weariness of this world. How thankful I am to have this place to come learn of Him. Satan whispers hey stay home and rest, you’ve had a long day, a long week; Jesus says come learn of Me, and there you will find your rest.

Verse 29 - and you will find rest for your souls

Result – Rest / Yoke Easy – Burden Light

The result? ...And ye shall find rest unto your souls. You’ll find what your heart is craving: Shabbat. Sabbath. Rest. *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Definition of Rest / Reversal – He takes Brunt of Load

I like the definition of this word rest, it means to come to an end, to cease, to leave; and that is what the Lord desires for us living in this world, that we will come to an end, leave, cease the laboring of the world, and allow Him to take the brunt of the load. The root of this word means “reversal” and that is the Lord’s desire for us, that He takes the brunt of the load. Last study we saw that that doesn’t mean life is easy, but this study we see that we can still have rest even when the load is pressing in upon us, because Jesus is taking the brunt of the load.

When hard Situation

When you find yourself in a hard situation, mind the Lord of this verse, although it will really be Him reminding us, Lord this is a tough situation I am in, but you say in your word, Your yoke is easy and Your burden is light”, and let release your end of the yoke, and let Him take the brunt of the burden. And, as we said last week, embrace wherever He takes you, even into the trials, so that He may have His way in your life, and being doing a work of conforming and transforming.

Acts 15 / Not Religion – Relationship / If Burden do some Evaluation

In Acts 15, questions arose concerning Gentile converts and whether or not they should follow the laws and the rituals and be circumcised. Peter gave the response in verse 10. Jesus says, “My yoke,” Jesus said, “is easy.” It’s not religion—it’s relationship. It’s not Judaism—it’s Jesus. It’s not the law—it’s love. *(Acts 15:10 NKJV) “Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”*

People say they Weary – Not from Him

Sometimes I hear people say, “I’m so burdened. It’s so tough being a servant. It’s so hard to be a brother, a musician, or a witness.” If it’s heavy, it’s not His burden because His burden is light. If what I’m doing is tough and wearisome to me, then I know it’s not the Lord who has placed that burden upon me. His burden is easy. His load is light. The burden has either come from myself, or I am allowing someone else to put it upon me.

Live a Yoked Life

Live a yoked life, and you will begin to see through those things, and discern what is His yoke, and what is not.

Jesus says Come / Don’t Labor to Pharaoh – Bondage to Sin – Laws of Pharisees / Weighed Down

Jesus would say to you today, “Come to Me. Don’t labor under the burdens of Pharaoh. You’ll become weary if you do. Don’t become heavy laden under the bondage of sin. It will rob you of your energy. Don’t become enslaved by the laws of the Pharisees. You’ll be weighed down.

Just Come – Find Rest

Just come to Me. Yoke with Me. Learn of Me. And you’ll find rest in your souls.”

Matthew 12

The Lord of the Sabbath (12:1-21)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person – Principle –Power / Now Resistance

In chapters 1-4 we saw the person of the King revealed (His birth and baptism), then chapter 5-7 we saw the King's principles recorded (the Sermon on the Mount), and then in chapters 8-11 we saw the King's power released (as He performed miracles and sends His disciples out to do the same). Then chapter 11 we began to see a shift in Jesus' ministry, as we began, and will continue here chapter 12, to read about resistance, challenges, and attacks that will be brought against the King and upon His followers.

Sabbath – Anything but Rest / The Talmud

In this study Jesus will be accused by those that resisted Him of breaking the Sabbath, the day of rest. Now, at this point, the Sabbath had become anything but a day of rest. The Talmud (which is the Rabbi's commentary, interpretation of the Law) devoted 24 chapters on how to keep the Sabbath. For example:

- You couldn't carry anything that weighed more than 2 dry figs.
- Therefore if you wore false teeth, you'd have to take them out before the Sabbath began, lest you be guilty of bearing a load on the Sabbath, a day of rest.
- You couldn't spit, lest you spit rolled the dirt into a ball of mud, and thus you would therefore be plowing on the Sabbath.
- Woman were not allowed to look into the mirror on the Sabbath, lest you see a grey hair, and the Rabbi says you'd see that grey hair, be tempted to pluck it, and thus be guilty of harvesting on the Sabbath.
- You couldn't take a bath on the Sabbath, lest when you stepped out the tub, the water would spill over and the water on the floor would then be considered washing the floor.
- You could not travel more than 3,000 feet on the Sabbath away from your home, for you were to stay at home and rest; however if you took a string and tied it to one end of your house, however far that string was would be considered an extension of your home.

So Ridiculous / No Longer Rest – But Anxiety

How ridiculous these rules, and thus the Sabbath was no longer a day of rest, but anxiety, as the people lived in the constant fear of have I violated some rule or regulation.

Anything but Rest – How Fitting Matthew 11:28

The Sabbath had become anything but rest, and how fitting that this passage of Scripture immediately follows Jesus words of chapter 11, Come Unto Me!, and I will give you rest, rest for your souls:

(Matthew 11:28 NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Established Genesis / Hebrews Quotes Psalms / Much more than a Vacation

Even though the Sabbath day was established in the Book of Genesis, the author of Hebrews (New Testament) quotes Psalm 95 (Old Testament), saying there remains a Sabbath for God's people. The argument of Hebrews 4 is that the ultimate Sabbath encompasses much more than a singular day. God's intent was much greater than just to give His people a vacation, a day off.

(Genesis 2:2 NKJV) And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

(Genesis 2:3 NKJV) Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

(Hebrews 4:4 NKJV) For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

(Hebrews 4:5 NKJV) and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

(Hebrews 4:6 NKJV) Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

(Hebrews 4:7 NKJV) again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

(Hebrews 4:8 NKJV) For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

(Hebrews 4:9 NKJV) There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

*(Hebrews 4:10 NKJV) **For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.***

Much more than a Location / Rest comes from Person – Jesus the Sabbath they Sought

Other people say, "The Sabbath is not a vacation, it's location. It's not so much a day, it's a place." The Jews thought the perfect location would be the Promised Land. But Hebrews 4 goes on to say that even after they were in the Promised Land, the Lord still spoke of a rest that was to come. The Promised Land didn't satisfy the restlessness within them, and the Sabbath day didn't bring them the refreshment for which they longed. So Hebrews 4 concludes that true rest comes neither from vacation nor location. It's found in a Person. Jesus Christ is the Sabbath they sought.

The Garden Sabbath / Bite into This / Created for Fellowship / After Fall – A Day to Return

The best commentary for the Bible, is the Bible, and we see the heart of the Sabbath back in Genesis. God rested on the 7th day, after He was done creating, but more specifically it says, He rested after He created man (Adam – which means man) on the 6th day, after He finished putting His crowning jewel on His creation – Man. For everything that God had made, He made for Adam, for Him and Adam to enjoy together. He made the watermelon knowing that when Adam bit into it he would say, it is good; when the Father would hand him a plump juicy peach, Adam would partake and say, it is good!. Here Adam try this cantaloupe, try this carrot, try this banana, try this leafy lettuce, and all these things Adam would bite into and say, it is good. And, as we can attest to, Adam would look unto His heavenly Father, who loves him, adores him, and Adam would look at His Father we do and say, it is very good! God created man for fellowship with Him, He created man to spend intimate time together with Him, so that man would walk with Him in the "cool of the day". After the fall, God established the Sabbath to bring man back to that place, a day, a time, of sweet fellowship and focus on Him, a day to slow down and come back to the garden, all a foreshadow of when He takes us out of the fallen world, and brings us into the Paradise Restored – home in heaven with Him. The Scriptures tell us that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; not a day for man to keep a bunch of rules, but to fellowship and commune with his creator:

(Genesis 2:2 NKJV) And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.

*(Genesis 2:3 NKJV) **Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.***

(Mark 2:27 NKJV) And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."

Col 2:16-17 / In Other Words / They are Shadows / Sabbath God / Fighting Words – Stage Set

*(Colossians 2:16-17 NKJV) says: So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, **which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.** - In other words, don't let anyone tell you that what you are looking for can be found in meats and drinks and holy days and Sabbaths. No, these Old Testament pictures are only shadows describing the reality, which is Christ. We don't have a Sabbath day. We have a Sabbath God in Jesus Christ. He is our Rest. He is our Shabbat, He says Come Unto Me all you that need rest; and what words they would be to a people*

that are anything but rested, to a people that probably dreaded the weekend, because they would have the constant anxiety of worrying if they had offended the Holy God. Jesus says come unto Me and I will give you rest, for I am the Lord of the Sabbath. But these were fighting words for the religious leaders and rabbis. And now the stage is set for chapter 12. The issue? The Sabbath.

(Colossians 2:16 NKJV) So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, (Colossians 2:17 NKJV) which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

(Matthew 11:28 NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

(Matthew 12:1 NKJV) At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.

No Roads – Weary Travelers – McDonalds / Jesus not Stealing – Duet 23

See now in your mind's eye Jesus walking with His disciples, flanked by fields of wheat. With roads in that day few and far between, travelers would walk on pathways that wound their way through fields. The law made provision in Deuteronomy 23 for the hunger of such travelers. If you walked on a path through a man's field, you could eat what grew along the path. Therefore, don't be mistaken. Jesus and His disciples were not robbing some poor farmer of his crops. They were well within the legal boundaries of the provision of God's Law. This was their modern fast-food, the Micky-D's of Israel. You couldn't bring a sickle, and load up your sack, but you could grab a handful for a quick bite.

(Deuteronomy 23:24 NKJV) "When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put any in your container.

(Deuteronomy 23:25 NKJV) "When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.

(Matthew 12:2 NKJV) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

Pharisees Hiding in Field / People Today Can't stand to See your Liberty

Here's the question I have: What were these Pharisees doing in the field in the first place? They had broken their own rules by being more than three thousand feet away from their own homes on the Sabbath. But that's the way Pharisees always are. They would go out of their way to find fault with others, and in so doing, err themselves. I kinda of picture them hiding in the bushes and then jumping out, ahha, busted, what are you guys doing. Man, how many of these people I have met today in my life, they are so caught-up in the Law, that they can't stand to see a person enjoy Christ. They are like hiding in the bushes waiting to pull out the 10 cannons of the Law. They always talk about grace but never give it.

(Matthew 12:3 NKJV) But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:

(Matthew 12:4 NKJV) "how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests?

David & Showbread / Love over Law / Relationship over Ritual / King being Rejected

Haven't you been reading the Scriptures?" Jesus asked. "Don't you know the story of 1 Samuel 21? When David and his men became hungry while fleeing from Saul, the priests gave him the showbread, which was not lawful for them to eat. Don't you remember that story that shows love is more important than the law, relationship more important than ritual?" Don't know your Scriptures, that God didn't punish David for doings that. Jesus chose a particularly interesting illustration, for just as David was at that time rejected as king of Israel, so Jesus was also at this time rejected as King.

(1 Samuel 21:6 NKJV) So the priest gave him holy bread; for there was no bread there but the showbread which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place on the day when it was taken away.

(Matthew 12:5 NKJV) "Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

Temple Priests Worked on Sabbath / Double Sacrifice

Temple priests worked twice as hard on the Sabbath, their supposed day of rest, since twice as many sacrifices were offered to the Lord on that day. Jesus here is making an airtight case. "Don't you know history?" He said. "David ate the showbread and was held blameless. Don't you know the law? It requires the priests to work doubly hard on the Sabbath day."

**(Matthew 12:6 NKJV) "Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.
(Matthew 12:7 NKJV) "But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'
you would not have condemned the guiltless.**

Quotes the Prophet Hosea – Heart of Father – Not Sacrifice / Ironclad – Prophet-Priest-King

"Finally," Jesus asks, "don't you know the Word?" as He quoted from the prophet Hosea. "Don't you know the heart of your Father? He desires mercy more than sacrifice, the word mercy here means compassion, tender. God desires tender love more than law, and relationship more than ritual." Notice the ironclad case Jesus makes here:

- He points to David—a king they honored.
- He points to the priests—who worked on the Sabbath.
- He points to the prophet Hosea—who declared God loves mercy more than sacrifice.

In validation of His own actions, Jesus identifies with a prophet, the priests, and a king. Jesus is ingeniously driving a point home to those who had ears to hear. "I am the King of kings, the great High Priest, the Prophet of God. I am the Anointed One. I am Messiah."

(Hosea 6:6 NKJV) For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

(Matthew 12:8 NKJV) "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

It all Points to Me / Search for Him when Read / Search for You

"It all speaks of Me," declares Jesus. "It all points to Me." When you read the Scriptures, don't get hung up in the regulations, rituals, and technicalities. They are all shadows that point to Jesus. Look for Him and become enamored with Him as you see Him on every page. Jesus is Lord of all—even of the Sabbath day. Along with searching for Him, I also read everyday to look for me. As I see Him page after page, I also see myself. I can relate to being a Pharisee, and I say ohh Lord help me to be gracious. I can relate to be Adam, and walking with Him in the cool of the day, and I say oh Lord it is very good. I look and say oh how I need rest Lord, give me your rest, give me you. Look for Jesus on every page, look for yourself, and your Bible reading will take on a whole new meaning.

(Matthew 12:9 NKJV) Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue.

Notice – Their Synagogue / How Sad – Mascot - Christmas Bazaar / What Love - Rev 3

He went into their synagogue. Their synagogue was no longer His synagogue. What a tragedy when a church is no longer His church—where Jesus is no longer honored and loved, exalted and worshiped—but where He is simply a mascot. "Oh yeah. We believe in Jesus. Now let's get down to the real matters of the church. We must plan for our Christmas bazaar." What a tragic loss. What tremendous love. Although it was no longer His synagogue, He still came in. I love the Lord for this. He doesn't give up. He continues on, time and time again. Reminds me of Revelation 3, I stand at the door and knock.....
(Revelation 3:20 NKJV) "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

(Matthew 12:10 NKJV) And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"; that they might accuse Him.

(Matthew 12:11 NKJV) Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?"

(Matthew 12:12 NKJV) "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

No Healing on Sabbath / Sheep Value / Save the Whales / Law bounds up in Regulations / Judge

Keep in mind that in their regulations, the Jews specifically said you could do no healing on the Sabbath day. Let's say a man was bleeding to death. You could put a tourniquet around him to prevent him from dying, but you could put no ointment on the wound that might bring healing. Jesus asks, "Why is it that your regulations say if a sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath, it's okay to bring him out, but a man cannot be healed on the Sabbath?" What an inconsistency in our day, people will say save the whales, save the spotted owls, but at the same time say, it's a woman's choice. That's what the law always does. When you become all bound up in regulations, traditions, and religious rituals, your heart becomes cold and hardened towards people. You constantly judge them and find fault with them. Religion apart from relationship will make you a pompous, snooty, holier-than-thou Pharisee.

(Matthew 12:13 NKJV) Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

Love this Incident / Didn't Argue / Dare to Act – Be Able to Act / Flee Porno

A withered hand was a paralyzed hand. How I love this incident! "Stretch out your hand," said Jesus. The man could have said, "I can't! It's paralyzed." But he didn't. He simply stretched it out; and as he obeyed, his hand was healed. There's power in the Word, gang. Dare to act, and you'll be able to act because God's commandments are God's enablements. The Bible says flee fornication, flee pornography, and yet people will say I can't, it is not that easy, I need counseling. Turn from your addiction, deal with that bitterness, watch that tongue. God says two words, flee. He doesn't say seek psycho-analysis, do these 12 things, go to church, rather He says flee.....

Commands come with Enablement / WHEN SICK OF IT / If you Tired of Bndage / Man Believed

God's commandments come with His enablement to do so! The question I get asked so very often from a parent is, when will my child finally break free of this addiction, and I answer with, when they are sick-of-it. God has given the enablement to break free, for that enablement automatically comes with the commandment, but now it is down to the one thing of, are you sick of it, are you tired of it, its bondage, its shame, its destruction it is causing, when a person is tired of offending their Holy God, then they will quit. This man had his choice to obey and believe, or sit and give excuses of why he couldn't do what Jesus asked him, told him, to do. This man, believed God's enablement behind His word, and stretched forth his hand.

After he Stretched / As Doing – Enablement Come / Quit Waiting and Start Doing

His hand was restored after he stretched it forth. It is as we are doing it, the enablement comes. Start to do it, and watch the enablement come, stop waiting for some moment, Christians are always saying I'm gona, oh next week I'm gona really do it this time, or if I could just have a really good morning devotion I can get this things kick-off. Quit waiting, and start doing, and watch the enabling come when you respond to the command, the word of God.

Start Firestorm / Enemies will be Upset – But what did this Man Do? / Made Whole

Now, this will start a firestorm amongst Jesus and those who opposed Him, and so too will it today when we respond to His command and apply His enablement. The enemies of God, those who opposed will be very upset. Whether it is that old buddy, or the Devil Himself who is upset, and the firestorm begins, let Jesus handle, and He will. We are not reading of the attacks on this man, but upon Jesus. What did this man do with this new-life, I would imagine he went home and hugged his wife for the first time in however many years, played with his kids, went and cut some firewood to warm his house, went down to the lake and did some fishing to provide for his family. I would imagine he took his new-life, and went on to live life. We will not be living life, until we move on and out of that old life. This man's hand was restored whole.....

(Matthew 12:13 NKJV) Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

(Matthew 12:14 NKJV) Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Pharisees – Nobody Noticing them Anymore / Competition / Warning to Youth

The problem with the Pharisees was jealousy. Nobody was noticing them anymore, and they didn't like the competition. If find that very applicable in our lives today, after we give our lives to Jesus how often have you heard from someone, I like the old you. It is part they hate the light that you shine, it convicts them; but also they hate the competition. Hey, we going to the club tonight, no thanks I'm going to a Bible Study, and now they are alone, or part of their world has changed, and it is because another has gotten your attention, and they don't like the competition. Let me give warning to you youth, especially you who have to have a "boyfriend" or a "girlfriend"; those guys or gals that paid you no attention will seemingly out of nowhere start paying you attention. Partly because as the Holy Spirit influences us, so does the spirit of Satan influence an unbeliever; but secondly, now there is competition, and what they thought would always be there, now they now they need to get in there before you get away. Most of it is pride, it isn't that they so much want you (don't get discouraged God has better for you), but they just don't want anyone else to have you.

(Matthew 12:15 NKJV) But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all.

(Matthew 12:16 NKJV) Yet He warned them not to make Him known,

No Circus Atmosphere

Jesus isn't trying to have some circus like atmosphere. Some certain ministries need to read this verse before their next television show.

(Matthew 12:17 NKJV) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

(Matthew 12:18 NKJV) "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.

(Matthew 12:19 NKJV) He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

Ish 42 / God's Anointed – Chosen / Didn't Stand Out- Even Miracles

Matthew quotes Isaiah 42, a beautiful prophecy wonderfully fulfilled in Jesus. God said, "This is the One in whom I am well pleased. My Spirit is upon Him. Justice will come to the Gentiles through Him. And He will not cry, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets." Jesus was not like some men we see today, striving, crying, and being weird in the name of the Lord. Jesus didn't draw attention to Himself. In fact, He blended into His world so completely that in the Garden of Gethsemane, His enemies couldn't identify Him without a kiss. Here was a Man who had healed, fed, and taught thousands, yet He remained unidentifiable because He moved in such humility and such grace. The only self description Jesus gives of Himself in the Scriptures is Matthew 11 – I am gentle and lowly in heart.

(Isaiah 42:1 NKJV) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

(Isaiah 42:2 NKJV) He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

(Isaiah 42:3 NKJV) A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.

(John 18:4 NKJV) Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

(John 18:5 NKJV) They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am He." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Don't Expect Him to Scream / Speak to your Heart

If you are waiting for Him to bust down your door and say hey, time to change this or do that, it is not going to happen. He is going to speak to your heart, not scream into your ear.

***(Matthew 12:20 NKJV) A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory;
(Matthew 12:21 NKJV) And in His name Gentiles will trust."***

Ties the 3 Passages Together / Context – Coming for Rest

These people, the Sabbath was anything but rest, and the Lord ties 3 wonderful passages of Scriptures together for all to piece together. Come unto Me and I will give rest for your souls. I am Lord of the Sabbath. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoldering flax He will not quench. We are still in the context of coming to Him for rest

(Matthew 11:28 NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

(Matthew 12:8 NKJV) "For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

(Isaiah 42:1 NKJV) "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.

(Isaiah 42:2 NKJV) He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.

(Isaiah 42:3 NKJV) A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth.

Flax – Wick / Won't Quench / Come to Me – Let me Kindle the Fire – Breath of God

Jesus, so gentle and kind to us, and the name we trust in. So gentle that a thin reed He will not break, trample over. Flax was used to make candle wicks, and Jesus so gentle a smoldering wick of a candle He will quench with His fingers. Maybe you feel you walk is just smoldering, the Lord of the Sabbath say come to be, let Me give you rest, let me blow My Spirit upon you, let me rekindle that flame, and all it will take is one breath, come away with Me today and let Me do that.

Reed – Musical Instrument / Be Gentle with You / Not Cast Off / Tender Touch – Make Song

That reed (they grow in marshes) they were, and still are, good for only one thing: musical instruments. If a reed became bruised or bent, it was good for nothing. The Lord says I am gentle and lowly in heart, I will be gentle with you, I will not throw you out or cast you aside because you are bruised, or even broken. Come unto Me and let through My gentle, tender loving touch, I will make you whole, I will give you strength, I will make a song out of you.

Hermeneutics – Him / Seek – Find / That Rest – Brings Strength – Song – Peace – Light - Darkness

The theological term for breaking down the Scriptures, the analysis of each word is Hermeneutics. The simplest definition is "Him-eneutics". In every verse, on every page, look for Him, for when you seek Him you will find Him, and He will bring rest to your soul, and that rest will include strength for today, a song for your heart, peace in the storm, light in the darkness, and hope for today. It will bring all that you need, for He is all that we need:

(Jeremiah 29:11 NKJV) For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

(Jeremiah 29:12 NKJV) Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

(Jeremiah 29:13 NKJV) And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

The King's Power - Questioned and Removed

Matthew 12:22-37

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Person – Principle –Power / Now Resistance

In chapters 1-4 we saw the person of the King revealed (His birth and baptism), then chapter 5-7 we saw the King's principles recorded (the Sermon on the Mount), and then in chapters 8-11 we saw the King's power released (as He performed miracles and sends His disciples out to do the same). Then chapter 11 we began to read about resistance, challenges, and attacks that will be brought against the King and upon His followers. Last week here in chapter 12 we saw resistance to His person and principles as the religious leaders challenged His person and principles as Jesus declared He is the "Lord of the Sabbath". So much so was Jesus under attack, that verse 14 says they went to plot on how they might destroy Him. Picking up there in this study, we saw resistance to His person and principles, and now we will see resistance to His power, as His power will be brought into question on how He does His mighty works. But the Lord will give us deep insight and understanding into His power for our blessings. So the outline of the remainder of this chapter is as follows:

(Matthew 12:14 NKJV) Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

The King and His Power

- The Power Questioned (12:22-29)
- The Power Removed (12:30-37)
- The Power of the Gospel (12:38-42)
- The Power and It's Purpose (12:43-50)

Passage – Stands in Special Place

This passage of Scripture today stands in it's own special place, as sacred a place as the crucifixion, the death, and the resurrection of Christ. It stands in its own place because it speaks of the one and only unpardonable sin, and that is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. If you are here today, reading this on-line, listen to the tape, the words you will hear from Jesus are very sharp and direct, and the reason being is that today, this very day, may be the last time that God's Spirit will call out to you. Today for you, like these people in that we have been reading about, God is saying that you have seen all the lives that I have touched and changed, you can't deny the change in their lives, you have heard my teaching, you have heard the words that I have spoken to you directly, yet you still have not responded to Me. What we will see in this passage today is that there is a time, we do not know when, there is a place, we do not know where, but a person will no longer be able to hear the voice of God speaking to them, because God is no longer speaking. Today may be that last day, today is the day you need to make that decision, while you still can:

(2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV) For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

So first, His power is brought into question.

The Power Questioned (12:22-29)

(Matthew 12:22 NKJV) Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

(Matthew 12:23 NKJV) And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Son of David was the Jewish name for the Messiah.

(Matthew 12:24 NKJV) Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

Beelzebub was a Philistine deity, considered the Lord of the flies, and was a name the Jewish people used for the Devil.

(Matthew 12:25 NKJV) But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

(Matthew 12:26 NKJV) "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

(Matthew 12:27 NKJV) "And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

The Pharisees themselves believed in exorcism (we read of demon-possessed people throughout the Scriptures – here being one of them), so Jesus challenges them saying you believe the same thing I do, why are you attacking Me?

(Matthew 12:28 NKJV) "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

(Matthew 12:29 NKJV) "Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

Not Question Healing / Must attack Source / Competition – No Heads Turning / Cast Doubts

So here Jesus' power is being questioned; what is the source of His power, how is He able to do these things. Now notice, they are not questioning the healings, the miracles, they are undeniable. So, they then must attack the source, by what powers is He able to do such things. As we saw last week, these religious leaders hate the competition that Jesus brings, people are making a big deal about Jesus and little about them. Whereas they once turned the heads as they walked the streets, commanded and received respect and authority, they now are being passed by. So they can't deny the miracles of Jesus, so in order to gather the people back to them, they cast the doubt about where Jesus receives His power, it is of the Devil they say, and therefore all you who are following Him are following Him right into destruction.

Same Today – Jesus Delivered Me / People then Afraid for Me

The same still holds true today, you all have experienced it haven't you? I remember Jesus touching me, binding the dominate influence Satan and my flesh had over me. He delivered me from the bondage of the world I was in, and I was for the first time alive and free. What were those closest to me saying, Ray you are overboard, we are worried about you, we are afraid you are in a cult, you are going to get hurt. Afraid for me, you should have been fearful for me before, I was living dangerously, how many times I made it home without killing someone or myself after a night of drinking (I haven't lost my car since I quit drinking), how many other things could have destroyed me that were associated with that lifestyle? Afraid, you should have been afraid then.

Evil One – Young Believers / Cast Doubt / Just Zealousness – Not really God / Will Crash 10X

But what the Evil One does in these cases you young believers is he wants to cast doubt into your mind that you are overboard and that your extreme zeal is really harmful to you and will lead you into a disastrous place. He wants to cast doubt in your mind that what has happened to you is just a fad, and

will eventually wear off, and you will crash and burn. Satan and people will say it really isn't God, it is just zealotry, a replacement of extremes, a crutch, a fad and it will wear off; and when it does wear off then they will be in 10x worse shape than they originally were.

Jesus uses Logic / Will reach the Intellect / It would be Illogical to – Person-Principle Power

Jesus simply says, what you are saying is totally illogical. By the way, notice Jesus does reach out to man through logic and intellect, not just emotion as people will try to say. He will reach out to the scientist just as He will the downtrodden. Using logic He says to them, why would Satan cast out Satan, why would anyone rob their own house, why would Satan preach the Sermon on the Mount, give a call to repentance, it is just illogical. Today's term, why are you worried about me now, and not when I was living such a destructive lifestyle. This man was not only demon-possessed, but blind and mute. How could anyone be upset about that. How could anyone be upset when your marriage is healed, your addiction crushed, or your depression lifted; to be upset about that is totally illogical, and those that are upset should examine and say, why is that bothering me, why am I upset about someone's life being made better by them following Jesus.

It Behooves a Person to Examine – Day comes Can't Examine

It would behoove them to, for the next passage of Scripture says there is a day, we know not when, but a day where they will no longer be able to examine, and will be unable to escape their condition of separation from God.

The Power Removed (12:30-37)

(Matthew 12:30 NKJV) "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

No Middle Ground / Not a Great Teacher / Oprah Show /

There is no middle ground, either with Him, or against Him. Living for Him, or dying apart from Him. A person cannot say, oh Jesus was a good man, great teacher, I respect Him highly, have nothing against Him, but I think He is just one of the many great leaders, that all roads lead to God, not just specifically Jesus. Jesus says if you are not gathering with Him, then you are against Me. We say, oh he is such a nice person, he is a good man, even though he isn't saved, he is still a nice man. Jesus says no they are not, if you are with Me then you are against Me, and there are none good, for their throat is an open tomb. You see their life, their good life, leads others to the tomb, their kids, friends, follow them to the tomb because they are so nice, and see you don't have to be religious to be a nice person and live a good life. Their very life is scattering and drawing people away from Jesus. Now I'm not saying go curse them, but I am saying not to go along with them, not to ease up your witness to them, for they need the Lord, and they need to stop drawing people away from the Lord. You know, Oprah is such a nice person (if you would) but she continually has people on her show who bring new age philosophies, man's wisdom, and people say she really helps people. Listen, if you are not drawing people to Jesus Christ, if you are aiding them in being drawn away from the one sole power source to meet all man's needs, then you are not helping them. Especially if you fix their life up, and in the end they perish apart from knowing Jesus Christ (we will talk more about the reformation of man next study).

(Romans 3:12 NKJV) They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

(Romans 3:13 NKJV) "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";

Who Say He is – Won't Change who He Is

By the way, whom you decide Jesus is, will not change who He is, He is God whether you agree or not, what changes is who you will be.

(Matthew 12:31 NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

(Matthew 12:32 NKJV) "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Blaspheme – Reject

The word “blaspheme” means to reject.

Follow flow / Illogical- Hypocritical / Dangerously Close

Follow the flow: A man has been released of a demon. The Pharisees attributed the miracle to the power of Satan, and Jesus now gives a heavy word to these Pharisees: “You are speaking illogically, acting hypocritically, and jeopardizing your own souls eternally.” If they had not already done so, they were dangerously close to committing the blasphemy of the Spirit, which according to Jesus, is the only unpardonable sin.

What is Blasphemy – Coming to Wrong Conclusion / What’s happening not Jesus / Garbage

What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? It is when you come to the wrong conclusion that the reason miracles are happening, people are changing, and the dumb are speaking is due to some kind of hypnotism, demonic activity, or mental delusion. And you begin to blaspheme what the Spirit speaks in your heart when He says, “No, it’s real. It’s Jesus.” Beelzebub was the lord of the flies, and flies collect on garbage, and a person says this Jesus stuff is a bunch of garbage, or I’m a nice person, I am fine my own way.

Jesus on the Cross – every Sin but One / We are Free

When Jesus Christ died on the Cross of Calvary, He died not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world. That’s the gospel. Jesus died for every sin every person who has ever lived on the face of this planet has committed or ever will commit. When He said, “It is Finished,” the work was done. Every sin was paid for (except 1). March down the 10 Commandments, and I can check mark every one of them, 10 for 10, a perfect score for failure, but there is one sin I am not guilty of, and that is the blasphemy, rejection of the Holy Spirit’s witness of who Jesus Christ is, Lord and Savior. That’s great news! We can tell anyone, “My friend, your sins are forgiven! The price has been paid. You’re free!” But there is one sin that cannot be forgiven. There is one sin that will damn you eternally. It is the blasphemy of the Spirit. If you sin against the Father or against the Son, it’s forgiven. But if you sin against the Spirit in this blasphemy, it will damn you eternally. That’s the one sin that is unpardonable, the one sin that’s unforgivable.

Flat out Reject / Website / 800 People

Or you just flat out reject Him, and say I do not believe in Him, I reject Him. Only in our day folks; but someone built a website where a person can go and publicly reject Jesus Christ. They knowing say, I reject the Holy Spirit, I commit the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, and basically, what are you going to do about it God. In six months, 800 people have signed their name.

Comes a Point – One too Many Times / Genesis 6

If you ignore the Spirit’s voice in your heart and say, “Those people at Calvary Chapel are being brainwashed, those Christians are drinking their bathwater, those believers are under some kind of delusion,” there comes a point where you will have said, “No” one too many times to the Holy Spirit. There comes a point when the unpardonable sin has been committed. What does this mean? It means the Holy Spirit will no longer speak to you. You see, in Genesis 6, God declared, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man...” He’s not always going to speak to you about your need for salvation.

(Genesis 6:3 NKJV) And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

Just Emotional – Imagining they hear – Off the Wall / Eventually will Commit the Blasphemy

Therefore, if you keep saying, “Those people are just being emotional; they just imagine they hear from God; they’re off the wall,” eventually you will commit the blasphemy of the Spirit, and you will be damned.

You Can Only Hear & See so Many Times / God says have it your Way

You can only hear the message and see the miracles so many times before God will finally say, "Okay, have your way. You don't want to acknowledge My reality? Very well. My Spirit will no longer speak to you." And then you're lost.

"At that point, you not only will not believe. At that point, you cannot believe."

Jer 7:16 / Don't Pray – Keep Preaching / Time and Place / Fate Sealed

In Jeremiah 7:16, God said to Jeremiah, "Don't pray any longer for this people. They are lost." Jeremiah was told to preach to them, but not to pray for them. It wouldn't do any good. There comes a time, we know not when, and a place, we know not where, when a man's fate is sealed between heaven and despair. You can't play games when the Spirit is drawing you.

(Jeremiah 7:16 NKJV) "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you."

WW2

During World War II, a United States battleship, aircraft carrier, and several other smaller boats were patrolling the waters of the Northern Atlantic in search of German U-boats. One evening, several pilots took off from the carrier and were told to be back by a certain hour. But the leader of the squadron of four planes purposefully stayed out longer, feeling with just a little more time, he could find the enemy and secure an impressive hit. As the sun set, a German armada entered the area. The American fleet was in trouble for now they were outgunned, outmanned, and outnumbered. Unbeknownst to the pilots, radio silence was ordered between the ships in the water and aircraft still in flight. At this point, as their fuel was getting dangerously low, the pilots radioed to the American ships, but there was no reply. Again and again the pilots cried, "Turn on the lights. Turn on the landing lights." But the lights didn't go on, for to have done so would have jeopardized the lives of thousands of men. Thus, the story is recorded how the men on that aircraft carrier stood by in horror as they watched four American planes crash into the icy waters of the Atlantic.

Today is the Day / Time when Commander –in-Chief calls Radio Silence

So, too, the Scriptures say, "Today is the day of salvation." The light is shining in your heart. You're hearing the Word of the Lord. But there will come a time when the Lord, the Commander-in-Chief, will order radio silence. The lights will be dimmed, and you will not be able to find your way home. You will have blasphemed the Spirit, and there will be no hope for you.

(2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV) For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

Lord Offers Abundant Life / When Witness – Pray & Passionate – Stakes are High /

The Lord offers you eternal and abundant life. He wants to forgive your sins and fill you with joy. Only a fool would turn his back on such a gift. Today is the day of salvation. When you witness, pray passionately, and express yourself clearly. You need to be zealous in your witness because the stakes are high. A person doesn't have forever to make a decision. There is a point in time when the lights go off, when the communication stops. Such was the case with the Pharisees.

What a Person Missing

What does a person miss by the avoidance of the Holy Spirit prompting them to receive Him. I think this true story sums it up. A lawyer was trying to seek out a certain man, and the man became very evasive. The lawyer would try to come at different hours in the day, try to call the house, use different phone numbers, but to no avail. Every time the man saw the lawyer come he slipped out the back, or pulled the blinds shut. Finally after 14 years the man was in the hospital, and death was at the door, cancer and it was inoperable. The lawyer comes in the room and the man musters a smile and says ha, you caught-up to me, but it is too late now. The lawyer says well here you go, I'm just doing my job as he hands the man an envelope, and leaves the room. Upon opening the envelope expecting to read a law-suit filed, or a subpoena to court, much to his dismay, as he read of the inheritance that was left to him.....14 years ago. That is what people are missing out, the inheritance, the riches of His goodness, a mansion prepared for them, yet they like this man, slip out the back, live in the shadows, all the while missing a life, and a life more abundant.

(Ephesians 1:3 NKJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

(John 10:10 NKJV) "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Jesus goes on to say,

(Matthew 12:33 NKJV) "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

Know them by Fruit

Jesus had said prior in the Sermon on the Mount, be fruit inspectors and you'll know them by their fruit, and look at My fruit. The blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised:

(Matthew 7:17 NKJV) "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

(Matthew 7:18 NKJV) "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit.

(Matthew 7:19 NKJV) "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

(Matthew 7:20 NKJV) "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

(Matthew 12:34 NKJV) "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

(Matthew 12:35 NKJV) "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Here is Jesus – Meek and Lowly in heart

Here is Jesus, meek and lowly in heart, laying it out before these men. He calls them a brood of vipers;

(Matthew 11:28 NKJV) "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

(Matthew 11:29 NKJV) "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

(Matthew 11:30 NKJV) "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Matt 9 – Jesus answers Critics

Back in chapter 9 Jesus healed a mute and demon-possessed man, and they accused Him of healing by power of Satan. Jesus answers His critics by going out and teaching and healing. But here, now just a little time later, Jesus answers His critics with these piercing words. We can clearly see, there is a time where He is demonstrating His power and love to a people or person, and then there is a time where He says, you are approaching the point of no return.

(Matthew 9:32 NKJV) As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed.

(Matthew 9:33 NKJV) And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

(Matthew 9:34 NKJV) But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

(Matthew 9:35 NKJV) Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Best Example of Rejection – Herod

The best biblical example of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures is King Herod. He had called upon Jesus for he had heard about His miracles and teaching, and had hoped for a show, but the Scriptures say that Jesus answered him not:

(Luke 23:8 NKJV) Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.

(Luke 23:9 NKJV) Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

(Matthew 12:36 NKJV) "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

(Matthew 12:37 NKJV) "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Words Condemn – or Justify You

Your words will either condemn you or justify you. Thank God for Romans 10;

(Romans 10:8 NKJV) But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):

(Romans 10:9 NKJV) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

(Romans 10:10 NKJV) For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Thankful for the Blood – Covers every Foolish Word

How thankful I am that the blood of Jesus has covered every foolish word I have spoken, and I don't just mean before I was saved, I mean this week also.

His Power is Real / Splits Time / Splits Heaven & Hell

The power of Jesus Christ is real, even after 2000 years of being challenged. A power so power It split time (BC – AD). A power so real, that he splits heaven and hell. If you are here today, do not go away with out talking to someone, make sure that you are sure. If you are sure, remember brethren, the stakes are high, pray and preach passionately, for there is a time we know not when, and a place we know not where!

The Power of the Gospel – the Resurrection

Matthew 12:38-50

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Person – Principle –Power / Now Resistance

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(Matthew 12:14 NKJV) Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

The King and His Power

The Power Questioned (12:22-29)

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The Power of the Gospel (12:38-42)

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The Power of the Gospel (12:38-42)

Divides all Religions / Buddha – Krishna

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is what divides Christianity from all other religions. Buddha died, Krishna died, Mohammed died, Joseph Smith died, Mary Baker Eddy died, but only one overcame death, rose from the dead, to show and proclaim that I and I alone have power over death.

(Matthew 12:38 NKJV) Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

(Matthew 12:39 NKJV) But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

(Matthew 12:40 NKJV) "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

(Matthew 12:41 NKJV) "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

What Further Sign Need / Dangerous Ground – Follow Blasphemy Holy Spirit

What further sign could they possibly need? The blind seeing, the dumb can speak, the lame are walking, the dead are living again. Obviously they needed not another sign; they just need to respond to what had already been given to them. What dangerous ground they are on, for their question comes on the tail end of the last passage of Scripture, the rejection, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is rejecting the Holy Spirit's prompting of a person, hey what you see and hear is the real thing, Jesus is God and He is calling out to you, respond and receive Him.

If Only saw a Sign – Called Evil / Thomas – needed to See / Lord's Way – Believe it, You'll See It Verse 39 - An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign – how many people say if only God would give me a sign, if He gave me some kind of sign then I would believe. My mother still died of that cancer, even after I prayed, I'm still single, I'm still struggling with this or that, if only God would show me a sign, then I would believe, Jesus says those that ask for a sign are evil and adulterous, not a good category to be placed in, Thomas said, I will not believe it unless I see. So Jesus appears and shows Himself, but says Thomas you believe, because you see, blessed (oh how happy, how blessed a person will be) who believes, yet hasn't seen. An evil and adulterous people seek after a sign; people say if I see it, then I'll believe it, but the way of the Lord is that when you believe it, and you'll eventually see it *(John 20:29 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."*

Mark 16 – Signs will Follow / Signs should Follow Us

Mark 16 says that signs and wonders will follow after believers, will follow after the preaching of the Word; believers shouldn't follow after signs, but signs should follow after believers. Where ever we go, signs and wonders should follow. People getting saved, lives being changed, the move of the Spirit should follow us, healings, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

(Mark 16:15 NKJV) And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

(Mark 16:16 NKJV) "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

(Mark 16:17 NKJV) "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

(Mark 16:18 NKJV) "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Dangers – False Prophet / Faith can Stand on Word – Be Content / Signs needed Continually / Pentecostal can Damaging / Emotional – Wonder if Wrong / Hearing Faith endures past Emotion

The dangers of needing a sign, is that the Anti-Christ and False Prophet will come, bringing signs and wonders, and many will be deceived, because they had to have a sign before they believed. Faith is stronger than sight. Faith can stand on the Word of God and be content, but sight needs to continually see, and when they don't see, their faith weakens. That is why the Pentecostal movement can be so damaging, for when they don't have an emotional experience, they wonder where God went, if they have done something wrong; but those that have faith by hearing the Word of God, they will endure, even when the emotional part is not present:

(Revelation 13:13 NKJV) He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

(Revelation 13:14 NKJV) And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword and lived.

(2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV) For we walk by faith, not by sight.

(Romans 10:17 NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Do You Know / Mahdi – Muslim messiah / Not Mentioned in Quran / Same as Anti-Christ

Don't know if you know this, for it is very relevant in the days we live in. What is motivating the Muslims around the world and particularly in Iran and Iraq to cause violence, death, and destruction? A simple five-word explanation: The return of the Mahdi. He is the Muslim messiah who is supposed to return to earth possibly as soon as this March. Mahdi is not mentioned in the Koran by the way. Iran's

Ahmadinejad is obsessed with the Mahdi. Iraq's cleric al-Sadr, having fled to Iran to avoid the surge, says, "America's primary purpose for the war is preventing the return of the Mahdi." It could be in our lifetime that we see this false messiah come upon the scene. If we think the mid-east region is crazy today, wait till this false messiah comes on the scene. Could this false messiah, and the anti-christ be the very same, it may be. The Anti-Christ is going to stage a counterfeit resurrection, and only those who know the Word will escape his deceit. Many of the Mahdi followers believe that the Mahdi will come to Iraq, hence we could see how Babylon could become the center of the world as prophesied in Revelation chapter 18.

Excerpt from Wikipedia

In Islamic eschatology the Mahdi (مهدي transliteration: Mahdī, also Mehdi; "Guided One") is the prophesied redeemer of Islam. The advent of Mahdi is a universally accepted concept in Islam, though there are basic differences among different sects of Muslims about the timing and nature of his advent and guidance. Muslims believe that the Mahdi will change the world into a perfect and just Islamic society alongside Jesus before Yaum al-Qiyamah (literally "Day of the Resurrection" or "Day of the Standing"). The "hdi" of "Mahdi" refers to the Arabic root "هدى" which means "to guide".

1 Sign Jesus Said

The one sign I will give you is the sign of Jonah said Jesus.

(Matthew 12:40 NKJV) "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

(Matthew 12:41 NKJV) "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

Sign of Jonah – Resurrection / Jonah Death, Burial, Resurrection

"The sign of Jonah" is resurrection—the one and only sign Jesus promised as validation of His words and ministry. John is the picture of the death, burial, and resurrection as the great fish would swallow him whole, and he would spend 3 days in the belly of that fish, thought dead by all who witnesses the incident, and then be brought back out, and put upon the earth.

It is the Validation of the Substitution / The Cross Took / Finished means Finished

That's why the Resurrection is so important. It's the one sign upon which we build our faith.

How do I know if the Cross really "took"? Was God fully satisfied with the sacrifice of Jesus? Are my sins really forgiven? Yea and amen! The Resurrection proves Jesus is the Messiah and that His work on the Cross was complete. When Jesus said it is finished, it truly was finished.

Jesus the Way – Sins are Put Away

We know that Jesus is the Way, and my sins are put away.

When Share – Include Resurrection / It is Proof Positive – Sacrifice Accepted

When we share our faith, we must include the resurrection. We so often share our sin, Jesus substitution, Jesus on the cross, but then move on to do you want to receive Him, and we leave out the most powerful part of the gospel, the resurrection. The betrayal, beating, crucifixion, death, and burial are the love of God, the resurrection is the power of God! We can tell people we have proof-positive that your sins will be forgiven, that God accepted the substitution, the proof that the grave will not hold us, because Jesus rose from the dead, and showed that the grave will not hold us. Make the resurrection part of every time you witness.

They Questioned His Powers – Jesus says you ain't seen Nothing yet

You questioned my power Jesus said, let me tell you He says, the power, the signs and wonders you see now are nothing, for I will blow you way in the very near future, as I overcome death.

Same Power Available for Us Today / What is Your Need Today

And, that power that raised Jesus from the dead is the very same power available for our needs today. What is your need today Christian, do your faith empowered, the source is there; problem with your tongue, wayward eyes, bitterness of heart, a vice that you are sick off, the source is there. When we receive Jesus Christ we not only have forgiveness of sins, but now we have the power over sin (*Ephesians 1:19 NKJV*) and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (*Ephesians 1:20 NKJV*) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Jesus Compares Self to Jonah

Verse 41 - and indeed a greater than Jonah is here – Jesus said a greater than Jonah is here. He compares Himself to Jonah, to draw the comparison, so that people can think through the comparison, and see how much greater Jesus was than Jonah:

- Jonah preached judgment. I have come preaching grace and mercy.
- Jonah was disobedient. I have come obediently.
- Jonah preached to one city. I have come for the whole world.

A greater Prophet than Jonah is in your midst, yet you do not respond.” An evil and adulterous people seek after a sign, when all they needed was to read this word. And speaking of this word, it goes on about the word spoken so that man may have all the information needed to make a correct decision.

(Matthew 12:42 NKJV) "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.

Refers to Queen Sheba / Only Half the Story / Jesus compares Self to Solomon

Jesus is referring to the account in 1 Kings 10, wherein we read the Queen of Sheba cruised up from Africa to see Solomon. Having heard about his splendor, his majesty, and his wisdom, she went away saying, “Amazing! The half wasn’t even told to me. What I’ve seen here is a mind blower.” Yet a greater King than Solomon was in their midst. Again Jesus uses a comparison, to show how great he is, to declare His power, as this chapter 12 is about His power:

- Solomon had wisdom from God. Jesus is the wisdom of God.
- Solomon was a great king. Jesus is the King of kings.
- Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba gifts. Jesus is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we can ask or think.
- Solomon spoke practically to his nation. Jesus spoke powerfully to all of creation.

(1 Kings 10:7 NKJV) "However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard.

(Ephesians 3:20 NKJV) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

(Colossians 1:16 NKJV) For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

She got Half and Believed / Man Today has Whole Story – Reject / Appears Court Case – No Def

The Queen of Sheba on got half the story of Solomon, yet she believed. Here, for man today, the whole story is unfolded for us, yet many refuse to believe. This is interesting to me in that there would appear to be a case that is laid out before each person on the day of judgment, and there will be witnesses against man’s actions, bringing condemnation after condemnation, and sadly for those people who have refused to receive, for those who have rejected the Holy Spirits witness of who Jesus is, will stand alone in that court case, for they will have no Advocate, no Defense Lawyer – that is Jesus Christ, for they rejected Him from representing them in the case that is against them. For us, there is no court case, for the case is thrown out before it can get to court, for lack of evidence.

(1 John 2:1 NKJV) My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

*(1 Timothy 2:5 NKJV) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
(1 Timothy 2:6 NKJV) who gave Himself a ransom for all, **to be testified in due time,***

(John 8:10 NKJV) When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

(John 8:11 NKJV) She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

The Power and It's Purpose (12:43-50)

Power over Death – and Sin

God has a very specific purpose of His power for us, and that is not only overcoming death, proven through the resurrection, but the power to crush the power of sin in our lives.

(Matthew 12:43 NKJV) "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

(Matthew 12:44 NKJV) "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.

(Matthew 12:45 NKJV) "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

Power – Delivers us from Powers of Oppression

The Power of God, delivers us from the powers and oppression, and in some people even possession of the demonic influences. We have the power to go on and to live life and that more abundantly. We will have the power and ability to walk in the Light as He is in the Light

(Ephesians 1:19 NKJV) and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

(Ephesians 1:20 NKJV) which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

Increase in Reformation – Need is Regeneration

There is an ever increasing push around us today, for reformation, that is to clean-up a person, make their life better, all the while meeting their most vital need, to be reborn, they need regeneration.

Clean up Community – 7X worse / Just say No – Tried Prohibition

People who try to clean up their lives or their communities through reformation will sweep the house clean, but seven times as many demons will come back. The evil that follows will be greater than the initial evil unless there is rebirth. Do you really think we're going to stop drug abuse by trying to eradicate the fields of coca in South America? Do you really feel that militarily or politically or through slogans like "Just Say No," we're going to rid ourselves of cocaine nationally? We tried in Prohibition. "We'll sweep it clean," we said. "We'll close down the distilleries. We'll board up the breweries. We'll change this country through legislation." But do you know what followed? For a while, alcoholism seemed to ebb, but in its place came cocaine and heroin—seven times the greater evil.

Modern Psychology

I spoke with someone in the mental health field this week, I listen to a 30 minute overview on depression. They covered 2 areas, body and soul. How are you treating your body? Eating right, staying away from risky behavior, abstaining from drugs, what are the chemical balances in your body right now? Soul, how is your stress, what is going on in your relationships, employment. All things I agree with, but I couldn't sit quietly and I had to say, ma'am, you have covered the body and soul part well, but with the Spirit part, for man is body, soul, and spirit, you can not bring total healing to them. You can only give a temporary solution. I left out, that you are going to make thing 7 times worse, for I did not think she had ears to hear based on her response to me. Man's need, is three-fold, and we must address all three, lest we with all good intentions, make matters worse. When I worked the Crisis-Hotline, I never let a caller go with out offering them a chance to receive Jesus Christ, for then I knew I had met them, at body, soul, and spirit.

Social Gospel

Today, there is a shift of many churches, once Bible believing churches, and they are shifting towards what is called the "social gospel". In the social gospel, we the church will work on world hunger, clean-up our communities, preach a user-friendly message, water down sin and repentance, and emphasize

heavily on God's total love and acceptance. Oh people are coming and having a good time, getting their lives cleaned-up, but unfortunately, in the end, will be seven times worse.

Should we not be Involved

We need to take the words of Jesus to heart. We must be about regeneration—not reformation; rebirth inwardly—not reform outwardly. Should we not then be involved in community activities and political undertakings? Of course. But as you are involved, you must realize your ultimate goal is to see people changed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You must be salt and light—drawing people to and reflecting Him.

That Power – Always us to Call Him Brother Jesus

And that power to overcome sins power in our lives, is the power that we may call Him, Jesus Christ, Brother. Brother Jesus.

(Matthew 12:46 NKJV) While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him.

(Matthew 12:47 NKJV) Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

(Matthew 12:48 NKJV) But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

(Matthew 12:49 NKJV) And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!

(Matthew 12:50 NKJV) "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

Family Afraid for Him – You Brood of Vipers

Why did Jesus' family want to talk with Him? They were worried about Him. They knew one didn't call the Pharisees a brood of vipers and escape scot-free. According to a long list of rules and regulations concerning infidels and heretics, the Pharisees could stone someone for such an offense. So Jesus' mother and brothers, sensing confrontation, might have wanted to protect Him.

We can't Choose Family – God Can & Does / Hebrews 2:11 / Amazing

It is true we can't choose our family. But the Lord did. If you believe on Him whom the Father has sent, He embraces you as His family. Hebrews says He is not ashamed to call us brethren (Hebrews 2:11). He says, "Behold, My brothers, My sisters, My mother—those who hear My word, those who do the will of the Father, believing in Me—they are My family." Before the world began, Jesus chose us to live with Him eternally. Amazing!

(Hebrews 2:11 NKJV) For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

Matthew 13

The Sower and the Seed (Matthew 13:1-23)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Shift in Teaching / Used to Draw Interest / Para – Alongside = Ballo – to Cast / Story+Truth

Here in chapter 13 we see a change in Jesus’ teaching, as He will begin to teach in parables. The use of parables was the way people communicated when they wanted to arouse curiosity and excite interest. They wouldn’t use guitars or humor, but rather they would use parables—little stories with big messages. The word “parable” comes from parabole in Greek. The Greek word para means “alongside,” while ballo means “to cast, or to throw.” Thus, the word “parable” means “casting alongside.” Parabolic teaching places a story alongside a truth or a principle. As you study parables, realize this: The lost and the lazy will not understand them, but for those who are interested in truth, they are wonderfully illuminating.

Context of Religious Rejecting / Plot to Destroy / John 9:22 / Had they reached Blasphemy?

The parables are in the context of the religious leaders rejecting Jesus; so much so last chapter we saw that they had begun their plot to destroy them. Those leaders had agreed in John 9:22 that anyone confessing Jesus would be put out of the synagogue. What we see here with Jesus teaching in parables, is that they won’t be able to understand Jesus, maybe they have reached the point of the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, I do not know, but we will see that Jesus will speak in parables and they can’t understand them; for there comes a time we know not when, and there comes a place we know not where, that man won’t believe, they cannot believe for the Holy Spirit has removed Himself from their life, and they are lost and damned eternally, they are the walking dead. But good news, all who have hearts to hear, will hear.

(Matthew 12:14 NKJV) Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

(John 9:22 NKJV) His parents said these things because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed that He was Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.

Outline for “The Sower and the Seed”

- 1.) The Hard Heart (13:4) / (13:19)**
- 2.) The Shallow Heart (13:5-6) / (13:20-21)**
- 3.) The Crowded Heart (13:7) / (13:22)**
- 4.) The Fruitful Heart (13:8) / (13:23)**

(Matthew 13:1 NKJV) On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.

On the Same day – Chapter 12

Notice it was on the same day, the same day that He stretched forth His hands to His followers and said these are my brothers and sisters. He is speaking to his followers, and He is going to speak in terms that they can understand, that they can grab hold of; the Lord always wants us to grasp this word, to grab hold of it in ways that we can understand, and ways that we can apply it, so we can live it out.

(Matthew 12:48 NKJV) But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"

(Matthew 12:49 NKJV) And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!"

(Matthew 12:50 NKJV) "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

(Matthew 13:2 NKJV) And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

(Matthew 13:3 NKJV) Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Natural Amphitheatre

This area forms a natural amphitheatre, the voice carries over the water, and the noise of wind is diminished because the Sea of Galilee sits 600 feet below sea level, and is surrounded by mountains.

Mark 4 – Unlock All / Expository Constancy

In Mark 4 Jesus says (referring to this same parable), if you don't understand this one you can't understand any of them. What will be important as we study not just the parables but the Bible in whole. is what is called Expository Constancy. What Expository Constancy is that when a word has a clear meaning in the Bible, and that is for the most part what it means. Oil for instance represents the Holy Spirit, Incense represents prayer. Here in Jesus will give us the meaning of what certain things mean, seed is the word of God, the soil is mans heart, and the birds of the air represent Satan.

(Mark 4:13 NKJV) And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

No Need to Add / Rev 22 / Hear all kinds of takes on this Passage

There is no need to try to make them mean anything else, even if they make good sermons, even if the person is not teaching heresy. We are told not to add to or take away from the Scriptures, and we will do well to heed that warning. I've heard all kinds of teaching on this passage (especially the blab it and grab movement) and the teacher basically was making it say what he wanted it too, totally ignoring Jesus' interpretation, he was adding to and taking away.

(Revelation 22:18 NKJV) For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book;

(Revelation 22:19 NKJV) and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Unlock the Others / Timeless – Agricultural Terms

Now the meaning of these words will be used to help us understand the other parables we will be reading in this chapter in the weeks to come. Again, Jesus was taking spiritual truths and casting it along natural truths they already understood. These people lived an agricultural life, they understood agricultural terms. Now Jesus is relating spiritual truths to them to make them even clearer. The beauty of parables are that they are timeless, regardless of what the technology of the day is, or the fads of the world, all of the parables of the Bible are still relatable to the day we live in, for the Lord wants those with ears to hear, to understand His heart, so our heart may be changed to be like His.

Not Necessarily 1 out of 4 / Not all will Receive - Relax

Before I go on, we will see 4 types of soil, but I don't think Jesus is saying only 25 percent of people get saved. That assumption is that the seed is cast equally on each of these types of ground, but just a general fact is that ever farmer tries to cast his seed on the good soil, but in some cases that seed (as we will see, fell, outside of the good soil). So I don't take this as proof text that only 1 in 4 people get saved. The main point is the 4 heart conditions Jesus is talking about, and that fact that not everyone we share the gospel with will receive it, so no need to think we are doing something wrong, or no good at sharing, we aren't called, for Jesus clearly says that not all will receive the word.

The Hard Heart (13:4) / (13:19)

(Matthew 13:4 NKJV) "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

Paths through Fields

Wayside is the beaten path that went through the fields, it was traveled on so much that it became as concrete.

The Shallow Heart (13:5-6) / (13:20-21)

(Matthew 13:5 NKJV) "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

(Matthew 13:6 NKJV) "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

Very rocky Region

If you ever make it to Israel and you will see a rocky region, and you'll see a half inch of dirt in a crack of a rock, with little blades of grass or what not springing up through them.

The Crowded Heart (13:7) / (13:22)

(Matthew 13:7 NKJV) "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

No Need to Plant Weeds

Funny thing if you ever have done any gardening, you don't have to plant weeds, they just come.

Wouldn't it be great if fruit naturally grew and we had to plant weeds, we would have no world hunger.

The Fruitful Heart (13:8) / (13:23)

(Matthew 13:8 NKJV) "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Jesus will Explain

Jesus is going to tell us what these 4 soils mean, so let's let the Master teach us. But before getting there, He

(Matthew 13:9 NKJV) "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Listen Up!

Now, Jesus wants people to hear, He wants them to understand, He uses the same words when He speaks to the 7 churches in Revelation. He is not trying to hide these things, but He wants us to hear them and apply them. So today, listen up, that is what Jesus has just said to you.

(Matthew 13:10 NKJV) And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

(Matthew 13:11 NKJV) He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

(Matthew 13:12 NKJV) "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

Mysteries to be Searched Out / Spiritually Discerned / Proverbs 25

When the Bible speaks of mysteries, it is not speaking of things that are hidden from us, but things that need to be searched out for understanding. The natural man can not receive the things of God unless they are spiritually discerned to him. There is a beautiful verse in Proverbs 25, of God calling us out of the every day, oh I have to read my Bible, to where God says Bible reading is a treasure hunt. Open it, search out the things within, therein you will find treasures (an abundance of treasures); you will be not as common man but like the kings of the earth. Oh precious saints, if we can convince ourselves this is true, that there is a treasure to be found every time we open this word, that we will be as kings of the earth, Bible reading will never be the same:

(1 Corinthians 2:12 NKJV) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

(1 Corinthians 2:13 NKJV) These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

(1 Corinthians 2:14 NKJV) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

(Proverbs 25:2 NKJV) It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.

Some Came to Judge / Blasphemy / Still same Day

But in the next verses, Jesus explains why He will speak in parables, because we are still in the context of the religious leaders plotting against Him, the context of the Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, it is still the same day.....

(Matthew 13:13 NKJV) "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

(Matthew 13:14 NKJV) "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;

(Matthew 13:15 NKJV) For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'

Quotes Ish 6 / Honors Free-will / Jeremiah 7

Here Jesus quotes a difficult passage from Isaiah 6 (verse 9-10), in which Isaiah is commanded by the Lord to speak to a people who won't hear him or receive from him. It was a prophecy fulfilled completely in Jesus, as He spoke to a people whose hearts were hardened, whose hearing was dull, and whose eyes were closed. Now, here's the question. Why would God send Isaiah to preach to people who wouldn't listen or respond to him? Because God is a perfect gentleman, and He will not force His will on anyone. God isn't say don't preach, but that they won't listen.....lest they have to change their lives, turn from their sin. He will honor the decision of those who don't want to be saved. Remember what was said to Jeremiah, keep preaching, but don't pray for them no more, there comes a time, we know not when, and a place, we know not where, when a man's fate is sealed between heaven and despair. You can't play games when the Spirit is drawing you. Oh people, today.....he who has an ear let him hear:

(Jeremiah 7:16 NKJV) "Therefore do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you.

Coal Miners / Jesus teaches Believers & Non-Believers

I am reminded of the story from a number of years ago a coal mine collapsed, and seven miners were trapped inside for three and a half days. Rescue workers dug feverishly, and when they finally broke through the caved-in mineshaft, the miners were whooping and hollering, obviously grateful they had been rescued—until one of the seven said, "Hey, why doesn't someone light a lantern?" The other six looked at their friend, and they realized he was blind. The light was on. The lanterns were lit. The rescue team had brought light into the darkened shaft, but he could not see because he had been blinded by the cave-in. Until the light came through, no one knew who was blind and who could see. The light had to shine on all seven before anyone could differentiate between those who could see and those who were blind. So, too, Jesus taught believer and non-believer alike in order to determine who was truly blind. The light was shining for those who wanted to see. But those who chose to be wicked wouldn't see the light, and it would only prove their blindness.

Even Christians – Take it In – but Don't Live it Out

This word has application for us today, as so many people today, Christians, take in the word; take in the word, but never live in it, They become hearers of the word but not doers. How many Christians go to church every week, hear the word, then go out with no change in their lives. We must be hearers and doers of the Word we receive;

(James 1:22 NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

(Matthew 13:16 NKJV) "But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;

(Matthew 13:17 NKJV) "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

Prophets Wished

The prophets who wrote OT prophecy wished they could know what we know. They wrote it and said that is good Stuff, I wonder what all that means. We know, therefore we should be living it out.

(Matthew 13:18 NKJV) "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

Jesus is going to explain the parable, nothing is hidden, nor is it hard to understand as some people try to say the parables are hard to understand:

The Hard Heart (13:4) / (13:19)

(Matthew 13:19 NKJV) "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Word can't Penetrate

Some people have such hard hearts that the Word doesn't penetrate at all. Birds (wicked one – Satan) pluck it away before it can make any impact, and their hearts remain unchanged. The hard heart, too proud to admit they have a need for a Savior, that they are sinners

Satan Hates the Word

Satan hates this word, he loves to distract you from it, keep you from coming here, reading it at home, talking about. Hey if you ever have insomnia, open the Word and you'll go right to sleep.

The Shallow Heart (13:5-6) / (13:20-21)

(Matthew 13:20 NKJV) "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

(Matthew 13:21 NKJV) "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Sounds Great – Until Persecution

Others hear the Word and say, "Yeah, that sounds good!" And they get saved. They come forward, they raise their hands, and they get baptized, had an emotional moment, but there's no root; and when persecution and tribulation come, they dry up and check out.

Eternity Magazine / 178 – 4,106 – 3mon – 3% - 3,981

Eternity magazine did a study recently of a large crusade by a famous evangelist. 178 churches came together for this crusade. In one week's time, 4,106 decisions were made for Christ. But within 3 months only 3% were going to church at all. That means 3,981 people came forward but didn't go on. They responded to the message and sprang up quickly, but when the walk got tough, they bailed out.

The Crowded Heart (13:7) / (13:22)

(Matthew 13:22 NKJV) "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Become Unfruitful / Dig their Pools

Notice it says they become unfruitful. It appears that at one time they were fruitful. They were fruitful but now one, or both thorns have tangled them (either the cares of this world or deceitfulness of riches). In others, the cares of this world choke out the Word. They don't have time for Bible study anymore. They have to wax their cars, paint their houses, or dig their pools. They can't fit Scripture into their schedules

Thorny – Speaks of Crowded / Menu of the World / This World – Blocks World to Come

The thorny heart speaks of the crowded heart. The biggest dangers for us who are believers, our hearts can become so crowded because of all the activities we have going on. The crowded heart takes what is on the menu of the world, people chasing after the menu of the world. The menu of the world is loaded up, we can do this, we can do that, we can get involved here, there. The cares of this world block out the vision of the world to come.

Care – Pulled in Different Direction / Word speaks –then Gets Challenged for Position

Cares means to be pulled in different directions, it means to distribute, to divide, to give a part of. The word had been speaking to us, but then it gets challenged for the position in our hearts and who will have the priority

Deceitfulness – False Impression

Deceitfulness means to give a false impression. It doesn't mean we are not to have wealth or have possessions, but how we can be deceived that wealth, or having that thing will be the end of, will bring some satisfaction or security, or joy.

Wealth is a Great tool against Satan

So it isn't wrong to have wealth is a great tool to use against Satan. We are a wealthy nation, and we may not have a church building, but we have more than the churches in Nicaragua do, or Africa. So we share our wealth and do damage on the kingdom of Satan. We are in the process of buying a camel (I think every church should have a camel) for a missionary in Africa, who will then be able to take the gospel to places where no one has ever heard of Jesus Christ. That is a good investment as a church.

Wealthy Man Is Not the Most – Needs the Least

The wealthy man is not the man who has the most, but the one who needs the least to live.

The Fruitful Heart (13:8) / (13:23)

(Matthew 13:23 NKJV) "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

They Produce Fruit

So those that receive the hear the Word and receive it because the soil is ready. Their hearts are right. They take it in, and it produces fruit—thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold.

The Word is Thoughts of God

The Word changes lives, for the Word is the thoughts of God Himself, given to us, and that will bring forth fruit:

(Isaiah 55:8 NKJV) "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

(Isaiah 55:9 NKJV) "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

(Isaiah 55:10 NKJV) "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,

(Isaiah 55:11 NKJV) So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

(Isaiah 55:12 NKJV) "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

The Marvel is the Seed / Genetically Coded / Hebrews 4

The marvel is in the seed. Take a flower seed, plant it in the soil, and somehow in the darkness, responding to the water being applied, it is genetically coded to burst forth and grow into a flower, a beautiful blossom. That is what the word of God is like. Get it planted in good soil, water it with the Holy Spirit, and it is going to burst forth a beautiful blossom. It is genetically coded. This word is living and powerful, it is a live, and it is genetically coded to produce fruit, just get it in beloved:

(Hebrews 4:12 NKJV) For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

What fruit is produced, God tells us through His word. There are 6 fruits spoken of in the Bible: What is fruit? The Scriptures specify 6 types of fruit.

1.) Romans 6:22 says that holiness is a fruit:

Your life begins to take on a new wholeness, not eroded by sin, not wiped out by the world. Holiness begins to grow in you, and a new wholesomeness begins to be worked out through you. Holiness means

“purification”, and “sanctification”, we are set apart for God. An easy self-examination is this, Lord how am I doing in terms of keeping your Word?

(Romans 6:22 NKJV) But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

(1 Th 4:7 NKJV) For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.

2.) Roman 1:13 says that soul-winning is a fruit:

Paul said “*I wish to come to Rome that I might have fruit among you*” - or, see souls saved. Paul then goes into that powerful verse on preaching the gospel

(Romans 1:15-16 KJV) So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

3.) Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit

(Gal 5:22-23 NKJV) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

4.) Romans 15 calls financial giving a fruit

The church in Jerusalem, because of their persecution, was so poor, that the Apostle Paul was taking up a collection to take to them so that they might have money just to buy food. I know sometimes it is hard to write that check, but we have to remember financial giving is a fruit.

(Romans 15:26-28 NKJV) For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

5.) Colossians 1:10 Labels good works a fruit:

Serving others is a fruit. Helping someone I might also point out, a piece of fruit has no say in who picks it or who eats it. And so too it is with us, we are to give our fruit away freely with no conditions attached. Helping someone and figuring they owe us one is not fruit, probably the greatest blessings come when we help someone who has no ability to ever pay us back, this includes the financial fruit too.

(Colossians 1:10 NKJV) that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

6.) Hebrews 13:15 names praises as a fruit.

Giving thanks to the Lord is fruit in His eyes. Praises to God not only come in the form of worship, but also by every word that proceeds from our lips. Words of love and encouragement to others bring praises unto God. Words of destruction from God's children does not bring praise unto God. Let every word that proceeds from our mouths, be only words of edification.

(Hebrews 13:15 KJV) By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

Good Benchmark

So are we fruitful, we have 6 benchmarks to examine ourselves by. I think it is a good idea to lay these 6 out in our devotion time each day and say “God how’s my fruit in these area, what type of fruit have I been producing? If little or none, then change me Lord; if lots, then Praise you Lord, lets do more.

How Apply Practically / Ground – Water – Sun – Weeds - Varmints

How can I produce this fruit you may ask? Before I can produce the crop, I need to plant the seed, and before I plant the seed I need to prepare the soil. Be a farmer of the Word, apply the basic principles of farming to your mediating on the word.

- Find yourself a good piece of ground to sow the seed, that quiet place that you can concentrate on the word.
- Every seed needs water, water your word. Before, during and after, ask/pray to the Holy Spirit to teach you (John 14:26).
- Every seed needs sunlight, ask Jesus to illuminate your word. Jesus, show me yourself in this word, and show me – me, illuminate what this word means to me, how it applies to me. Read with a purpose, to see Jesus and to see yourself.

- Tend to your garden. Pull the weeds out, the cares of the world, the distractions. Dedicate that time for that only. Don't try to watch television, or listen to worship, just dedicate that time to the Lord.
- And, chase the varmints out of your garden, don't allow the devil to distract you, discourage you, say you can't live up to this word, or you haven't been in your garden for 3 weeks, you can't save your crop. Chase him out, and claim Isaiah 55!

(John 14:26 NKJV) "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

Application for Sowing the Word

There is application also of not just receiving the word, but as we ourselves cast the seed of the word out to others. 3,981 out of 4,106, just 3% is unacceptable. When we share the gospel, remember these 4 soils, so we cast seed on good ground, and not add to the 3,981.

Outline for "The Sower and the Seed"

1.) The Hard Heart (13:4) / (13:19)

Don't think that hard soil, has to remain hard soil. With a little water, running over time, even the hardest soil softens. So water that person with a hard heart continually. Water them with prayer, asking the Lord to soften their heart. Water them with the Word, a word here and a word there, and allow God to break up the hard soil, that hard heart.

2.) The Shallow Heart (13:5-6) / (13:20-21)

Oh the error of today's modern evangelism; how I hate those invitations given out at some churches, "if you want to know that you have eternal life today, just raise your hand and ask God in". that byproduct is 3,981. That is a shallow gospel for a shallow heart. When we give out the word, the gospel, we must give it in its entirety, and that includes the message of repentance (for without repentance there is not forgiveness of sin) and as we said last week, include the resurrection for that is the power of the gospel.

3.) The Crowded Heart (13:7) / (13:22)

Along that same thought, is that error of saying, Jesus makes your life better, or you will be miserable without Him (all those things are true) but for many people, they love their life the way it is, I'm fine as I am, and I enjoy the life I have, I see no need for change. We must present to them that there is competition for their heart, the things of the world, and the things of God. But only the things of God will last, and someday we will stand before Him to give and account. Our sin has separated us from the Holy God, and we need a Savior, regardless of what it cost us in today's life.

4.) The Fruitful Heart (13:8) / (13:23)

And, as we applied t for our lives, so must we for there lives. We need to continually water them with prayer. We need to continually come back and keep showing them Jesus, so they can start tot see the comparison of the vanity of this world, and riches of His greatness. We need come alongside of them, to help them with the weeds until they are strong enough to pull them themselves. Help them through their struggles. And lastly, stand with them to chase the varmints out of the garden, as Satan tries to pluck the seed. We continue in prayer for them, and keep bringing them the word.

The Infiltration of the Kingdom **(Matthew 13:24-43)**

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be "The King has Come", for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Shift in Teaching / Used to Draw Interest / Para – Alongside = Ballo – to Cast / Story+Truth

Here in chapter 13 we see a change in Jesus' teaching, as He will begin to teach in parables because of the resistance and rejection that is coming against and upon Him. The use of parables was the way people communicated when they wanted to arouse curiosity and excite interest. They wouldn't use guitars or humor, but rather they would use parables—little stories with big messages. The word "parable" comes from *parabole* in Greek. The Greek word *para* means "alongside," while *ballo* means "to cast, or to throw." Thus, the word "parable" means "casting alongside." Parabolic teaching places a story alongside a truth or a principle (in these cases a story alongside a spiritual truth). As you study parables, realize this: The lost and the lazy will not understand them, but for those who are interested in truth, they are wonderfully illuminating.

7 Parables

There are 7 kingdom parables ("*the kingdom of heaven is likened to*") here in Matthew 13, keeping along with the use of the number 7 we see so much through this NT. Paul wrote to 7 Churches, and in Revelation there were 7 churches, so we continue to see the number 7 (which represents completeness in the Scriptures) being woven throughout the Scriptures. I like those things for they show to me the divine inspiration of the Scriptures:

1. Parable of the Wheat and Tares (13:24-30) / 13:36-43)
2. Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)
3. Parable of the Leaven (13:33)
4. Parable of the Hidden Treasure (13:44)
5. Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (13:45-46)
6. Parable of the Fishing Net (13:47-50)
7. Parable of the Householder (13:51-54)

Parable of the Wheat and Tares (13:24-30) / 13:36-43)

(Matthew 13:24 NKJV) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;

(Matthew 13:25 NKJV) "but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

(Matthew 13:26 NKJV) "But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared.

(Matthew 13:27 NKJV) "So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

(Matthew 13:28 NKJV) "He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?'

(Matthew 13:29 NKJV) "But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

(Matthew 13:30 NKJV) 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.'" "

Continuing Analogy of Sowing / Familiar Subject / Enemy against the Farmer

Continuing His analogy of sowing (from 13:1-23), Jesus moved on to a subject very familiar to His listeners. When a farmer planted a field of wheat, anyone who had something against him would, under cover of night, sow tares in with the wheat.

Tares same – Color – Shape – Smell / Soaked Nutrients – No Fruit / Darnel Weed / Zondervan

Tares have the same color, shape, and fragrance as wheat, but no heads of grain form. In other words, the tares soak up the nutrients, and they take up space, but they produce nothing in return and are unidentifiable until harvest time. This weed is called a darnel, a weed that looks just like the wheat. Zondervan Encyclopedia says even some of the most seasoned farmers have difficulty distinguishing between the wheat and the tare in the early stages of maturation.

Hard to Distinguish New Believers / Maturity Brings Fruit / Seed is Genetically Programmed

How hard it can be to distinguish some people who make professions for Christ; but as they mature it becomes clearer who are the wheat, for there is a fruit that is about them. We see the 6 fruits spoken of in the Scriptures and they are producing those fruits, some 30, some 60, some 100. The fruit is naturally produced because the seed (the Word of God as we saw last study) is genetically pre-programmed to produce fruit, it is in the Word of God.

1. Romans 6:22 says that holiness is a fruit:
2. Roman 1:13 says that soul-winning is a fruit:
3. Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit
4. Romans 15 calls financial giving a fruit
5. Colossians 1:10 Labels good works a fruit:
6. Hebrews 13:15 names praises as a fruit.

But Some Still Mature – to Little Fruit

But then there are those, who make profession, and years and years later it is still difficult to distinguish whether they are wheat or tares. Titus 3:10 says they profess to know God, but in works deny Him. So there lives have no fruit to confirm their confession. There is no evidence of those 6 types of fruit, *(Titus 1:16 NKJV) They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.*

Which are they? / Won't Know Until the Harvest

Well which are they, I don't know, we won't know, until the harvest comes. Some will be wheat; some will be tares, all I know is it is not a place I would want to be.

Jude – Same Century as Resurrection

In the same century that Jesus walked the earth, the same century of His resurrection, these words came true as we read in the Book of Jude. Jude warns about the tares trying to choke the truth, and this is happening before the church is even 100 years old. These people creep in unnoticed, and they are fruitless:

(Jude 1:3 NKJV) Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

(Jude 1:4 NKJV) For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Jude 1:12 NKJV) These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots;

(Jude 1:13 NKJV) raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

Acts 20 – Savage Wolves

Then there is the extreme cases, like in Acts 20, Paul says I cease never to step waning you about the wolves coming in among the flock. Paul says men will arise from amongst you. But see, Paul declared the whole word of God, and that is the best defense against savage wolves and their errant teachings:

(Acts 20:27 NKJV) "For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.

(Acts 20:28 NKJV) "Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

(Acts 20:29 NKJV) "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.

(Acts 20:30 NKJV) "Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.

Jesus said not Always Obvious / Now Muslim – Buddhist not Confused / Matt 7 – Depart

Jesus tells us this is how it will be and that it won't be obvious all the time. Now an atheist who publicly denouncing God won't be confused with wheat. A Muslim, Buddhist, or Hindu will not be confused as to whether they are a wheat or tare. Jesus is talking about the kingdom, the church, those that say I'm with Him. Jesus is saying they will say they are part of Me, they will be among you, but not all will be. Jesus gives strong warning about this previously, where He said not all who call Me Lord are Mine:

(Matthew 7:21 NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 7:22 NKJV) "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

(Matthew 7:23 NKJV) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

(Matthew 13:30 NKJV) 'Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."' "

Lord's Concern for the Wheat / 1 Harvest / Glad not before 1991 / Nor after 911

In verse 30, we see the Lords concern about not harming the wheat that He allows the tares to continue. People often ask how He can allow this evil in the world, why doesn't He judge it. Here again is the answer, that if He brings the sickle to harvest, that if it, He will bring the judgment upon all evil. What is evil but the absence of God; so that person who is absent of God, who has not received Him as Lord, will have to be harvested by the sickle along with the terrorist, the murderer, the adulterer, and the rapist, or the 27 year old living in Florida, who had lived for himself for 27 years but knew something was missing, knew his life was empty., I am glad that in January 1991 God didn't say enough, its harvest time, because I got saved in February of that year. How painful Sept 11th was and still is, but if God said enough, then all who have received Him in the last 5 years would have bundled for the fire, not the barn. So God in' His grace allow both to continue together, because many will seek repentance. There will be 1 harvest, and 1 harvest only, and that can be read about in Revelation 14:

(Revelation 14:15 NKJV) And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

(Revelation 14:16 NKJV) So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

(Revelation 14:17 NKJV) Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

(Revelation 14:18 NKJV) And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, "Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe."

(Revelation 14:19 NKJV) So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

Billy Graham on Larry King

Larry King asked Billy Graham if he thought the world was getting better or worse, and Billy said both. Billy referred back to this passage and said the tares have gotten worse, evil has increased tremendously and grown even wicked. But so too has the wheat as year after year we see more and more people make commitment for Christ. Billy said the harvest is near, God's angels have the sickles in their hands and harvest is about to be brought in. Larry King hurried up and said, we will be right back after this commercial break.

Tale of 2 Cities / Colorado Teen – Iranian Islamic Leader / Satellite and Radio

So we truly are living in the "Tale of 2 Cities", these are the best of times, and these are the worst of times. Wickedness and evil grow worse every day it seems as we are shocked by the news we read, the

homicide bombers in Iraq killing hundreds this week alone, how about the 15 year old teenage girl and her 17 year old boyfriend in who were arrested in Colorado this week for killing the girls mother, then hiding her body in the truck of the car for a month while they went and drained her bank account. How about the Iranian president who says Israel needs to be wiped off the face of the map. But how about gospel being preached into Muslim strongholds via the satellite beaming the gospel to their radios. News this week, one of the top Islamic leaders in Iran accepted Christ and left the country after facing death threats and imprisonment, according to an Iranian pastor living in the U.S. Millions of people are hearing the gospel for the first time this year, and receiving Him. Truly these are the best of times, and the worst of times. God cares about the wheat, and will not pull the wheat up until the harvest is full. That time is near, are you ready?

Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)

(Matthew 13:31 NKJV) Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,

(Matthew 13:32 NKJV) "which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

Follow the Flow – now Small Seed Sown - Mustard

Follow the flow. Jesus is giving us insight about the kingdom. In verses 19–23, He talked about the sower sowing seed and how some of the seed falls upon good soil and produces fruit. In verses 24–30, He said in this field there will be some tares growing alongside the true wheat. Developing still further His seed / kingdom analogy, Jesus now likens the kingdom of heaven to the smallest seed sown—a mustard seed.

Some Commentators – Start Small and Grows Large

Some commentators say this parable shows how the kingdom starts small and just grows beautifully. But wait—there is no example either in history or in botany where a mustard seed has grown into a tree large enough to support birds.

Zondervan Encyclopedia / Black – White / Bush hard to build a Nest

Again, Zondervan Encyclopedia says there are 2 kinds of mustard seeds, black and white Mustard seeds. The black mustard seed grows to about 15 foot, but it still is more of a large bush than a tree, as its branches are not that thick. The white mustard seed grows to about 2 feet high, and would be even harder for birds to lodge in. I would tend to lean towards this being the white mustard seed, because of the analogy of black and white, the analogy of evil trying to infiltrate the church, but I can't say for sure. In either case, black or white, it would be hard for a bird to build a nest in either of these trees, which are really more of a bush than a tree.

Jesus is Talking Abnormal Growth / Birds speak of Evil – Expository Constancy / Organization

In reality, Jesus is talking about abnormal, unnatural growth. He's talking about something that begins small, like a mustard seed, but which grows abnormally to a size where birds can call it home. Bear in mind, students, that throughout the Bible, birds speak of evil (remember our last study where the bird plucked up the Word, and the Bird was the Evil One.). Jesus had said if you don't get that parable you won't understand the rest, and as we had talked, it is best to stay with Expository Constancy. This is why I believe Jesus is talking about the kingdom becoming bureaucratic, losing its simplicity, and becoming too big organizationally as ministries have a propensity to do.

(Mark 4:13 NKJV) And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

(Matthew 13:4 NKJV) "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

(Matthew 13:19 NKJV) "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Foul Fowl

From the latter perspective, these birds may represent that undesirable element in the world which flocks to the kingdom merely to rob it of its fruit, peck holes in its structure, or drive away those who genuinely seek a place to nest. Such foul fowl do more damage than good, and need to be driven away. Consider carefully the following feathered felons. Are any nesting among our branches?

- **The Parrot**—This bird has a talent for repeating what someone else has said. One must exercise great caution around a parrot, for what you say may be repeated when you least expect it. “Don’t tell anyone, but have you heard...” is a phrase that can lead to “fruit and seed robbing” in the kingdom.
- **The Fan-Tail Pigeon**—This is a strutting bird, one which loves to show off. This “church bird” must always be the center of attention. When denied the spotlight it will generally fly to another tree where it is more greatly appreciated.
- **The Hawk**—This bird has an extremely sharp eye. It can spot a flaw a mile away. He can list every error the preacher made in a sermon, every song incorrectly pitched or led, every failing of every member. The hawk is a bird of prey which looks for weaknesses...and then swoops in for the kill.
- **The Jay Bird**—Often called the fussing bird, they feel the “divine call” to sound the alarm and raise a ruckus whenever they spot something that doesn’t suit them. Most of their time is spent squawking over matters of little or no consequence.
- **The Bat**—Though not really a bird, from a distance it may appear to be one. Viewed up close it can be seen to be another species: “A rat with wings!” A pretender, a hypocrite.
- **The Crow**—This bird is a thief. It slips into a field another has planted and cultivated, and steals the grain, thus robbing another of the fruit of his labor. It always squawks loudly when caught.
- **The Swan**—This is a very beautiful bird, but very flighty. It calls no particular pond home, but wanders from pond to pond. Never satisfied with where it’s at, it searches ceaselessly for that perfect pond...never finding it!

Parable of the Leaven (13:33)

(Matthew 13:33 NKJV) Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Some Say Kingdom Permeating

Some Say, see the kingdom is growing, permeating at a rapid pace; actually not so Mormonism and Islam is going equally as fast as Christianity, possibly even faster.

Leaven 98 times / Leaven Sin – Puffed Up / Meal – the Word / Genesis 18

Leaven is mentioned ninety-eight times throughout Scripture; leaven is a picture of sin throughout the Scriptures, and in the Passover observance we studied in the past how they sweep the house of all leaven. In every single case, it is linked with evil. So again, I disagree with those teachers who say these two parables describe the beautiful and mysterious growth of the kingdom. Leaven, symbolizing a puffing up, speaks of evil. In contrast, meal or bread in Scripture speaks of the Word, and it speaks of fellowship with the Lord as we see it first mentioned in Genesis 18 when Abraham fellowshiped with the Lord. I see a very tight connection between this parable and the last. Jesus is saying, “Watch out for outward organization that becomes good only for birds. Watch out for internal deception when leaven is hidden in the meal.”

(Genesis 18:5 NKJV) "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said."

(Genesis 18:6 NKJV) So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes."

People Knock on Door / Open Bible – Bring another Book

People knock on your door, saying, “May we hold a Bible study in your house? We have some wonderful things we want to share with you.” And they come in and open their Bibles, but in addition, they show you the Pearl of Great Price, The Book of Mormon, or the Watchtower Magazine. Or, hey I have the “secret” which has sold over 1 million copies since Oprah introduced last month. What are they doing? They’re inserting leaven into the meal of the Word. Jesus will warn in a few chapters to watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees:

(Matthew 16:6 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

Stick with the Word / Hey Eve lets Party – Eve you are so Spiritual

Stick with the Scriptures. Don’t let people add to the Word as they try to appeal to your spirituality. After all, when Satan came to Eve in the Garden, he didn’t say, “Hey Eve, let’s party!” No, he said, “Eve, you’re so spiritual. You just want to be like God, and the day you eat this fruit, your eyes will be opened, and you will be more like Him.”

Meal Picture of Fellowship / Big Organization turn into a Religion / Buddhist Teaching

Meal is always a picture of fellowship. So we see a relationship over a religion. People make religion a political or social organization, but Jesus shows it is about a relationship. Those groups are loaded with sin, they have left the word and turned it into an organization where Jesus is merely the mascot. The other day I was recruiting for work, and had a young student who was from China. On her resume it said she had taught Christianity at a local church to the children (which is a rather large denomination). I said tell me more, and she said I told them about Jesus. I said that is great, but she said, yes but I am Buddhist, I don't believe in Jesus. I am amazed that any church would allow such a thing, but I read it right here that it would be. I am just seeing the Word of Jesus revealed before me in the very life I live.

Secrets since the Foundation of the World (13:34-35)

(Matthew 13:34 NKJV) All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them,

(Matthew 13:35 NKJV) that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."

What a Day in Capernaum

What a day in Capernaum! Revealed to them were things that were not fully understood since the foundation of the world. How much more for us, how we have understanding in things that were laid out in the foundation of the world. Don't know if we can fully appreciate all that is before us right now.

Jesus Explains the parable of the Wheat and Tares (13:36-43)

(Matthew 13:36 NKJV) Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

Jesus is out of the boat and now in a house.

Disciples ask for More

After Jesus sent the multitude away, the disciples came to Him asking for further instruction and greater illumination. So too, after receiving a teaching—perhaps at a Bible study, over the radio, in a book, or in your own devotions—have you discovered the dynamic of stopping and asking Jesus for further revelation and specific application? I'm convinced we lose much because once we hear a study, we split out the door and go our way without really taking the time to seek the Lord and say, "Father, what is in this for me today?"

(Matthew 13:37 NKJV) He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

(Matthew 13:38 NKJV) "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.

Wheat Bows Over / Picture of the 4th Soil – Loaded with Fruit – Some 30/60/100

What is interesting is that the wheat after it grows and matures becomes heavy and bows over from the weight. But the darnel weed is light, has no substance to it, and continues to stand upright, straight and tall, very proud. What a beautiful picture of the believer, hearts bowed before Him, the 4th soil we studied last week; a heart so loaded with fruit it bows over from the weight of the 30-60-100: They are loaded with the 6 fruits of the Scriptures:

- Romans 6:22 says that holiness is a fruit:
- Roman 1:13 says that soul-winning is a fruit:
- Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit
- Romans 15 calls financial giving a fruit
- Colossians 1:10 Labels good works a fruit:
- Hebrews 13:15 names praises as a fruit.

Zondervan / Poisonous and Must be Destroyed

In Zondervan Encyclopedia it says that the tare must be separated from the wheat because the seeds of the tare once they are crushed, broken open, are poisonous and can even cause death. They must be destroyed:

(Matthew 13:39 NKJV) "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

(Matthew 13:40 NKJV) "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.

(Matthew 13:41 NKJV) "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,

(Matthew 13:42 NKJV) "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

(Matthew 13:43 NKJV) "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

Chp 13 – We never Know / Appear as Believers – Go to Church – Carry Bible / No Relationship

Throughout chapter 13, Jesus has been teaching about the kingdom of God. In so doing, He is explaining we really don't know who's in the kingdom and who's not. In the kingdom, there are those who appear as though they're believers. They go to church regularly. They carry a Bible. They may even tithe. But they've never had a relationship with Jesus. They're counterfeit and bogus. They're tares. Satan has planted them within the kingdom to cause confusion and consternation.

Satan's Counterfeit

All part of Satan's counterfeit. The Bible speaks of:

- false brethren in 2 Corinthians 11,
- a false gospel in Galatians 1,
- a false Christ in 2 Thessalonians 2,
- and a false church in Revelation 2.

Church Born – 10 waves Persecution / Dipped in Wax – Boiling Oil – Lions - Crucified

When the church was born, Satan tried to destroy it through three hundred years of persecution. Ten Roman emperors ordered the systematic persecution of the church as Christians were dipped in hot wax and lit as candles, placed in boiling oil, skinned alive, fed to the lions, and crucified upside down, . But do you know what happened? The stronger the persecution, the more the church grew.

Reminds of Exodus

It reminds me of Exodus.

Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. Exodus 1:8-12

More Affliction – More Growth / Russian Christians / 60-80 Million Christians in China

So, too, concerning the church. The more Satan afflicted and burdened the church, the more she grew. That's always the way it is. Some years ago, when they were going through tremendous difficulty and very real persecution, a group of Russian Christians sent a letter to America, saying, "We are praying for you in America that you will have the opportunity to endure persecution and grow like us." We pray, "Oh, Lord, don't allow persecution in Russia," but they pray, "Oh, Lord, persecute the church in America," because the Russian church has discovered that persecution brings about maturation and the propagation of the gospel. According to various reports, as of September 2002, there are anywhere between sixty and eighty million believers in China. Incredible! In persecution, the church grows.

Satan Goofed for 300 yrs / Changed tactics in 313AD – Joined the Church /

Satan goofed in those first three hundred years. The church experienced persecution and began to spread throughout the whole world. So what did he do? He changed his tactics. In A.D. 313, with the edict of Constantine, Christianity was adopted as the national religion of Rome. Satan, in essence, joined the church. And the church has been suffering ever since. You see, the danger is not persecution.

Danger not Persecution – but Infiltration

The real danger is infiltration. When Christianity becomes respectable and easy, tares pop up all over the place.

Do we Judge the Tares / Parable teaches take Place at Harvest / I love – God Judges

Is it our responsibility to rid the church of tares? No. This parable teaches separation will take place by the angels at the end of the world. If we try to figure out who's a believer and who's not, we're going to err and pull out the wrong people. It's our job to love, and it's God's job to judge. We are to love people, for "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (see John 13:35). Whether he's your brother or whether he's your enemy, whether he's wheat or a tare, it makes no difference. You are to love him and let God judge him. I really like this. I don't have to analyze, scrutinize, and criticize. I can just say, "Lord, thank You for this parable. And now I'm going to practice it. I get to love people and leave the judging to You. You see things perfectly. I don't."

(John 13:35 NKJV) "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

(Matthew 13:43 NKJV) "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Thank You for Tomorrow

He was just a little fellow. His mother died when he was just a child. His father, in trying to be both mommy and daddy, had planned a picnic. The little boy had never been on a picnic, so they made their plans, fixed the lunch, and packed the car. Then it was time to go to bed, for the picnic was the next day. He just couldn't sleep. He tossed and he turned, but the excitement got to him. Finally, he got out of bed, ran into the room where his father had already fallen asleep, and shook him. His father woke up and saw his son. He said to him, "What are you doing up? What's the matter?"

The boy said, "I can't sleep."

The father asked, "Why can't you sleep?"

In answering, the boy said, "Daddy, I'm excited about tomorrow."

His father replied, "Well, Son, I'm sure you are, and it's going to be a great day, but it won't be great if we don't get some sleep. So why don't you just run down the hall, get back in bed, and get a good night's rest."

So the boy trudged off down the hall to his room and got in bed. Before long, sleep came—to the father, that is. It wasn't long thereafter that back was the little boy. He was pushing and shoving his father, and his father opened his eyes. Harsh words almost blurted out until he saw the expression on the boy's face. The father asked, "What's the matter now?"

The boy said, "Daddy, I just want to thank you for tomorrow."

See my past – which would have been Future

When I think of my past and the fact that a loving Father would not let me go, reached down in his divine providence, and lifted me off of the streets of Harlem, when I think of what he has done for me and then think that he is planning a new thing for me that will surpass the past, let the record show this day in this place that Ray Bollas testified, Father, I want to thank you for tomorrow! Let us all do the same!

You are Treasured – Now Live it Out (Matthew 13:44-52)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

- His Birth (Matthew 1-2)
- His Life (Matthew 3-15)
- His Death (Matthew 16-27)
- His Resurrection (Matthew 28)

Theme of the Book of Matthew:

Matthew is primarily written to the Jewish people, so this book has a Jewish flavor to it. From the beginning we see its Jewish flavor as these genealogies prove that Jesus has the right to the throne of King David. If I was to give the Book of Matthew a title, it would be “The King has Come”, for the book emphasizes the kingship of Jesus Christ, and thus is the theme of this book:

(Matthew 27:11 NKJV) Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" So Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."

Shift in Teaching / Used to Draw Interest / Para – Alongside = Ballo – to Cast / Story+Truth

Here in chapter 13 we see a change in Jesus’ teaching, as He will begin to teach in parables because of the resistance and rejection that is coming against and upon Him. The use of parables was the way people communicated when they wanted to arouse curiosity and excite interest. They wouldn’t use guitars or humor, but rather they would use parables—little stories with big messages. The word “parable” comes from parable in Greek.

- The Greek word “para” means “alongside,”
- While the Greek word “ballo” means “to cast, or to throw.”

Thus, the word “parable” means “casting alongside.” Parabolic teaching places a story alongside a truth or a principle (in these cases a story alongside a spiritual truth). As you study parables, realize this: The lost and the lazy will not understand them, but for those who are interested in truth, they are wonderfully illuminating.

7 Parables

There are 7 kingdom parables (“*the kingdom of heaven is likened to*”) here in Matthew 13, keeping along with the use of the number 7 we see so much through this NT. Paul wrote to 7 Churches, and in Revelation there were 7 churches, so we continue to see the number 7 (which represents completeness in the Scriptures) being woven throughout the Scriptures. I like those things for they show to me the divine inspiration of the Scriptures:

1. Parable of the Wheat and Tares (13:24-30) / 13:36-43)
2. Parable of the Mustard Seed (13:31-32)
3. Parable of the Leaven (13:33)
4. Parable of the Hidden Treasure (13:44)
5. Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (13:45-46)
6. Parable of the Fishing Net (13:47-50)
7. Parable of the Householder (13:51-54)

Theme / Your Value – Not Blanket Statement / Separation at End / Don’t Be Satisfied

The theme in our passage today is that you are treasured. Jesus will speak of your value, a value so great that He would be willing to lay down His life for you. However He will make it clear that salvation, His sacrifice, is not a blanketing statement. That although God so loved the world that whomsoever should believe in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life; He shows through these parables that not all will believe and receive, and they shall be separated from Him (as He enforces through the parable of the Fishnet and the separating of the good fish and the bad fish). But Jesus gives words of power and opportunity as He closes out this dissertation on the Kingdom Parables but encourages us to not be satisfied with just being saved, and He gives a call to live out and apply faith in our lives so we can see His working on our life, today, not just what He did 2000 years ago on the cross:

(John 3:16 NKJV) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

(John 3:17 NKJV) "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

(John 3:18 NKJV) "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Parable of the Hidden Treasure (13:44)

(Matthew 13:44 NKJV) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

No Banks

In those days there were no banks; people literally hid their money and valuables in jars that they would bury underneath their homes or in their fields. They continually find these jars of treasures in excavations they do in the land today.

Maybe Heard this Version / Who sold All when Saved?

In this parable, a man finds some treasure and immediately buys the field in order to gain the treasure therein. You may have heard this parable taught like this: The treasure in the field is Jesus. We are the man. Like the man who found the treasure, when you discover Jesus, you should forsake everything to follow Him. But I believe this is an improper interpretation. I believe Jesus is the Man, and we are the treasure. Think about it. When you were saved, how many of you sold everything to follow Jesus? None of us did that. We were simply born again. How? Not by our will, not by our efforts, not even by our desire, but by God. God saved us; God elected us; God predestined us. We didn't sell anything to receive Him. He, on the other hand, gave His life to purchase us. Jesus left the throne, the right hand of the Father to come and redeem us, buy us back out of our slavery to sin.

(Ephesians 1:4 NKJV) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

(Ephesians 1:5 NKJV) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

(Ephesians 1:6 NKJV) to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Field – World / Adam forfeited to Satan / Adam became Servant / Jesus bought Field

Jesus told us back in verse 38 that the field is the world (we obviously didn't buy the world – Jesus did), so again we need to stay with Expository Constancy that that is what it means (remember Mark 4 – speaking of understanding the parables). Jesus said God gave Adam the authority, the opportunity, and the responsibility to oversee, tend, and rule this planet. But Satan came to Adam to tempt him, and Adam submitted to Satan when he ate of the forbidden fruit. The Bible says to whom you submit, of him you become the servant. When Adam submitted to Satan, he became the servant of Satan and handed to him the title deed, the authority, and the dominion of this planet. Thus, the ownership of the world changed hands—from God to man to Satan. Why was the field—the world—purchased? Did the Lord want another planet? No, He wanted the treasure that was buried in the world. He wanted you.

(Mark 4:13 NKJV) And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"

(Matthew 13:38 NKJV) "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.

Title Deed Redeemed in Revelation 5 / No Separate Wheat & Tares / Satan a Squatter

Will the title deed to earth remain in the devil's grasp forever? Revelation 5 gives us the answer that it won't. Jesus purchased the field (the world), the treasure is His, and at the appointed time He will take the world along with it as we saw in last weeks study with the wheat and the tares. The Lord says don't pick the tares out from among the wheat lest you harm the wheat, I will harvest them all together, and then we follow that through in Revelation that He will then make a new heaven and a new earth, that will be void of evil. So, what is it that we see today in our world, because Satan is a squatter, he is hanging on to what he has lost. He is still the god of this age, but soon his world will be cast into the furnace as we will see in just a few verses:

(Revelation 5:5 NKJV) But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

*(2 Corinthians 4:3 NKJV) But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
(2 Corinthians 4:4 NKJV) whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

Jesus the Treasure Hunter

The story kind of lends itself to sound as if a man was walking through a field and then accidentally found the treasure. I really don't see it that way, because I have the wealth of the other 31,101 verses (31,102 total). Indiana Jones is not original, but a mere shadow of the greatest treasure hunter of all times, Jesus Christ. Like any treasure hunter Jesus would have to leave his home and travel to a foreign land to get the treasure, for Jesus He left the throne room of heaven. There was a map, the title deed to the earth. There was evil men trying to steal his find, the evil one Satan and his henchmen. Like those Indiana Jones movies there were traps set all over for Him; Pharisees trying to trap Him with His words, people trying to push Him off of cliffs, and how about the trap set there on the cross. It wouldn't be an Indiana Jones movie without a dark tomb, and to the tomb He went, yet out of the tomb He came.....with treasure in hand! Jesus Christ willing to risk it all, pour it all out, to take get that treasure, to say lay that treasure at the Father's feet. Jesus didn't wear the debonair hat the Indiana Jones wore, but a hat of thorns; He had no whip, but took the whip – 40 lashes of it; Jesus Christ, the greatest treasure hunter of all times; and He says you are the greatest treasure in the world!

Feel like an Irritant / Philp 1:6

Maybe you don't feel like a treasure, maybe you feel like a little irritant to God. I just keep messing up, why bother, I don't feel like much of treasure, and the things I have done are anything but beautiful. Guess what, He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete, you pearl of great price: *(Philippians 1:6 NKJV) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (13:45-46)

(Matthew 13:45 NKJV) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, (Matthew 13:46 NKJV) "who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Pearl – Irritant of Sand / 7 years

A pearl begins as nothing more than an irritating grain of sand (or a parasite) stuck in the shell of an oyster. But the oyster surrounds the grain with a crystalline covering, which over years hardens and becomes precious and valuable. Those who study such things say the most beautiful pearls take seven years to form. During that seven-year period, the irritating piece of sand is hidden away—clothed and covered with beauty. That's us, gang—irritating pieces of sand. Yet, the Lord clothes us in His righteousness, and He will finish that pearl in 7 years (the number for completeness) . *(2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV) For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

You are the Pearl / Living Process

You are the pearl of great price. You have been clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ. And His righteousness is a thing of matchless beauty and unspeakable value in the eyes of God. A pearl is the only gem that is made through a living process. Diamonds, rubies, etc are all inorganic; they are simply there and cut out, but the pearl is a living process, and Jesus is forming His pearl (Philp 1:6), and in time it will be beautiful. But from His perspective, He already sees the finished product (back to Eph 1): *(Philippians 1:6 NKJV) being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*

*(Ephesians 1:4 NKJV) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,
(Ephesians 1:5 NKJV) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
(Ephesians 1:6 NKJV) to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.*

Not to be Cut / Beauty in Unity – All kinds of People / Enjoy Commonality – not Difference

A pearl is the only gem that does not need to be cut to bring out its beauty. Diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and amethysts—they all must be cut. But a pearl? If you even scratch it, you ruin it. So, too, in the church

there is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free. The church is one—one Lord, one baptism, and one faith. The church finds her beauty in her unity—the unity of all kinds of people brought together in Christ. Divisions only mar her, and quite frankly, that is the biggest problem with denominations. There can be a tendency in denominationalism to start dividing the body of Christ instead of enjoying our commonality in Christ.

(John 17:20 NKJV) "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

(John 17:21 NKJV) "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

(John 17:22 NKJV) "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

Perspiration ruins a Pearl / Don't try to Prove or Earn / Don't Sweat Out – Let it Out

There's one thing that will ruin a pearl. It's perspiration. So, too, one thing will ruin your beauty in the Lord. Perspiring, sweating, or trying to prove you are worthy of His blessing. Trying to prove "it's my spirituality, my energy, my togetherness that makes me so wonderful." No, the pearl is destroyed, eaten away, decayed by sweat. What you need is not to sweat it out, but just let it out. Release praise, thanksgiving, appreciation, and adoration, saying, "Thank You, Lord, for seeing me as a pearl. I'm not going to try to earn it, nor add to it. I don't even understand it. But I am forever grateful." Be a pearl for His glory.

Parable of the Fishing Net (13:47-50)

(Matthew 13:47 NKJV) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

(Matthew 13:48 NKJV) "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

(Matthew 13:49 NKJV) "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,

(Matthew 13:50 NKJV) "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

3rd Illustration / Some Good – Some Bad

The third illustration Jesus gave His disciples concerning the kingdom is that of a fisherman hauling in a great catch. In the net, there are some edible fish and some terrible fish.

Jesus tells it Like it Is / Treasures with Warning / Wheat – Tares / Mustard / Hypocrites

Jesus is telling it like it is. He tells the beautiful stories of His heart for us, that we are treasures and we are jewels to Him. But at the same He gives stern warning that there will be a gathering in of the just and the unjust. Tares will grow with the wheat, the mustard seed depicts abnormal growth of the church and that leaven and sin will be in the church along with the pearls and treasure. Jesus tells us the church won't be perfect. People say the church is full of hypocrites and they think they are prophet or something. Jesus said that is how it will be, they aren't saying something new. But Jesus said don't try to pick the tares out from the wheat, don't try to sort out the good fishes from the stinky fishes, He said He will take care of that in end.

There is Separation to Come / Churches Afraid to Tell That / Margaritaville

There is a separation that is to come. Today more so than ever churches and pastors are more afraid to teach on hell and sin, but Jesus tells it like it is, and so too much we. I was entertaining myself and said now if I wanted to just make people feel good, tell them what would they like to hear how would I have taught this message today. I think I would have camped out on the pearl of great price. Do you know the pronunciation for the word pearl in the Greek? It is "margarites, mar-gar-ee'-tace" (where we get the word margarita). Oh boy, it is margaritaville, let's play some Jimmy Buffet music, and celebrate, for life is one big party. That will grow a church, or should I say a large mustard tree with birds building nest in it. If things don't work out here for me, I'm going to go to one of the churches up the road; they have a men's fellowship where the guys get together and smoke cigars and drink brandy. I heard the church had to get a new building due to all the people coming.

Jesus tells it Like it Is / Teach the Word – Context 4 Soils

I don't think Jesus is telling me to have brandy and cigar fellowships. Jesus tells it like it is; what I hear Him telling me to do, tell us to do, is to teach the word. Cast the seed and let the seed that is genetically pre-programmed to produce fruit do its work. Everything we are studying is in the context of the 4 types of soil, and only that one soil produces fruit 30-60-100, and it all comes from the Seed (the Word of God) *(Matthew 13:23 NKJV) "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

And, verse 51, dig out the treasure.....

Parable of the Householder (13:51-52)

(Matthew 13:51 NKJV) Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

(Matthew 13:52 NKJV) Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Doubt Understood All / Antiques – Spices / Wise - Understand Both

I doubt they understood all, I think they were so blown away by all these sayings they are just shaking their heads in agreement. Jesus gives this last kingdom parable by saying that the homeowner is diversified in his wealth. He has some antiques, but he also has some spices and furs, not all his wealth is in one place. If all his wealth was in antiques, he may find himself having nothing to barter with in a drought or siege. If all his wealth is in the spices or furs, he could find himself with nothing to barter with if animals or weather destroy his spices or fur in the normal times. Jesus is saying the wise person in the kingdom has his understanding in both the old things (the Old Testament Scriptures) and the new things (the teachings of the New Covenant, which we call the New Testament).

Scribes originally Truth Seekers – Teachers / Be like Scribe – OT & NT

The scribes (the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures), you see, were not originally as off the wall as we think of them today. Originally, in the days when Ezra brought a group of exiled Jews back to Jerusalem to rebuild the city after the captivity, the purpose of the scribes was to teach truth. Initially, the scribes were great seekers and teachers of truth. And Jesus is here saying, "You should be like scribes—drawing from the Old Testament and from the New Covenant."

Stuck in Old – Miss the Present / Only New – Miss the History

If we get stuck in the old and are not open to what the Lord is doing presently, we'll miss what the Lord is doing creatively in this day. But if we're only into the new and fail to draw from our history and heritage, we'll become spiritual lightweights. Jesus said the one who receives from both old and new will be a rich man.

OT loaded Teaching of the Parables / 4 Soils – Amos / Treasure – Adam - Prop / Pearl - Gentiles

The Old Testament is loaded with teachings and living examples of all the parables we have just read. I think of Amos when I think of the parable of the 4 soils, as the Lord says there will be a famine in the land, not of bread but the hearing of the Word of God. As I think of the treasure in the field, I think of God forming Adam in the garden, man his crowning jewel, His treasure of this world. When I think of the pearl, I think of all the prophecies in the OT that speak of Jesus giving Himself as the ultimate sacrifice (Psalm 22). By the way, the pearl wasn't a cherished jewel of the Jewish people, probably because it came from a shellfish which was not part of their dietary law (Lev 11:9-10), so the pearl is a great picture of God's promise to that the Gentiles would be part of the kingdom, and there are many a verses that declare they would in the OT. By the way again, although the grain of sand is the most viewed approach of how a pearl is made, the encyclopedia also says that a pearl is made when the tissue of the oyster is damaged by a foreign object, and the oyster starts coating the wound with its crystal which eventually turns into a pearl. Jesus pierced by the foreign object, the nail, and His healing process produces the church, you and I.

(Amos 8:11 NKJV) "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD."

(Genesis 2:7 NKJV) And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

(Psalms 22:16 NKJV) For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet;

Important Old & New /

Jesus is saying how important that we dig into both the Old and New. Study mostly in the OT and a person can find themselves seeing a God of wrath, of rules and regulation. Study only the NT and a person can find themselves seeing a God of grace and missing His holiness. Jesus says a wise homebuilder studies and draws truth from both.

Stale Christians / Saved & Stopped / Treasure – Revealed / Why we do Missions

But that point beyond just the Word of God, I see one of the saddest application of this passage in many Christians today; that is, they are just living in the past, they are antiques; their whole Christian experience and life is that they are saved; they don't move on, they don't go on to experience new things of God. They become a Christian antique, stale and dusty. Jesus says the wise homebuilder moves on beyond salvation, and seeks new (fresh) application for today. Alright I am saved, I am a tremendous treasure to God, now what does He want to do in me today, what does He want to do with me today. God bought the treasure to reveal the treasure, to enjoy the treasure, so that it wouldn't be hidden away. We do missions not just to seek and save the lost, but to keep ourselves from becoming stale. Retreats, conferences, home fellowships, soup kitchens, teaching children's church, prayer meetings, all such things so we don't get stale, so we can let God impart new and fresh truths and applications into our lives.

Always be Looking for Jesus / Dig Deeper – Reach Higher / Stop being Satisfied / Salvation End

Always be a man or woman that is looking for Jesus, and what Jesus has done, and is currently doing. Christian dig deeper, reach higher, go further. Christian don't be, or stop being, satisfied where you are at in Christ. Stop being satisfied that you are saved. Salvation is just the beginning, it is not the end. The Lord is making a clear call to stop living in the past, to be seeking out the new, what He is presently doing.

You are a treasure, a precious jewel, and you have been bought with a tremendous price. Cherish it, live it!

Praying the Tabernacle

Life of the King – Parables / But can do No Mighty Works

We are studying through the life of Jesus, the King has come. We have finished the Kingdom parables of what the Kingdom of Heaven will be. Now we close out chapter 13 with Jesus going back to His hometown of Nazareth, andHim not being able to do many mighty works because of their unbelief.

(Matthew 13:53 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.

(Matthew 13:54 NKJV) And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?"

(Matthew 13:55 NKJV) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

(Matthew 13:56 NKJV) "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

(Matthew 13:57 NKJV) So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

(Matthew 13:58 NKJV) Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Hometown / Do You Need Mighty Work / Teach us to Pray

Next week we will break this passage down verse-by-verse, and we will look at a people's unbelief and how Jesus could do no mighty work in not just His hometown, but their hometown, their homes, the very places they lived and worked, and raised their kids. May I ask you, does your home need a mighty work, maybe even a miracle? Well, there was a place Jesus was working, and people saw it, and they wanted it for their home, for themselves. A group of them came to Jesus one day and said, Lord teach us to pray. These men saw that there was some connection between Jesus' mighty working, and His intimate prayer with the Father. They never asked Him, Lord teach us how to multiply the loaves, or raise the dead, heal the leper, or walk on water, rather they said Lord teach us to pray. They knew His power, His mighty works came through those times of intimacy with the Father, and they knew if we can pray, we can do all those other things.

Luke 11:1-4 (KJV) And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. [2] And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. [3] Give us day by day our daily bread. [4] And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Model / A-C-T-S / Old & New

Jesus gave them a model for prayer. He gave them a model not a formula. A model that shows the elements of prayer; Acknowledgment of who God is, Confession of Sin, Thanksgiving for His goodness, and Supplication which is the requesting of His move in our life. Well we were told last week that the wise householder has both old and new treasures, and so we will look an old treasure for a prayer model found in the Old Testament:

(Matthew 13:52 NKJV) Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Exodus / Meeting Place – Shekinah Glory / Every Piece – Picture of Jesus

In our study over the last few months we have had a wonderful look at the Tabernacle and the Priesthood that God had established for His children, the Nation of Israel. The Tabernacle (also called the Place of Meeting), was where God met with His people, it was there in the Holy of Holies that the Shekinah Glory of God rested (easy to see the analogy of Meeting Place and Prayer). As we have studied, every piece, every detail was and is a picture, an illustration of Jesus Christ. Each piece we studied had certain and specific application for us as followers of Him. Each study we took the time to recap the pieces of the Tabernacle, to revisit them in our memories, so that we would have the Tabernacle locked into our minds, so that we might apply it in this wonderful way tonight, and that is to "pray the Tabernacle". Each piece had a spiritual truth and application to it, and therefore it makes for a wonderful spiritual prayer, for anytime you pray the "Word" you can be sure that His word will not return void. The Word is pre-programmed to produce fruit as we studied in Matthew 13:1-13.

(Isaiah 55:11 NKJV) So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Chp 13 – Truths Alongside Illustration / Rom 15

We have been reading and studying in chapter 13 of how Jesus would take a spiritual truth and cast it alongside of an illustration, and God has done the same for us with every piece of the Tabernacle, as each piece points to Jesus, and a spiritual truth about Him, and a spiritual application for us. Romans 14: says all these things written in the OT were for our learning;

Romans 15:4 (KJV) For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

Anything Like Me – Hard to Stay Focused

And, if you are anything like me, sometimes I have a very hard time staying focused on prayer, as my mind wanders, my zeal wanes; I have found that praying the Tabernacle keeps me focused, and keeps my prayers direct. So in this study we will “Pray the Tabernacle”.

Pray the Tabernacle Outline

~The Gate/Way into the Tabernacle

~The Courtyard

~The Bronze Altar

~The Bronze Laver

~The Gate/Way into the Holy Place

~The Golden Lampstand

~The Table of Showbread

~The Altar of Incense

~The Veil/Way into the Holy of Holies

~The Ark of the Covenant

~The Jar of Manna

~Aaron's Rod that Budded

~The 10 Commandments

~The Shekinah Glory of God

1.) The Gate/Way into the Tabernacle

There was only one gate/way into the courtyard of the tabernacle, and we see the picture that Jesus is the Gate. We will see three gates, and each gate will be made of the same material and coloring. Jesus is the door, and He is the only way to God.

John 10:9 (KJV) I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Enter with Thanksgiving / A Grateful Person / Heaviness Lifted

Psalm 100 says that we are to enter His gates with thanksgiving. You see when we start off prayer remembering all that He has done for us, we will find ourselves being more confident of the present and the future. What He has done in the past is a demonstration of what He will do in the future. Also, a grateful person, will be a full person. When I dwell on what He has done, what He has given me, I will find the heaviness and depression lifting. I will not be running into prayer to only talk about what I don't presently have, which can cause depression if that is all we see.

Psalm 100:4 (KJV) Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

2.) The Courtyard / Place of Praise

Through the gate and into the courtyard, and Psalm 100 says to enter into the courtyard with praise. After the gate I am keenly aware of what He has done for me, now I will spend time thinking on who He is. When I dwell on all that He is, when it comes to supplication I will have the confidence in knowing that He is able, and that He cares about my every detail and need. This is a time to spend just worshipping Him. Lift your voice up to Him and dwell on His holiness, His beauty, His majesty, His might and power. How often it is heard that I find myself just breaking forth in spontaneous worship, a song come to mind and I sing it aloud. Guess what, heaviness and depression, fleeing away. Confidence and strength filling my inner man

Psalm 100:4 (KJV) Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

3.) The Bronze Altar / Place of Sacrifice

Immediately upon entry into the courtyard each person would be face-to-face with the bronze altar, the place of sacrifice, and the statement is made that without the shedding of innocent blood man cannot approach the Holy God. Again what a place of remembrance. That He considers me such a treasure that He would sell it all to purchase me back. I am in a place of love here at the Bronze Altar.

Hebrews 9:22 (KJV) And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

Matthew 13:44 (KJV) Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Some Days – As Far Get

Some days this is as far as I get, and then it is time to go to work. That is alright I have found, it is sufficient for the day, for I find myself walking in a place of peace and assurance, that He loves me, and that is enough for me.

4.) The Bronze Laver / Cleansing – Confession / Psalm 119 / James - Mirror

Beyond that would be the bronze laver, a place of washing for the High priest before entry into the service of the Lord. The washing is a place of cleansing; it is a place of confession. The Psalmist asks, how can a man cleanse his way, then he answers according to your word. God's word reveals what needs to be cleansed, confessed. Confession means to agree with, and we have to know His Word (which is His Will) in order to know what to agree with. James says God's Word is a mirror. Every morning we look in a mirror (some more than others) on what needs to be fixed up, adjusted before we take off for the day. Here, be specific about your confession, agree with God and say lets fix this now.

(Psalms 119:9 NKJV) How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

(Ephesians 5:25 NKJV) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, (Ephesians 5:26 NKJV) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

(John 15:3 NKJV) "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

(James 1:23 NIV) Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror

5.) The Gate/Way into the Holy Place

Then, the gate/way into the tabernacle itself, into the first of two rooms, the Holy place. Again just a brief reminder, but an important reminder, it is all about Jesus. Going through the gates always brings us back to Jesus, and off of ourselves.

(John 10:9 NKJV) "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.

6.) The Golden Lampstand

Once in, to the left would be the Golden Lampstand, Jesus the Light of the World and we His Light reflectors. The make-up of this Lampstand was that there was one main branch, and six branches coming off the main shaft. Those 6 branches all at lower, and because they did, they illuminated the main branch. What a beautiful picture of us, we are the Light of the World, as we reflect His glory:

(John 8:12 NKJV) Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Matthew 5:16 (KJV) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Pray to be the Light / Missionaries

It is here that I ask the Lord for that day to make be shine and be the light of the world, at work, at play, in my home. I also take the time here to pray for certain missionaries the Lord has laid on my heart. I pray for them as they are the Light of the World.

7.) The Table of Showbread / Beauty in Unity

To the right was the Table of Showbread, Jesus' body broken for us, and 12 loaves on that table, yet all one body. This is a place that I pray for the unity in the church. Within our church specifically, and within the body of Christ corporately. I may not overcome denominationalism by my prayers, but in my prayers denominationalism will not overcome me. The beauty is in the unity; may we be a people that rejoice in

our commonality, and not bicker over the differences. There is too much division in the body of Christ, and how we need to make this part of our prayer life:

(John 17:20 NKJV) "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

(John 17:21 NKJV) "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

(John 17:22 NKJV) "And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

8.) The Altar of Incense / Pray Family - Enemies

Then immediately in front of the next gate/way/door into the Holy of Holies was the Altar of Incense (which speaks of prayer). This is the place I go to for intercessory prayer. I pray for others specifically. And their needs. I pray for my family, I pray for the church, unbelievers, and yes even my enemies as Jesus said too, for as I pray for them my heart becomes softened to them and I am less critical of them, and many times actually see their side of why they are as they are.

(Revelation 8:3 NKJV) Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

(Revelation 8:4 NKJV) And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand.

(Psalms 141:2 NKJV) Let my prayer be set before You as incense, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

9.) The Veil/Way into the Holy of Holies

Once again, back to Jesus. This model is beautiful because it always brings me back to Jesus, and He is the one that has the power to do the mighty works. He is the one that loves me enough to give it all for me. If God is for me, than who can be against me. The High Priest would only go into the Holy of Holies once a year, and that only on the Day of Atonement. Yet God says to us to boldly enter into, to come and come as often as you like:

Romans 8:31 (KJV) What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Hebrews 4:16 (KJV) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

10.) The Ark of the Covenant / Jar – Rod - Law

Beyond that door/veil, into the Holy of Holies was the Ark of the Covenant, with the Mercy Seat above the ark, and inside the Ark was a jar of Manna, Aaron's rod that had budded, and the 10 Commandments.

11.) The Jar of Manna / Daily Provision

The Jar of Manna represented God's provision for the children of Israel in their wilderness journey as he rained manna from heaven every morning. It is here that I ask God to meet my daily provision.

13.) Aaron's Rod that Budded / Numbers 17 / We all have a Ministry

Also in the Ark of the Covenant was Aarons Rod that had budded. The story is told in Numbers 17 of how people questioned if Aaron should lead, and God endorsed Aarons ministry by saying the rod that buds is the leader I have chosen. We all have a ministry God has called us to. Dad's, you are the Pastor of your home. Now I assume you assume that I am praying for this church, its directions and its people. You expect that of me, for how can I lead if I am not seeking the Lords will for the church and His power to work in it. What you expect of me as pastor of this church is the same expectation for you fathers. You are the pastors of your home, you have a calling and a responsibility; you need to come into the Holy of Holies and seek the Lord for His will for your family, and His power to work in it. Mothers, you are the Associate pastors of the home, and notice I didn't say assistant pastors. An assistant just runs around doing what the pastor tell them to do. But the Associate Pastor is the one that runs the church when the Pastor is gone, is the one that steps in when the pastor is away. We all have a ministry, right there in our home; and then there are those ministries as teachers in Sunday School, worship, soup kitchen, whatever and wherever it may be, and we need to pray for the ministry God has given us. If you don't have one, then ask the Lord why that is.....you will need to know that answer, and you may not like what He says.

14.) The 10 Commandments

Here is the place I see the Law, the very same Law that condemned me, but now it is covered by the Mercy Seat. Here is where I pray the continual balance in my life between the Holy God and the Gracious loving God. Again, the wise household has treasures from both the old and the new. We need

to live in the balance of holiness and love. Many a Christians live lopsided in the holiness part, and they have no joy in their life, continually living in guilt and shame for their failures. Others along the same make sure that no one else has joy as they continually bring the Law down on those around them. Others, they live lopsided in the grace and mercy, and they are in just a bad position because they are not living in holiness, no fear of the Lord, no respect for His Word, and they are a slave to their so-called freedom, miserable because they reap what they sow. We need to live in that balance; as we read the Word, His will for our lives (after our prayer or later in the day), we read it in light how can I become more like you, holiness is your call for all men (Be Holy as I am Holy). Yet we live in the balance that we are a work in process (and so are others), and we know that He who began a good work will be faithful to complete it. This will be the balance that we read our Bibles that day, and interact with those around us. *Leviticus 20:7 (KJV) Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God.*

1 Peter 1:15-16 (KJV) But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; [16] Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Phillip. 1:6 (KJV) Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

~The Shekinah Glory of God

As I spend time in the Tabernacle, praying through the Tabernacle, just walking through it, what do I find there? I find myself in the presence of the Shekinah Glory, the presence and fellowship with Him. So try it, see if you don't find the same today!

Unbelief: It's Cause and Cure

Matthew 13:53-58

Life of the King – Parables / But can do No Mighty Works

We are studying through the life of Jesus, the King has come. We have finished the Kingdom parables of what the Kingdom of Heaven will be. Now we close out chapter 13 with Jesus going back to His hometown of Nazareth, andHim not being able to do many mighty works because of their unbelief.

(Matthew 13:53 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.

(Matthew 13:54 NKJV) And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?"

(Matthew 13:55 NKJV) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

(Matthew 13:56 NKJV) "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

(Matthew 13:57 NKJV) So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

(Matthew 13:58 NKJV) Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Presenting Powerful Teaching / Travels 20 Miles – Hometown / Ends Chapter – No Mighty

After presenting a powerful teaching to His disciples concerning the kingdom, Jesus left Galilee and traveled twenty miles west—home to Nazareth. In Nazareth, unbelief filled the hearts of His countrymen. Matthew ends this chapter saying of Jesus, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

Mark's Gospel – Could Do No Mighty Works – Not would Do

In recording the same incident, Mark takes it a step further when he writes, "And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief." It is not simply that Jesus would do no mighty works in Nazareth. Mark tells us He could do no mighty works there.

Mark 6:4 - 5 (NKJV) *⁴But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." ⁵Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.*

Unbelief Limited / Miracle in Home / This Study - 3 Affects – 3 Cures

Their unbelief limited what He could do. How sad that right there in their own backyard, their own communities, their own homes, their own families, the very place they needed the miracles and mighty works of God, their unbelief limited what He could do for them. Is your home, your family, maybe your marriage, your children, your community in need of a mighty work of God, well in this passage of Scripture the Lord will give us 3 affects of unbelief, but we will also glean from the scriptures 3 cures for unbelief.

3 Affects of Unbelief

- Unbelief blinds your eyes, and you become skeptical.
- Unbelief poisons your heart, and you become cynical.
- Unbelief robs your joy, and you become sterile.

Unbelief blinds your eyes, and you become skeptical.

First, look with me at the way unbelief blinds eyes.

(Matthew 13:54 NKJV) And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?"

Miracles Happening Everywhere / Blinded to the Obvious

Miracles were happening—the dead were raised, the lame were walking, the blind were seeing, the deaf were hearing. It was obvious God was working. But unbelief blinds eyes to the obvious. People are blinded to the great works of God:

Still Blinded Today / Birds Migrating – Baby Nursing / Creation Random Explosion / Mutants

People are still blinded today. Blinded by so-called science, evolution! Tell me evolution who taught the birds to fly south, who taught herds in Africa to migrate south towards the water in the summer droughts, who teaches the flowers to bloom in spring and not December, who taught my baby who had to spend the first 2 weeks of his life in an incubator, being feed through a tube, yet when his mother would hold him he would turn to her breast to feed, though never had he been breast fed. If a person was to be completely honest they would have to agree, the fact that all this around us happened by chance, some random explosion in the galaxy and here we are, after million and million of years of mutations here we are, is a real stretch. Now that is a statement of faith if they are to be honest. By the way, 99.99% of all mutations are harmful, or degenerating, cancerous if you will, not advancing and strengthening, yet men today say that is how man evolved. God declares in His Word that creation speaks of His eternal Godhead, and that man is without excuse.

Rom 1:20 - 23 (NKJV) ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, ²¹because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

Science Based on Facts

There was a time when science was based on factual evidence, something you could prove, but today it is based many times on nothingness. It can seem so intimidating when they pour all their so-called Scientific Facts on us.

(1 Timothy 6:20 KJV) O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

1 Tim 6:20 - 21 (NKJV) ²⁰O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—²¹by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen.

College Education

I'm reminded of the story of the young man who came home from his first semester in college at a big city university, his dad, a blue-collar worker, says how was it son, oh it was great dad we are learning so many things. As the son goes on the dad could detect a tone and attitude that his son was talking down to him because his father never went to college. As the son went on he said dad, science fascinates me, we created an acid in the lab that can eat through anything, and dad we created that right in our very lab he says pridefully. Thinking he just proved he is now the smart one of the family and that his father is just a hunky from the steel mills he sits down in front of his father with the "what do you think of that look". The dad shakes his head, that's good son, so what do you keep it in?

Cross-Examined by the Obvious

Evolution, it looks so solid, so sure of itself, until it cross-examined by the obvious. This study will look at some of the obvious errors of science, the majors contradictions this evolution theory has against the facts of science.

Evolution – Replacement to Creation / Theory – became Law

Evolution comes in with all its facts, now and then they may confess it is just a theory, but go into the high schools and universities and you don't hear them teaching it as an alternative to Creation, but in replacement of Creation.

World Based on 2 Laws / Energy Building Block of Universe

This whole world is energy, therefore all Science is based on 2 Laws. If you violate any one of these law, then your theory has to be thrown out. Because without energy, there is no power to perform anything. Energy is the building block of the Universe.

So we will take an obvious look at these Laws and what they mean to Evolution.

The First Law of Thermodynamics

The First Law of Thermodynamics is known as the “Law of Energy Conservation”. It states that energy cannot be created nor destroyed; it can only change from one form to another. Simply meaning there is no new energy being created.

Energy for Big Bang

For the Evolution Theory the question has to be asked if energy cannot be created nor destroyed, then where did the energy come for the “Big Bang.”

Genesis Account ----Bara/Asah

Interesting, in Genesis God uses two different words for create. One word is to create out of nothing; the other is to create out of existing substance.

(Genesis 1:1 KJV) In the beginning God created (bara) the heaven and the earth.

Bara – means to create out of nothing

(Genesis 1:7 KJV) And God made (asah) the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

Asah – create from existing

How did Writer 4000yrs Ago – Know 1st Law

How did the writer of Genesis almost 4,000 years ago know the First Law of Thermodynamics.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

The Second Law of Thermodynamics is known as the “Law of Energy Decay.” Every system left to itself will move from order to disorder.

Examples

A few practical examples is that new car you paid 20,000\$ for five years doesn't look so new now does it. You that are 40, go look at your High School Class photo. Go look at your kids' room a day after you cleaned it.

Disorder cannot Evolve in Order / 1st Law Prevents Big Bang – 2nd Negates Evolution

The Second Law therefore concludes that disorder cannot evolve into order, neither can a simple structure evolve into a more complex one. The First Law of Thermodynamics prevents a “Big Bang” from happening from nothing, and the Second Law prevents that bang (which never could have happened) from ever organizing into the complex ordered system we call our universe.

Scriptures

(Isaiah 51:6 KJV) Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment,

(Matthew 24:35 KJV) Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

(Psalms 102:25 NKJV) Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.

(Psalms 102:26 NKJV) They will perish, but You will endure; Yes, they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will change them, And they will be changed.

(Psalms 102:27 NKJV) But You are the same, And Your years will have no end.

Go On-line for Rest of Notes

Now by violating these two laws there is nothing left to build the Evolution Theory, but we might as well dispel some other key points, so go on-line and see our full study notes on Evolution verses Creation.

Aprils Fool

A scripture for today, April 1st,

Psa 14:1 (NKJV) *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, They have done abominable works, There is none who does good.*

Unbelief poisons your heart, and you become cynical.

Second, notice not only the blindness of their eyes, which resulted in skepticism, but the poison in their hearts, which resulted in cynicism.

(Matthew 13:55 NKJV) "Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?"

(Matthew 13:56 NKJV) "And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?"

(Matthew 13:57 NKJV) So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house."

Won't Believe – Poisoned Towards Family of God

When a person will not believe, his heart will inevitably become poisoned toward the family of God.

His Dad's a Carpenter – No Rabbi / We heard about Mary

"Isn't His dad a carpenter—just an ordinary carpenter? He's not a scholar or a rabbi, a mystic or a miracle worker. We know His dad; he's the carpenter. And Mary? We've heard about her problem, She was pregnant before she got married."

Unbeliever – will Attach Family of God / Point out Their Problem / Facts may be Wrong

You see, the unbeliever, or the believer that does not want to believe the wonderful work God is doing in someone's life, or in that place, will always attack the family of God. His heart will become poisoned as he points out the problems of fallen Christian pastors or this Christian neighbor. He will point out problems in the family, even though, like those in Nazareth, ***his facts may be wrong***. Since no one—not even the most avowed atheist or skeptical cynic—has ever been able to find one single fault with Christ (as Pilate could not), he or she will attack His family. "Can you believe what a joke that minister on TV is?" "Look at those hypocrites sitting in church." "Some Christian she is."

Luke 23:4 (KJV) *Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.*

Hearts become Cynical - Hardened

And their hearts become cynical, critical, hardened, and bitter.

Our Response to the Hypocrites

By the way, we hear it all the time, well I can't believe, you Christians are all a bunch of hypocrites, what about that Ted Haggard guy, and the Jimmy Bakers. Hey just tell them, God's word is true, judgment does begin in the house of the Lord. God will bust, God will chasten and discipline those who are His, and publicly and very humiliating if they won't repent. These people who fall publicly don't make me retreat on my faith, but stand more firm, the Word of God is true. So true, that it speaks to my heart, nor could I ever get away with anything, because I know I am His, and He will bring His discipline upon me. The person that needs to be afraid is the one that can continue on in his hypocrisy, and not be disciplined, for I would be wondering if I truly am in the "hose of the Lord".

1 Pet 4:17 - 19 (KJV) *¹⁷For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? ¹⁸And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? ¹⁹Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

Unbelief robs your joy, and you become sterile.

Third, unbelief robs you of your joy.

(Matthew 13:58 NKJV) Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Jesus would have Healed Many / God will not Work Outside Area of Faith / Miracles Missing

When Jesus went to His hometown, He would have healed many if only they would have believed. Great joy would have filled that little hamlet of Nazareth. But God will not work outside the arena of faith. God has chosen to limit Himself in certain ways. And because they didn't believe, He couldn't work. As a result, miracles were missing. Healings weren't happening. Joy wasn't exploding.

Heb 11:6 (NKJV) *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

How Many Lives & Homes

Sadly, how many lives and homes are missing the miracle, the mighty working, the joy of God moving in their lives because of unbelief

Unbelief – Blinds – Poisons – Robs / Antidote – That we Might not Limit Him

Unbelief, It blinds your eyes; it poisons your heart; it steals your joy. What is the antidote for unbelief? What would the Great Physician prescribe to you and to me who, although we are believers in Jesus, are also guilty of limiting Him?

The Antidote for Unbelief

1.) Offer Prayer to God

First, the antidote for the unbelief, which results in blinded eyes, is simply to offer prayer to God. Paul did this when, in Ephesians 1, he prayed for the believers at Ephesus—that their eyes might be enlightened. You see, faith is not blind. Faith sees what unbelief never will. Paul prayed that people would see the power of God in their lives, that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power available for us today:

Eph 1:16 - 23 (NKJV) *¹⁶do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²²And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Hence Last Study on Prayer / I See Him / His Word Comes Through

Hence our last study we had on prayer, praying the Tabernacle. I personally believe that our faith will be limited to our prayer life. I have found personally in my life that it is during those times of prayers, as I remember who Jesus is, the power of my God, that I find my faith strengthen to believe that he is more than able to do the things I am asking Him to do. It is during those times of prayer, or the prayer that starts my day in communing with Him and it carries throughout the day, and a word comes in that time of communion, a passage of Scripture that is my situation. That Scripture gives me the faith to stand, or to go, to speak or to be quiet, whatever the Lord speaks to me. For faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God:

Rom 10:17 (NKJV) *¹⁷So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Faith Sees what Unbelief Can't

Faith sees what unbelief never will.

Remember Story of Elisha in 2 Kings 6

I am reminded of the story of Elisha in 2 Kings 6. As the Syrians waged war against the Jews, the king of Syria set an ambush for the Israelites. Elisha sent word to the king of Israel, saying, "Don't go through that pass. You'll walk into a Syrian ambush." The king of Syria then set a second ambush, and again the Lord spoke to Elisha the prophet. Finally, the king of Syria said, "Every time we set up an ambush, Israel suddenly changes directions to avoid it. Someone is spying, and I want his head." One of his advisers said, "King, there's no spy in our midst. There's a prophet in their land. His name is Elisha. He knows everything you say—even what you say in your bedchamber." "Where is this man Elisha?" barked the

king. "In Dothan," answered his advisers. That same night, the Syrians surrounded the city of Dothan with soldiers, chariots, and armaments. The next morning, when Elisha's servant, Gehazi, woke up, he ran to his master, shouting, "Master! We're surrounded! We're through! We're history!" And Elisha answered

2 Kin 6:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Lord Surrounded Them / Faith Sees what Unbelief Can't

The Lord had surrounded those who had surrounded them, and the Lord was much mightier. Elisha wasn't worried because faith sees what unbelief never will. A word for us, but parents a word for us to pray for our children, that their eyes will be opened to see the mighty working of the Lord.

2.) See People in God

Second, the antidote for the unbelief that results in a bitter heart is to see people in God.

See People in God

Paul said, "I know no man after the flesh" (2 Corinthians 5:16). In other words, "I see people in Christ—washed in His blood, robed in His righteousness. That's the way I choose to see people."

2 Cor 5:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

Hence prayer Last Week / See People in God – Less Critical / Just Embrace Them

Hence last weeks study on prayer, we prayed at the Table of Showbread, for there is beauty in unity, and we prayed for our enemies at the Altar of Incense. When you see people in God, suddenly you're not so cynical. You can just embrace, love, and enjoy them.

Can I Point that Out / A False Sense of Familiarity – Kept from Receiving

Can I point that out to you about that brother or sister sitting next to you, the people in this passage of Scripture today, they thought they knew Jesus, but they didn't. A false sense of familiarity kept them from receiving what He wanted to do in their midst. "Oh, we know Him. We know His father." No, they didn't. "We know His brothers." No, they were His half brothers. Jesus' neighbors failed to recognize Him because they thought they knew all about Him.

Prophet without Honor / Same for Us – Think we Know Them

A prophet is not without honor in his hometown, and we feel like that with out family or friends who think we are out there, but we can be guilty of the same, the same holds true for us when, mistakenly thinking we know all about them, we fail to recognize His presence in our midst through our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

When Talk to Brother – Jesus Using Them / Don't Mistake Them / Wonderful when Look Jesus

Can I encourage you to be open to the brother who talks with you after the service, to the sister who comes into your shop tomorrow. Jesus may be using them in a very real sense. Don't make the mistake of saying, "I know him. The Lord could never use that guy!" or "I know more than she does. How could the Lord possibly use her to speak to me?" Wonderful things happen when you begin to say, "Lord, I'm looking for You. I believe You're going to work in my homeland in unexpected ways, at unexpected times, through unexpected people—all for Your glory."

3.) Speak the Promises of God

Third, to thwart the unbelief that robs you of joy, speak the promises of God.

Many Ways to Please – None Apart from Faith

There are many ways to please God—but not one apart from faith.

Heb 11:6 (NKJV) ⁶But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Faith Worked into by Word / Released by Spoken Word / Not Enough Quiet Internal / Via Mouth

Faith is worked into our lives by God's Word (Romans 10:17). It is released from our lives by our spoken word. It's not enough to have a quiet, internal faith. Faith is released via the mouth. Jesus said, "When you see an obstacle in front of you, a mountain looming before you, a problem facing you, say to the mountain, 'Be removed' and it shall be removed" (see Matthew 17:20).

Matt 17:20 - 21 (NKJV) ²⁰So Jesus said to them, *"Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. ²¹However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."*

Except with fasting and prayer.....hence back to our study on prayer!

Speak the Promises / Difficult Life – Problem Family – School / Jesus Desires to Work

Speak the promises of God. Scripture is packed with promises—over three thousand in number—a promise for every situation. Perhaps you have a difficulty in your life, a problem in your family, a hardship financially or vocationally, tough times in school or in friendship. Jesus desires to work in those situations. He really does. But we limit Him by unbelief.

Once Promise in Heart – Release it Via the Mouth / Speak out That which Worked In

God wants us to speak His promises because it's too easy for us to say, "Well, I've got some ideas and thoughts, some hopes and dreams, but I'm not going to go on record verbally lest I seem foolish." Once you have the promise of God in your heart, you need to release it via your mouth. Speak out that which has been worked in.

Phil 4:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Phil 4:13 (NKJV) ¹³I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Matt 28:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Psa 140:7 (NKJV) ⁷ O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation, You have covered my head in the day of battle.

Either Venture in Faith – or Vegetate / Grow in Faith as you Watch – Shrink into Churchianity

Either you will venture out in faith, or you will vegetate. Your Christian life will either grow in faith as you see wonderful things happen in your family, in your ministry, in your life personally, or you will shrink into a "church-ianity." God forbid. Where you believe, you know you are saved, but always afraid to step out and grab hold of all that God wants to do in your life.

Don't know your Need – Answer lies in Faithful One

I don't know what struggle you might have, what difficulty you might face, but I know where the answer lies. It lies in the Faithful One—Jesus Christ.

Begin to Venture Out – He want to Come into Your Nazareth – Do Mighty Work

Begin to venture out radically and watch what the Lord does joyfully. He wants to come into your Nazareth and do a mighty work.

Matthew 14

Satan's Trophy Room (14:1-12)

Beheading of John / Not so Much Warfare – God turning Low Points into Victories /

These verses give the account of the beheading of John the Baptist. This isn't a message so much on spiritual warfare, rather a message on turning defeats or low points into victories. This is message for you on taking your lowest moment or your greatest mistake – and letting God turn it into your greatest victory.

Whether – Sin/Tragedy/Circumstances / Feel it is Over – Complete Loss

Whether it is sin, tragedy or circumstances – there are moments in our life where we feel it's over, it is a complete loss, we can't go on.

- Maybe your marriage is over.
- Maybe through your own sin you have deeply hurt your family.
- Maybe through your self-desires for drinking or drugs you have made a mess of your life.
- Or maybe for you singles your desire for purity has been spoiled.
- Maybe through no fault of your own your unemployed.
- Or you have just been diagnosed with a serious illness and the future looks uncertain.
- Maybe, your lowest moment, is still yet future. Maybe for this nation, September 11th was only the beginning. If so then may today's message and words flood back you at that time.

What ever the case,

- you may feel you are just too beaten to get back up,
- you may feel you have blown it too bad to ever be used by God again,
- you may even feel like life isn't worth living anymore,

This Message for You / God wants to turn your Lowest Moments – Into Greatest Victories

Then this message is for you, for God wants to turn your lowest moments or greatest defeat, into **HIS** great victory.

*******God will tell you, "It's always too soon to quit."*******

Let's read these verses to refresh us of the story of John the Baptist.

(Matthew 14:1 NKJV) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus

(Matthew 14:2 NKJV) and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

(Matthew 14:3 NKJV) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

(Matthew 14:4 NKJV) Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

(Matthew 14:5 NKJV) And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

(Matthew 14:6 NKJV) But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.

(Matthew 14:7 NKJV) Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

(Matthew 14:8 NKJV) So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."

(Matthew 14:9 NKJV) And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her.

(Matthew 14:10 NKJV) So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.

(Matthew 14:11 NKJV) And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

(Matthew 14:12 NKJV) Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Let's get into the story, get some background, **and then watch God turn the tables on Satan**

(Matthew 14:1 NKJV) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus

(Matthew 14:2 NKJV) and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

(Matthew 14:3 NKJV) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

(Matthew 14:4 NKJV) Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

Married Brothers Wife / John called Sin - Sin

King Herod married his brother's wife. John called it for what it was – sin.

(Mark 6:17 NKJV) For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

(Mark 6:18 NKJV) For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

Obviously didn't Read the Books / Came on too Strong – Gain Confidence / John Called It

Obviously John didn't read "How to win friends and influence people" Ohh John you blew it, see you came on too strong. If only John could have been blessed with the wisdom we have learned in today's modern evangelism, he should have come to the evangelism seminar and learned how to witness. He should have made friends first, gained their confidence, had dinner with them, said you two make a cute couple. Then after awhile laid the gospel on them. John don't you know how much influence you could have on city by being seen with the King, you could be his spiritual advisor, and become famous and have a mighty ministry - John chose to call it sin, and ended up in jail.

(Matthew 14:5 NKJV) And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

Mark's Gospel – Held it Against Him / Get use to It – those who love their Sin

King Herod wanted to put him to death but was afraid of what the people would say. But, in Mark's gospel it says that Herodias held it against John for saying that they shouldn't be together. So here she fumed over this for weeks, months, maybe even years. "Held it against him"; It is a fact, get use to it, people will hold your witness against you. Those who love their sin will not like you for preaching the truth.

(Mark 6:19 NKJV) Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not;

Mark's Gospel – Herod knew John Holy / If People speak Evilly of You

In Mark's gospel it says that Herod knew John was a holy man. As much as Herod hated John's witness, he could lay no charge against him, he knew he was a just and holy man. If people speak evilly of you, let it be something they had to make up. Nothing hurts me more than when they don't have to lie. Oh Lord that the world would say I am a just and holy man, let our walk be a living testimony.

(Mark 6:20 NKJV) for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

(Matthew 14:6 NKJV) But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.

Mark's gospel – Opportune Time / Don't Fool Self – Satan has Patience / Keep Guard Up

Mark's gospel says at the opportune time. Don't fool yourself Christian, Satan has patience. Look, he waited for the opportune day, and then he struck. We as Christians can never let our guard down in prayer and the study of the Word, for Satan is always looking and waiting for that opportune time —and more time than not, it comes when we let our guard down. We have to continually be about our Father's business so we don't get caught with out guard down. Oh I'll just rest, miss church, skip devotions, I got so much to do. Satan will wait for you, just as he waited for John:

(Mark 6:21 NKJV) Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee.

(Matthew 14:7 NKJV) Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

Mark's Gospel – Half the Kingdom / Playboy nothing New / Control Flesh

Mark's gospel says he offered her up to half the kingdom. It must have been some dance, half the kingdom. Don't think that the Playboy channel is something new. Think about it, half the kingdom. Men, control the flesh, or the flesh will control you. I know many a men, saved or not, who have given up more than half the kingdom because they could not control their flesh. They lost and ruined their families, destroyed their kids, and lost jobs, all for a moments pleasure, reduced to a crust of bread, and Satan laughs. Lust will make you do foolish things – Herod offers something he later regrets.

(Mark 6:22 NKJV) And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you."

(Mark 6:23 NKJV) He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom."

(Matthew 14:8 NKJV) So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."

How bad Hate – Pass up Half Kingdom / People say witness too Strong / Faced Repentance - True
How bad did Herodias hate John the Baptist? So bad that she would pass up half the kingdom. Christian people will hate you for preaching the truth. Satan tells us that our witness is too strong if people are offended, but that is not true. When faced with repentance people will show their true heart. Their true heart may be hatred, guilt, or revenge. These feelings may lash out on you.

(Mark 6:24 NKJV) So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

(Mark 6:25 NKJV) Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

She a Pawn of Satan / Satan puts Pawns in Your Life

She was a pawn used by Satan. A pawn put in place that at an opportune time, Satan would strike. Satan puts pawns in your life, people he hopes to work through so as to get to you.

A pawn may be:

- that pretty girl at work who always gives special attention to you,
- or Joe Buffed at the gym, even though you are married.
- Or maybe that boss who will just make your life miserable, so miserable you take it home to your family.
- Or that friend that calls you for just that one beer, like ole times.
- For you youth, that friend that says just try it once, its no big deal.
- Youth, the constant bombardment of fleshly things (sex before marriage, drinking and drugs) in the movies, on television, on the internet. You see it so many times it reduces your sensitivity to dangers they are, they become to you a part of daily life.

All Just Pawns – Wait for Opportune Time / Watch Out – Don't put Guard Down

They are all just pawns in Satan's plot to bring you down, and he has patience, and he will continually feed your flesh, then he will strike with the knockout blow. Watch out for them, don't put your guard down, Satan is waiting for that opportune time.

(Matthew 14:9 NKJV) And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her.

(Matthew 14:10 NKJV) So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.

Not Courageous to Obey John – Now Obey own Word / Pride lead to Foolishness

In Mark's gospel it says that Herod was "exceedingly" sorry. Herod was not courageous enough to obey John's word and repent, but now he had to obey his own word. Pride can lead you to make foolish decisions in your life, in Herod's case it lead him straight to hell.

Luke's Gospel – Jesus would not Speak / Rejected Word so Much – God not Respond

In Luke 23:6-12 when they brought Jesus before this very same Herod, Jesus would not even speak to him or answer him. If you want an example of the unpardonable sin, I think this is one. It wasn't the

beheading of John the Baptist, but the rejection of the Word. Herod had rejected the Word so much, that God would not even respond to him.
(Mark 6:26 NKJV) And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

Luke 23:8 - 9 (NKJV) ⁸Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. ⁹Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.

History says – Lost Kingdom – Forced Exile

History says that Herod eventually ended up losing his kingdom and was forced into exile. Mark 8: 36:
For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

(Matthew 14:11 NKJV) And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

Beheaded for Preaching – We quit for being Rejected

Beheaded for preaching, yet we are ready to quit because we get rejected

Realize John could Recant / Stood true to End / May we Stand Firm

Do you realize John probably could have said “wait I was wrong, it’s ok what your doing, lets be friends.” But John stood for the truth until the end, even to the point of death. How are we doing when it comes to standing for the truth. 2 Timothy 3:12 *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.* Christian if you share the Gospel in Love, then stand firm and know that you did what the Lord called you to do.

(Mark 6:27 NKJV) Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison,

(Mark 6:28 NKJV) brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother.

2 Tim 3:12 (NKJV) ¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Beheaded by Dancing Girl / Yet Jesus says of Him

John the Baptist beheaded because of a little dancing girl, little Brittney Spears Herodias. Jennifer Herodipez. Jesus speaking of John said:

(Luke 7:28 NKJV) "For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist;

Greatest Prophet – Brought down by Little Girl

The greatest prophet of all times, brought down because of a dancing girl.

Satan stands back and Smiles / 400 Years of Silence from Malachi to John

Brethren, bad things happen to good people. And here is where Satan stands back and smiles in his victory. John the Baptist – taken out. Man had gone 400 years without hearing from God. 400 years from Malachi to John the Baptist. Consider this, in the beginning:

- Adam walked with God in the garden,
- Enoch walked with God and had sons and daughters,
- Noah walked with God, and foretold Gods judgment to come,
- Abraham, Isaac and Jacob proclaimed His promises to the people,
- Moses went into Pharaoh’s court and said the Great I Am” has sent me for His people,
- God gave them judges, then kings, and prophets for years and years, and years.....

Then Silence / Years to Decades – Centuries / Hope to Hopeless / BEHOLD the LAMB

And Then God gave them silence – for 400 years, Malachi to Matthew. As years turned into decades, and decades into centuries, Hope turned into hopelessness, they had not heard from God; then God spoke again through John the Baptist. The resultant was a great revival as people repented. John came in the power and authority of the great prophet Elijah. John introduced the Messiah to the world, He said “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.” John baptized Jesus Christ, imagine what that must have been like. Imagine reading John’s newsletter that week.

John 1:29 (NKJV) ²⁹The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Now Dead / Satan Exulted – Greatest Prophet brought down Dancing Girl / Satan Lavishes

Now he is dead, and Satan feels exulted. The greatest prophet of all times, brought down because of a dancing girl. Satan lavishes in his victory.

Head on Platter / Lombardi – Wimbledon – Stanley Cup

Verse 11 - *And his head was brought on a platter.* His Head was brought on a platter; In January we saw the coveted Lombardi Trophy (Super Bowl Champs) raised high. In May somebody will hold a Silver Platter over their head at Wimbledon. And in June the Stanley Cup Trophy (Hockey Champs) will be skated around some hockey arena.

Trophy Symbolizes Victory over Opponent

All trophies will symbolize a victory over an opponent. They will symbolize "that on that day and that time the holder of that trophy had victory over their opponent". I was the best!

I Wonder - Satan's Arrogance / Isaiah 14 / Symbols of Victories

I wonder if Satan, with his arrogance (I will exalt my throne above the stars of God I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:12-15)) has a trophy room. Some symbols to remind him of past victories over God's chosen.

Isa 14:12 - 15 (NKJV) ¹² "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! ¹³ For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' ¹⁵ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

If Does / John Baptist / Stones & Coats / Fire Peter Warmed At

If he does,

- I imagine this platter hung on the wall with an inscription "32 AD - John the Baptist goes down" – God's spokesman silenced.
- There would be some coats and stones there. The coats that Saul of Tarsus held, and the stones used to kill Stephen.
- There would be the fire that Peter warmed himself by as he denied the Lord 3 times.

Platter with My Name

There would be a platter there with my name on it, dated April 1994. The inscription would read, "the day I took Ray down, and neutralized his ministry". The day he claimed victory over me.

Some Other Memorabilia – Bottles – Needles – Porn – Paychecks – Computers - Wedding Rings

There would be platters and memorabilia of the many Ministers and Christians that Satan has taken down. Some of the memorabilia may be:

- bottles of alcohol,
- drug needles and paraphernalia,
- pornographic magazines,
- big fat paychecks with tons of overtime logged on it – laying on empty church seats
- or computers that were used to go places on the Internet that Christians should not go.
- wedding bands with broken vows

Know What about Satan's Trophy Room / Trophy's Disappear – Only Temporary

But you know what I like about Satan's trophy room? Trophies disappear from his trophy room. You see many of his trophies are only temporary.

JB's Platter only Temporary / 1st Martyr / How many Thousands Gain Strength – JB's Example

For the platter of John the Baptist was only a temporary victory. Quick, who was the first martyr for Jesus Christ? How many of you said Stephen? But truly John the Baptist was the first New Testament martyr for Christ. We may be oblivious to it, but tens of thousands of Christians are martyred every year in this

world because of their faith. How many of the millions of martyred Christians gained strength from the story of John the Baptist. How many have looked at John's example of preaching the truth even to the point of death and it gave them strength to stand firm like John did, and in turn brought many people into the Kingdom.

Platter in Jesus' Trophy / A Crown – Thrown at His Feet / Kill Messenger – Never the Message

The platter of John the Baptist is now in Jesus' trophy room - it is a jewel / a crown that will be thrown at His feet. Satan – you can kill the messenger, but the message will never die

Coat's & Stone of Stephen – thrown at Jesus' Feet / Saul say Stephen's Face – Paul's Heart

The coats and stones from Stephen's death are now jewels that will be thrown at Jesus' feet also. I believe as Saul held those coats and watched Stephen get stoned, he also saw Stephen's face as Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father ready to receive him. I believe this affected Saul greatly. Saul's heart was now prepared to meet the Lord on the road to Damascus.

Acts 7:55 - 56 (NKJV) ⁵⁵But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

Coats Symbol of Victory – Paul 2nd Greatest Evangelist

The coats and stones became symbols of victory as Paul went on to become the second greatest evangelist to ever walk on this earth.

Peter's Fire – Represent God's Grace / God of Many Chances / Peter Restored - Leader

The fire would represent God grace and love, the God of second, thirds, and 500 hundredth chances, as Peter would be restored and become a pillar in the early church.

My Platter is Gone / Get Up / I Stand here to Tell You – He will turn Defeats into Victory

The platter with my name on it is gone. What appeared to be a defeat, turned into God's greatest victory in my life. I had been a Christian about 2 years, so sure of myself, so full of myself, really thought I was something for the Lord. People would say I can rally see God using you, I bought all the press releases. Then I found myself in a place I said I'd never be again, bringing shame to His name. The next day as I laid there in defeat, convinced God would never use me again, my face was buried in the carpet, all my promises to You, all just added to my shame, it was over, I should just walk away, I'm a big phony – then I heard His voice, as clear as you can hear mine, He said, "Get up, for I have plans for you" I always go back to that moment when I'm ready to quit. It didn't happen overnight, but God raised me up in power and victory, but very much so in humility (after a time of discipline). My walk and ministry have been on a steady rise, and each year I grow stronger and God uses me more. That was many years ago – but instead of being silenced and neutralized – I stand here today to tell God's people that He is more than able to turn defeats into victories.

Some Trophy's on Stay 3 Days

And there are some trophies that only stayed in Satan's trophy room for 3 days:

- **The whip** that was used to strike Our Lord 40 times,
- **the bag** that was put over His head to buffet Him,
- **the robe** the soldiers cast lots for,
- **the reed** they mockingly made Him carry,
- **the crown** of thorns crushed into His head,
- **the sign** that read "This is Jesus, the King of the Jesus",
- **the nails** that pierced His hands and feet,
- and **the cross** used to crucify Him.

What Looked Like Victory – Messiah Silenced / The ULTIMATE DEFEAT / The Way of the Cross

What looked like victory for Satan, "the Messiah silenced, crucified on a rugged cross on some hill in Palestine", became Satan's ultimate defeat. It became God's greatest victory. For by way of the cross, sinful man may come before the Holy God, received and accepted into His arms of love.

Christian – Only Trophy to Satan – if stays a Defeat / You Don't Get Up – Give Up / Use Past

Christian it is only a trophy to Satan if it is a defeat. A defeat is where you don't get up, and where you quit and give up. Christian use your past failures as a place to claim a victory, a place where you got up and went on to do great and mighty things for the Lord

Go Get Back Today

Christian, if Satan has your name on a trophy in his trophy room, then today you go get it back.

Don't let Past – Keep you Down / Write a New Testimony / Lowest to Greatest

Do not let the past failures keep you down. Today Church lets begin to write a new testimony. A testimony of how we took our lowest moment or our worse defeat and let God turn it into our greatest comeback. A testimony of

- A new Christ Centered marriage
- Of sexual purity,
- Of drug and alcohol freedom
- An illness that brought people to Christ
- A job loss that drew you closer to Christ and His power
- You fill in the blank _____

Whatever it Is – Let it not take you to Defeat/Depression – But Joy & Victory

Whatever it is, let it not take you to defeat and depression, but to joy and victory as God turns the table on Satan. And does a great work in your life.

Conclusion – A Call to War / Can't Just Stroll in Satan's House / Ready to War

This isn't a speech to just get you all excited. It is a call to war. You can't just stroll into Satan's trophy room and take what you want, you have to be ready to fight for it, go to war for it. If you want peace from the things that trouble you, you have to fight for it.

Peace only Found on Other side of War / Let the War Begin here Today

There is a peace that can only be found on the other side of war. If there has to be a fight, then let it begin here and today.

Lord ready to War With You

The Lord is ready to go to war with you and for you, He is rolling up His sleeve, you will not have to go this alone;

(Isa 52:10 NRSV) The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Remember – Fighting From Victory / Settled at Cross / Go turn the Tables

Remember Christian we are fighting from victory, not to victory. The victory was settled at the cross. Go with the Lord, and watch Him turn the table.

If Satan has Trophy – Go Get it

Brethren, if Satan has a trophy with your name on it, go get it.

Blessing.....Kick the Devil in the Teeth

And When they Heard **(Matthew 14:12)**

Recapping Last Study

In our last study we saw the beheading of John the Baptist. We saw that he was a righteous man, and faithful witness for Christ. He was so sold out, that his witness for Christ caused him his life. Yet what we talked about last time, what looks like Satan's greatest victory, God turns the tables into Satan's greatest defeats, and God's greatest victory. John would be the first martyr for Jesus Christ, and his story would bring strength to many martyrs to follow.

Another Nugget / Mark's Account

There is another wonderful golden nugget that almost gets lost in the story until we slow down to think about it, and that is John's disciples came to get his body after he was beheaded. I like Mark's account, for he says, "*and when they heard*", and that is the title of this message, "And when they Heard".

(Matthew 14:12 NKJV) Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

(Mark 6:29 KJV) And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

Look Around – Fallen Away Back into the World / 10 of Us – now 2

If you look around the church, you'll notice that many people who were here a year ago, are no longer – some have moved on to another city or fellowship, but for many, they have fallen away, fallen back into the world. When I first got saved, there were about 10 of us that always hung out together, all excited about the Lord, desiring to serve Him. Today, there are only 2 of us still walking with the Lord.

Hard Walk – Long Walk / What to Do When Taken Down

It is a hard walk isn't it, it is a long walk. This message may apply today, it may not - but it will apply someday. Well in this study is, what are we to do if one of our brothers or sisters is taken down by the enemy. We will see 4 examples of what those disciples did when one of their brethren had fallen, 4 examples of what we can do should we see one of our loved ones fall.

When They Fall Outline:

Point 1: When they Heard

Point 2: They Came

Point 3: They Took

Point 4: They went and told Jesus

Let's start back in verse 1 for context:

(Matthew 14:1 NKJV) At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus

(Matthew 14:2 NKJV) and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

(Matthew 14:3 NKJV) For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

(Matthew 14:4 NKJV) Because John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

(Matthew 14:5 NKJV) And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

(Matthew 14:6 NKJV) But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.

(Matthew 14:7 NKJV) Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

(Matthew 14:8 NKJV) So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."

(Matthew 14:9 NKJV) And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her.

(Matthew 14:10 NKJV) So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.

(Matthew 14:11 NKJV) And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

(Matthew 14:12 NKJV) Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Point 1: When they Heard

Had to Make Decision – What Am I Going to Do

When they heard, they had to make a decision, what are we going to do about this. When we hear of a brother taken down, we are immediately faced with a decision, what am I going to do about it. We see what the disciples did, they took immediate action.

Understand this is War – High Risk Involved

Now we have to understand this, this is war, and there is always a high risk involved in going to war.

- John had just been beheaded,
- before that he was imprisoned,
- before that he was hated by the Kings wife,
- and before that he was hated by the religious Pharisees.

To go High Risk – If Vengeance not Satisfied / No Law to Protect Them

For these disciples to go to him, was high risk. If the vengeance and hatred all these people had against him wasn't satisfied in his beheading, then these men were prime target for more. May I point out to you, John had no trial, he was simply imprisoned and murdered. There would be no law to protect these men either, yet they went, willing to risk life and limb to get him.

If Go – Satan Waiting – his Hatred not Satisfied / Time Short – Looking another Trophy

If you chose to go, Satan will be waiting for you too. His vengeance and hatred was not satisfied on the cross, his hatred for Jesus will be spilled out on you. He knows time is short for him. He will be waiting for you because he considers that brethren he has just taken down a prize, a trophy for his trophy room.

He Wallowing in Victory – Laughing at Saints / Florida – Drug Dealers

He is wallowing in his victory, and laughing at God and the saints of God. Satan loves to see Christian fall, blow their witness, then he loves to get as much press as possible to say look at those Christians, hypocrites, weak, there is no help in God, where was their God to save them. I'm reminded of one experience while in Florida. A brother called me, he needed me to loan him 30 dollars and take him to the pawn shop to make a payment on his welding equipment he used as collateral, or he would lose it all, and not be able to go back to work. After sitting in the car for around 15 minutes, it hit me, I had been taken. I got out of my car, walked around the building, not knowing at the time that he was walking around the other side. When I turned the corner, there was a crack dealer about 30 yards away. He knew who I was, and when he saw me he started to laugh in my face. It was a long walk back to my car, he followed me all the way laughing at me, pointing at me to the other dealers. He was grabbing his crouch, pointing and laughing, and the other drug dealers starting laughing at me too. He knew who we were (Christians), and he was laughing at the Christians, the so called holy ones – coming to him for drugs. The world calls him slim, yet the Christians were coming to him.

The Risks / Physical – Humiliation – Holy Folks/Accusations

The risks are there if you are going to go. It could be physical, use wisdom, or you may be humiliated, some "holier than thou" will attack your character on who you are friends with. You may go and actually be rejected by that brother or sister.

Disciples went – Risked it All

Yet the disciple went, they took the risk.

Point 2: They Came

Heard – Then Came / Who will we Come For – Look Around

First they heard, then they came. Who will we be coming for? Just look around you, every person in this room has the potential of falling, and /or falling away

Singles- it can get real lonely being single. Its hard be sexually pure. It is easy to find yourselves spending more time with non-believers, because you like the company and would rather not be alone. But then gradually you find yourselves drifting away. It is probably easier for singles to slip by more so than anyone else, because they have the least accountability. Singles you need to look out for each other.

Our Elderly Brothers/Sisters: They can be the Golden years, or the Lonely years. The years of enjoying retirement or looking back on regrets and missed opportunities. Years of wishing the family would come to visit, feeling castoff by the world, a burden to your family.

Substance Users – drugs and alcohol. If substance use was a big part of your past life, it is a powerful draw, which always seems to keep calling you. Have you ever had a mountain top experience with the Lord, and then find yourself the next day being drawn back, it is unexplainable? Or how about those times in the valley, where you just fell like checking out for a few days. Giving up, taking the so-called easy road. If you do, then you know how easy it is to fall back into it.

How about **unequally** yoked marriages. Never being understood, never connecting in the fullest, the frustrations, and heartaches. It is easy to quit after the continual challenges from the spouse; why do you have to go to church they may say, Sunday is our only day to sleep in, be together. Oh they say, you spend more time with those church people than you do me. For some, it even comes down to “I forbid you from going”. It is easy to grow weary and drift away.

How about those **teens’** parents?. You pour your life into them, but you have to compete against Hollywood, teen magazine, and “You Tube” – its easy for them to be lured away by the shiny packaging of the world. You teens, this message is for you, about you going to your brothers and sisters who have left the things of God, and bowed to the influences of the world.

But here is quite possibly the **hardest fall**. The person who was so strong. That man or women who was faithfully serving at the church, witnessing on the job site. The one the Pastor said I can see God raising you up and using you for great and mighty things. But then they fall, and they seem to fall harder and farther then all the above, because they never thought it would happen to them.

Hard Walk – Long Walk / Need to Look out for Each Other / When go Forward – We Stand With

It is a hard walk, it is a long walk, and we need to constantly be looking out for each other. When a person comes forward they are saying I am taking a stand for Christ, and we are saying we will stand beside you.

Somehow they Slip Away – We get wrapped up in Our Life – Don’t Look Around

But somehow, someday, people slip by us everyday. I think we get so wrapped up in our busy lives, we don’t take time to look around and see all that is happening to our brothers and sisters.

Disciples Came – May they be not Left on their Own / Expend the Effort – Take the Risk

The disciples came, and may we Christians be the same, may we go when we hear. May that person not be left out there on their own. May we take the risks, let the gossip fly, may we expend the energy and the time it takes to go..... *when they heard!* I am reminded of Mogadishu Somalia.

Mogadishu Somalia

The day was **Oct. 3, 1993**, Mogadishu, Somalia, it was the longest sustained firefight U.S. forces had engaged in since Vietnam. In 15 hours of horrendous street combat, 18 American troops were killed and

73 wounded. On the Somalia side 500 dead and 500 wounded. The previous year 20,000 U.S. troops initially stopped a famine in late 1992 by taking control from feuding warlords.

On that day in October 1993, a small U.S. force of 160 men with 19 aircraft and a dozen vehicles staged a midday assault into the busiest marketplace of a city of 1 million on the coast of Africa. Somehow, the Americans thought it could be done antiseptically. The plan was to get in and out quickly, capturing two top lieutenants of warlord Mohamed Farah Aidid, head of the powerful Habr Gidr clan and a man definitely not interested in any coalition-building.

But what happened that day was unimaginable; maybe you remember the footage on CNN. American soldiers mutilated bodies being paraded through the street of Mogadishu. They were our elite U.S. Army Rangers and special Delta Force secret operatives swept in aboard their powerful Black Hawk helicopters; they all wore desert camouflage fatigues, with Kevlar vests and helmets and about 50 pounds of equipment and ammo. All had goggles and thick leather gloves. Those layers of gear made even the slightest of them look bulky, robotic, and intimidating.

But immediately hundreds of Aidid's gunmen began converging upon them. Soon the Americans were fighting a pitched battle (meaning the gunmen would take cover behind innocent women and children, knowing the American wouldn't shoot back if there was a possibility of killing the innocent). Then the battle took a dark turn for the Americans, one of the Blackhawk's went down, and then another. U.S. pilot Mike Durant was captured by the mob, a rescue convoy came to him and was ambushed and many of the rescuers died. After a night of desperate combat, the Americans were finally pulled out by a large ground force. Before it was over, 18 American soldiers dead, 73 wounded.

The Enemy Banked on 1 Thing – Every Commander who Fights US Forces / Never Leave Own!

You see the enemy was so successful because the enemy was able to make strategic moves, position soldiers in key places, because they knew there was one thing they could bank on. And it is the one thing every military commander who fights American forces knows, American Armed Forces always come back for their own, they never leave them to fight a battle on their own. American forces will never leave a fellow soldier to fight the battle alone, they would rather die trying to pull them out, they would risks many, rather than leave one. The enemy knew it that day in Mogadishu Somalia, and laid in wait. Many considered that day an American defeat, but I by no means do, I think it sent a message to all, loud and clear, we will never leave or forsake our fellow countrymen, and enemies you best be ready to fight, because we will come with might and force and show no grace.

I pray the Enemy of God Would Know / We are Coming for our Own – Just as Disciples Did

I pray every enemy of God will always know this too, that we will be coming back for our own, we will not let them fight the battle alone, we will come to them at whatever the cost or risk, WE ARE COMING BACK FOR OUR OWN, just as these disciples did *“when they heard!”*

Andrew Jackson

One man with courage is a majority. — Andrew Jackson

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. —1 Corinthians 16:13 NIV

1 Cor 16:13 - 14 (TLB) ¹³Keep your eyes open for spiritual danger; stand true to the Lord; act like men; be strong; ¹⁴and whatever you do, do it with kindness and love.

Edward Everett Hale (1822–1909)

I am only one, but I am one.
I can't do everything, but
I can do something.
And what I can do, I ought to do.
And what I ought to do, by the
Grace of God, I shall do.

Satan – we are coming!

Point 3: They Took

Heard – Came – Now Take (belongs to the Father)

They heard, they came; now they take. We are coming to take back what rightly belongs to our Father

What a Demonstration of Love / Come in Lowest Moment

And what a great demonstration of love! Coming to a brother/sister in their lowest moment is one of the greatest demonstrations of love we can show for another

Must know – Always Accepted / Last Stop

People must always know that no matter what they have done, this church will accept them and love them. For those seeking acceptance, that this church is the place to go. Some will come to this church, and this is their last hope of being accepted, all other churches have rejected them, may we receive those that want to be restored.

Time to Come – not when back in Church / Backslidden – Thanks for the Call

Time to come is not when they are back in church, that is just being critical.....haven't seen ya in awhile, where have you been. That just makes people want to never come back. I was at a church and this one guy, that was his gift, keep track of other people's church attendance. I had been out of work for some time, and had to take a contract job and I went wherever they needed me. One place was out of state for several weeks, so obviously I wasn't in that church for several weeks. When I returned he was almost the first person that came up to me, as I was walking in he says hey Ray I haven't seen ya here in awhile, where have you been? Without missing a step, as I walked by him, I looked right at him and said, I've been backslidden, thanks for calling me. Never heard him question me again.

I Remember Lowest Point

I can remember my lowest moment, got to close to the world, was someplace I shouldn't have been. After the fall I wanted to give up quit, but God told me to get up. I knew I had to confess my sin; so I went to the elder who would spend time teaching me. We sat on the edge of his pool and I told him all. Now at that moment, his next words to me could make or break me. He could have said what, you fool, there is no place in our church for a sinner like you, God has no part with men like you. Instead he said lets pray, he encouraged me, he assured me of Gods love, never once condemning me.

Didn't Teach Grace from Book – but Demonstration / Now a Pastor / Taught me Missions Too

He didn't teach me grace from a book, but taught me grace and love through demonstration. What does God do with men like him, God made him a senior Pastor and sent him out to plant a new church which is thriving and growing in Florida. What else did that man do for me, he took me on two mission trips, and taught me world missions, just about everything I know about missions, he taught me; and today, God has me organizing and coordinating a mission trips every year, that will reach people who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and savior.

Going speaks Volumes to the World / John 13:35

It has been said "Great thoughts speak only to the thoughtful mind, but great actions speak to all mankind - Emily Bissell".

(John 13:35 KJV) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

See Something Special

The world will see our love one for another, and know there is something special we have.

Example Carried over to Stoning of Steven

The example set by John's disciples, cared over to Stephens friends.

(Acts 7:60 KJV) And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

(Acts 8:1 KJV) And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

(Acts 8:2 KJV) And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him

God calls them Devout / Vines Definition

Notice in verse 2, God calls those who come to get a fallen brother as “devout”. Vines definition of Devout: *“taking hold well. Careful as to the realization of the presence of God.*

When Go – Special Bond Formed / Right to Speak / How much Know – How much Care

When you go, there is a special bond that is built. You earned the right to speak into their life, they know how much you care, because you came at their lowest moment. No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Devout – Go! / Misconception Pastor Goes

Devout Brothers and Sisters Go. At this point, it is important to make this point, there is a great misconception (I think it is more an excuse) in the church today, as people somehow think the Pastor will go. Notice in this story that Jesus didn't go. People often think, I haven't seen so-and-so for awhile, I wonder if the Pastor called them. That is not God's design for the church. In Ephesians 4, God says that He has given the Church pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying (building) up of the body. Oh, I go, when I can, but if 10 people fall, and the Pastor has to go 10 times in that week, the whole body will suffer (including those who are doing well) because the teaching/equipping of the saints will be lacking because the Pastor didn't do what is his first ministry, the studying of the word, and prayer for the church (Acts 6).

Eph 4:11 - 16 (NKJV) ¹¹And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, ¹³till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Acts 6:2 - 4 (NKJV) ²Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. ³Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; ⁴but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”

Christian Go – Don't Wait for Someone Else to Go

Oh Christian go, don't wait for someone else to go, don't expect someone to go, you go. Go and let the Lord say of you, “My devout son, My devout Daughter, went to them, they were at the realization of the presence of God.” You go, and you will build a special bond to them and with them.

Don't Miss the Opportunity Today

Don't miss the opportunity to start that bonding today, go meet that brother or sister you haven't met, introduce yourself, leave your comfort zone. Come to Home Fellowship to get to know people, and then if they need it someday, and you come, you won't be a stranger to them. Also, it may very well be you that is the one that is in need:

Heb 10:24 - 25 (KJV) ²⁴And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: ²⁵Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Point 4: They went and told Jesus

(Matthew 14:12 NKJV) Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Heard – Went – Took / Then told Jesus / Intercession Coupled with Going – Special Bond

They heard, they went, they took, and last we see they told Jesus. They told Jesus, oh the power of intercession - there is a power in intercession. Intercession, coupled with going, builds a powerful relationship. The two of you will have a special bond, for they will know your heart. And you will have earned a right to speak into their life, and they will know who cared enough to come, in the time when they needed it the most.

Today – Write – Call – Drive / Let us not Leave a Countrymen Behind

So beloved, maybe it is today, you write that letter, send that email, make that phone call, or physically go in person; but go, like these disciples did, devout men of God, and let not that brother or sister have to fight the fight alone. Let us not leave one of our countrymen behind. Tell Jesus, and then Go!

The Feeding of the 5000 **(Matthew 14:13-21)**

I pray you have had a blessed week in the Lord, and I ask you, have you seen His glory this week. Have you seen Him take the common, ordinary, everyday things and turn them into something miraculous? Today we will look at the feeding of the 5,000 with only 5 loaves and 2 fish, and we see the Lord take what is just an ordinary day, time to eat, and turn it into something miraculous that has the people walking away that day and saying, what an awesome God. 2,000 years later here we are reading the story and still saying the same. I can tell you today Christian that God desires that we have no ordinary days, that each day we can walk away saying, wow what an awesome God. I am reminded of a story.....

The Ticket

Many years ago, there was a man who worked in a Sea Port town. Day in and day out he would watch the Cruise Ships come in and go out. He dreamed of someday being a passenger on one of those ships, and going to a far away land that he never saw before.

Well he was determined to turn his dream into a reality. He started to save his money, almost to the point of being a miser, but everyday, a penny here a dollar there, and over the years he saved enough to purchase a ticket on a cruise.

He arrived early, enjoyed all the excitement of being on such a fabulous vessel, and was in awe watching all the people board and their excitement. He was overjoyed with the fanfare of throwing confetti and leaving the port.

Unfortunately this is where his joy ended. After a few hours into the cruise he began to be hungry, he peered into the window of the dining room and he watched the people stuffing themselves with every food imaginable, shrimp, steak, lobsters, lush fruits and vegetables. The more he watched the more saddened he become. He wished that he money in his pocket to go buy some food, but he had spent every last cent he had on his ticket.

Evening came; the warmth of the sun was replaced by the chill of Atlantic breeze. As he watched everyone retire to their private cabins, the chill grew deeper in his bones. He found a blanket, and wrapped himself tightly in it, and slept on a chair on the deck outside.

For three days this went on; people stuffing themselves in front of him, and fighting off the cold sleeping outside on the Atlantic Ocean. What was expected to be his dream experience, turned into joyless days.

One night while security was making their rounds they stumbled upon him. You man, what are you doing sleeping on the deck, they said. The man replied I have no room. No room they cried, we have a stowaway here. The Captain was summoned, and the man was put into handcuffs, and told at the next port he would be turned over to the authorities. The man cried I am not a stowaway; I have a ticket, see (as he displayed his ticket). I ate no food nor slept in a room, but I have a ticket to be own this ship. The captain looked at the ticket, its real all right, he is a paid passenger.

The captain looked at the man sadly, turning the ticket over to the back, sir, if only you would have read the ticket, you would have known that your paid ticket not only included passage on the ship, but everything else.....food, room with a bed and shower, entertainment, and use of all the facilities....if only you would have read the ticket.

Sad Part – Picture of Us / Entrance – but Miss Out Blessings / Promised Eph 1:3

The sad part is that this is a true story I am told. And it is even sadder to say that this can be a picture of so many of us today. We have gained entrance into the Kingdom God, but miss out on so many blessing that He has for us His children, because we don't read the TICKET (this Bible). God has promised us all

the spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, to take an ordinary day and turn it into something extraordinary, to see the miraculous in the midst of the ordinary.

(Ephesians 1:3 KJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Yet we Miss – Don't Read Bible

Yet how often we don't receive all those blessings, because we didn't read the ticket, this Bible:

B-I-B-L-E

The BIBLE.....B-I-B-L-E.....Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.

This Book is amazing:

- The first printed book was.....the Bible
- The Number 1 selling book in the world year in and year out.....the Bible
- The First National Emergency declared in America.....printing of more.....Bibles
- More movies were made based on this book than any other.
- More books were written from this one book.
- In countries like China and India where Bibles are hard to come by, everybody gets one page, and then at the end of the week when they come back together they trade pages.

Our Text Today

Read Miracle – Understand Physical & Spiritual

In our Text today, we will see the miracle of the feeding of the 5000. What I want you to understand before we start is that every physical miracle in the Bible has a spiritual application for us today.

Also John 6 – Linking to Bread of Life

The feeding of the 5000 is also recorded in John chapter 6. And in that chapter we see the next day after Jesus feeds the 5000, He gives His sermon that He is "The Bread of Life." In that sermon He directly links the miracle of feeding 5000, to Him being the Bread of Life, that He is the sustainer of life.

***John 6:35 (NKJV)** ³⁵And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

John 1:17 – Grace & Truth

Early in the Book of John, chapter 1 verse 17, it is declared, *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* All through the Bible, "Grace and Truth" are woven together. Grace is God's miracles, and truth is the Word of God. Jesus performed the miracle of the bread, so He could preach the sermon that He is the Bread of Life. In Grace, our Lord fed the hungry people with food; but in truth, He fed them with the Word of God.

(John 1:17 KJV) For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

Bread nourishes Physically – Word Nourishes Spiritually / How fed Food – Feed the Word / Peter

Just as bread nourishes our body physically; God's Word nourishes our body spiritually. How God feed these people bread, is also how He wants to feed us His Word. This passage of Scripture is a wonderful display of God's power, His hearts desire to provide for His people, but it is also a wonderful passage of Scripture on how He wants to feed His sheep. Peter do you love me, He asked Peter, feed My sheep Peter. Jesus gives Peter, and us, the example of how He feeds His sheep, by taking this miracle, and bringing a spiritual application, a spiritual truth alongside of it.

***John 21:17 (NKJV)** ¹⁷He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.*

Let's read for context:

(Matthew 14:13 NKJV) When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

(Matthew 14:14 NKJV) And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

(Matthew 14:15 NKJV) When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

(Matthew 14:16 NKJV) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

(Matthew 14:17 NKJV) And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

(Matthew 14:18 NKJV) He said, "Bring them here to Me."

(Matthew 14:19 NKJV) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

(Matthew 14:20 NKJV) So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

(Matthew 14:21 NKJV) Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Verse-by-Verse:

(Matthew 14:13 NKJV) When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

(Matthew 14:14 NKJV) And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Marks – Moved Compassion / Sheep no Shepherd / Shepherd Protects

In Mark's gospel, it adds that Jesus was moved with compassion because the multitude of people He saw, were like sheep without a shepherd. His was moved because these people were not being lead, they were not being fed, they were not being protected, all the things that a shepherd does for his flock *(Mark 6:34) And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like sheep not having a shepherd. So He began to teach them many things.*

Jesus Moved – He Teaches / Psalm 138 – How Powerful the Word

Notice what Jesus does when He is moved with compassion, He teaches them. (Psalm 138:2) God says He has magnified His Word, above His name. And consider that at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess. Just how powerful is His Word, that it is magnified above His very name.

Psa 138:2 (NKJV)² *I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*

Great Shepherd / Provide – Protect - Comfort

The Great Shepherd wants to provide, protect, comfort His flock, and He does this through His word.

- When God sees sin knocking at your door, He wants to teach you to protect you from the destruction of that sin.
- When He sees the trial in your life He wants to teach you to comfort you, so that you might have peace.
- When you have doubts, He wants to teach you to assure you.

He wants to teach us so that we are nourished, strengthened, and strong, all the things that a Shepherd does for His flock.

5 Keys

In this passage of Scripture I see 5 keys here to a fruitful Bible study. 5 keys to enrich our studies.

5 Keys to a Fruitful Bible Study;

- 1.) Expect God to give you something every time you study.
- 2.) Get comfortable before you study
- 3.) Pray before you read
- 4.) Break the Word down
- 5.) God wants you to give it out what He has given You

Teach them to Fish / Kids – New Believers / Expect Something – Not return Void

It's been said; Give someone a fish, feed them for a day. Teach them to fish, feed them for a life. Lord teaches us today. Parents teach this to your kids, Christian teach this to new believers, teach them how to fish. And maybe this study may seem very basic to you, but let me encourage you in our first point, whether you have read the Bible cover to cover 100 times, or saved for 10 years, expect God to give you something every time you open this Word, and He will. For His Word will not return void:

*Isa 55:10 - 12 (NKJV)*¹⁰ "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater,¹¹ So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."¹² "For you shall go out with joy, And be led out with peace; The mountains and the hills Shall break forth into singing before you, And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

Key 1 To a Fruitful Bible Study; Expect God to give you something every time you study.

(Matthew 14:15 NKJV) When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

(Matthew 14:16 NKJV) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

(Matthew 14:17 NKJV) And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

(Matthew 14:18 NKJV) He said, "Bring them here to Me."

Said they have Nothing / Look Again / When Convinced it True – Not Requirement

Notice, here the disciples are saying we have nothing. It's late, were tired, I see nothing. How many times I have said that as I look at the word, I see nothing, yet God says look again. If you only receive one thing today, let it be this; Every time you read the Bible, expect God to give you something. Brethren, it will revolutionize your Study's. When you're convinced it's true, you'll look forward to your studies, your studies will never be the same, because it will no longer be I am reading my daily requirement to feel like a good Christian, but rather I am going to receive a word from the Great I Am, God is going to individually meet with me to speak and illuminate His word in my heart.. It is a guarantee, His Word will not return void:

Be a Glutton / Expect to be Full

This is a place where God wants you to be a glutton. Feasting on God's Word is the ultimate High Carb/High Protein Diet. Forget the Atkins Diet, the Phen Phen plan, the Zone – God wants you to eat up, no dieting. This book is powerful, and God wants you to know it's power. He wants you to expect something from Him, so that you might be full, just as these people were the day of the feeding of the 5,000.

Expect Every Time

Expect something from Him, expect to hear from Him every time you come to be fed.

Key 2 To a Fruitful Bible Study; Get Comfortable before you Study

(Matthew 14:19 NKJV) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

Find Lush Place – Comfortable – not Distracted

Verse 19 - Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass - Before Jesus fed them He had them sit on the green grass, not rocks or dirt, or on thorns, but on green grass. Can you picture the green grass all lush and soft? That's what God wants for us. Find a place to study His Word where it is comfortable, where we won't become distracted because our back is sore.

No Getting in Line – He Serves Them

Notice Jesus doesn't have them stand in line to get plates. He doesn't say everybody whose last name begins with A-M get in line first, then N-Z, or those with the Red Nametags, then those with the Blue. No He has them sit, He is going to serve them and minister to them.

My Green – Desk with Blanket

My lush green grass is my desk in my study with my Steelers Blanket on me (and a little space heater if it is chilly in the morning). Get yourself some coffee, a cozy blanket, or whatever it is that make you comfortable enough to stay awhile.

Parents / Planting Seeds

Parents, I know it can be extremely hard for you, but let me encourage you that once your child is of the age to understand, that you establish in your household that when you are having your study time you are not to be interrupted unless it is extremely important. Yes you may have to be firm, maybe even to the point of disciplining them; but you will not only be strengthening your soul for the day, but you will be planting Godly seeds in them as they see how important God's word is to you.

Mommy's Bible

A Pastor told the story of a young boy in his church bookstore that said he wanted a Bible like his mommy's not his daddy's. They said well their all the same, he said no their not, mommy's is more interesting than daddy's cause he never reads his. Parents your kids are watching.

Expect – Get Comfortable

Come into your time of reading expecting something from Him, and come in and get comfortable.

Key 3 To a Fruitful Bible Study; Pray Before you Read

(Matthew 14:19 NKJV) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

Jesus knew where to Look / Ask Holy Spirit to Teach

Verse 19 - And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed - He took the bread and fish and **looked up to heaven and blessed** it. Jesus knew where to look, so do we. Before we begin any study it is important that we look to God, the Holy Spirit to be our teacher.

John 15:26 - 27 (NKJV)²⁶But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. ²⁷And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Pray for Illumination / Ears to Hear – Not leave the Same

Pray that the Holy Spirit will speak to us through His Word, that He will reveal the passages to us, to teach us not only what it means, but also how we can apply it to our lives. Lord give me ears to hear and a heart to receive it. Don't let me leave here the same person I sat down as.

Not Dull of Hearing / Easy to Read Over and Over – Teach New Everytime

It is important that we do not become dull of hearing. It is easy to read something over and over and think that there is nothing new for us to learn, but that is the furthest from the truth. God wants to teach us something new every time we read the Bible.

Expect – Comfortable - Pray

Come into your time of reading expecting something from Him, and come in and get comfortable, and look to heaven for the Spirit to open the word up to you.

Key 4 To a Fruitful Bible Study; Break the Word Down

(Matthew 14:19 NKJV) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

He Broke It

Verse 19 - and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples - What did He do after He blessed it? **He broke it** before He gave it to them.

Not a Whole Loaf / Don't set Goals / Savor the Flavor

Notice Jesus didn't shove a whole loaf of bread down their throat. Nor would He try to shove the whole Bible down our throat. We set our goals for Bible reading: through the Bible in a year, or 3 chapters a day, 2 in the OT and 1 in the NT. After a few months it just becomes a routine in our life. We forget what we read as soon as we put it down. Don't pressure yourself to "x" amount of chapters, or finish the Bible in 12 months, but enjoy the lush green grass, relax, and just chew on the word, savor the flavor, whether that is 3 verses or 3 chapters. Let the word melt in your mouth, or better said, melt in your heart.

Break it to Bite-Size / Get in the Story – History – Culture

He broke it, and that is what we are to do. Take a little piece of the Bible and break it down. Break God's Word down into bite-size pieces. Chew on a verse or two. Put yourself in the story, get familiar with the history and culture for that time and place.

What does this Mean / How Apply

And, we must always be asking the question as we read, what does this mean, and what does it mean to me, how do I apply it to my life.

Atlas Centaur

While working at the Space Center several years ago, I was a rocket mechanic working on the Atlas Centaur Rocket carry satellites into space. This rocket was approximately 20 stories tall, had 100,000 pounds of rocket fuel, the engines produced 500,000 pounds of thrust, and would travel at Mach 25 (which is roughly 18,000mph), to get to that speed we would have to fly around the earth and use the earth's rotation to slingshot the rocket into space, 23,000 miles above the earth in what is called geosynchronous orbit. The whole flight time was 23 minutes.

250 Million / All or Nothing / 100% Success or Failure

The rocket cost 100 million dollars, and the satellite cost 150 million dollars. So each launch was worth a quarter of a billion dollars. Once that rocket lifted off, there was no getting it back. The mission was either 100 percent success or 100 percent failure; basically it was all or nothing.

Extensive Testing / SPECS / 99.99 Thrown Out / Guidelines for Success

To give ourselves every chance for a successful mission, we did extensive testing on the launch pad for 3 months prior to the flight. We had a Test Manual and every test was pass or fail based on the "specifications" – "SPECS" as we called them. If a part was outside the "SPECS" then it was replaced at whatever the cost. If the SPEC said 100 or more, and the test results said 99.99, then it failed. The SPECS were our guidelines for "Mission Success".

God's Economy / Study Word – Got SPECS / Life's Mission Success

In God's economy, 250 million dollars is chump change compared to one day in the life of one of His children's, after all it was for us that He endured the Cross (not some rocket and satellite). So, as I am studying the Word (The Life Manual for mission success, Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth), I have a set of SPECS I am constantly looking for as I read. SPECS, S..P...E..C..S; for my life's mission success.

S – Sins to Forsake - There is no negotiation, they have to be forsaken:

- **1 Cor 6:9- 11 (NKJV)** ⁹Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor covetous, nor

drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- Flee from youthful lust (2 Tim 2:22)
- I've made a covenant with my eyes (Job 31:1)
- "Judge not, that you be not judged. (Matthew 7:1)

P – Promises to Believe - God's promises get me through the hard times. God's promises warm my heart and soul as I read of His great love for me:

- **Jer 29:11 - 13 (NKJV)** ¹¹For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. ¹²Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. ¹³And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.
- "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7)
- My God shall supply all my needs (Philp 4:19)
- I will never leave you nor forsake you (Heb 13:5)
- It is Finished (John 19:30)

E – Examples to Follow - this book is loaded with great examples of great men and woman who followed after God:

- John the Baptist, would not waiver or water down the Word. (Matt 14:1-12)
- Moses intercedes on behalf of the people after their great sin (Exodus 32).
- Jesus sees the hungry, so He feeds them (Matt 14)
- Jesus is moved with compassion, so He teaches the people (Mark 6:34)

C – Commandments to Obey – They are not suggestions, but commands of God. The word command in the OT means “specifically”, and in the NT it means “an authoritative prescription”. I like that, this is the specific prescription from the Great Physician to make us well, and to keep us well:

- Study to show yourself approved unto God (2 Timothy 2:15)
- Go therefore and make disciples (Matt 28:19)
- Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the Church (Eph 5:25)
- Sara called her husband Abraham Lord (haha) (1 Peter 3:6)

S – Stumbling Blocks to Avoid – Just as there are great examples to follow, there are great examples not to follow but to avoid.

- Solomon took for himself many wives (haha) (Neh 13:26-27)
- Peter warmed himself by the enemy's fire (John 18:18)
- Aaron feared man and made the golden calf (Exodus 32)
- And Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom (Genesis 13:12)

SPECS – Assure Mission Success

S-P-E-C-S – to assure success in my life's mission.

Expect – Comfortable – Pray – Break Down

Come into your time of reading expecting something from Him, and come in and get comfortable, and look to heaven for the Spirit to open the word up to you.

Key 5 To a Fruitful Bible Study; God wants you to Give it Out what He has given You

(Matthew 14:19 NKJV) Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes.

Disciples gave it Out / Notice Daily Word – Word in Season / Study to Feed Other

Verse 19 - and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. Jesus gave it to His disciples to hand out. Ever notice how many times your daily reading is the perfect word for someone you meet that day who is struggling, or how it is the perfect word for your day. If you study because you want to feed others, God is going to bless your studies abundantly.

(Luke 6:38 NKJV) "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

And notice the result when God Feeds You.

(Matthew 14:20 NKJV) So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained.

(Matthew 14:21 NKJV) Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

All Ate – All Filled / Lacking Nothing

Verse 20, what happened when they ate? **They were filled.** Filled means, "to the top, lacking nothing." That is what happens to us when we take in the Word of God, we will be filled lacking in nothing.

Filled – No Junk Cravings / Peace – Content / Personal Relationship with Him / Trust in Him

When you are filled, you don't want junk food. You won't desire the things of this world, because you are satisfied. When we feast on God's Word we will be content, we will have peace, all because we have a deep personal relationship with Him. Our relationship will be deep, because we will know all about Him and be able to put all of our trust in Him.

- Lord I'm Tired; He breaks the bread and hands it to you, here refresh yourself
- Lord I'm not sure I can make it through the day; He breaks the bread and hands it to you, now you can.
- Lord the journey is so long; He breaks the bread and hands it to you, here's strength for the journey.
- Lord do you really love me, He breaks the bread and hands it to you. Read my love letter to you.

They had Leftovers

And notice; **They took up leftovers.** God always gives in abundance, He is not going to leave us lacking. God wants to teach you so much about Himself that not only will you be filled, you can feed others, and there will still be leftovers.

Conclusion

5 Keys to a Fruitful Bible Study:

- **Key 1 Expect God to Give you something every time you study**
- **Key 2: Get Comfortable before you study**
- **Key 3: Pray Before you read**
- **Key 4: Break the Word Down**
- **Key 5: God wants you to Give it Out what He has given you**

Spiritual Cruise – Comes with all The Spiritual Blessings / Read the Ticket

This "Spiritual Cruise" that we are on comes with all the Spiritual Blessings; Read the Ticket, it will tell you.

(Ephesians 1:3 KJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Where's God in the Trials **(Matthew 14:22-27)**

The title of this message is "Where's God in the Trials", as we look at the story of the disciples caught in a raging storm in the Sea of Galilee. Due to its low-lying position in the rift valley, surrounded by hills, the sea is prone to sudden violent storms.

Trials all Around Us / Either in – or Coming Out / Continual part of Life

Trials are all around us. If you are not going through one, you know somebody that is. But so often it seems that you are either coming out of a trial, going into a trial, or in the middle of a trial. Trials seem to be a continual part of our lives here on earth.

Next Study – Why / This Study – Where is God

Next study we will look more at why God allows trials in a believer's life, as we look at the account of Peter walking on water. This message today isn't going to be about why trials happen to us, but where is God during the trials.

The Fire / Feel God Abandoned – Forsaken – Forgotten / God wants Know – Parables chp13

Have you ever been in a trial, the fire is just burning away, and you feel like God has abandoned you, you wonder where He is? Lord have you forsaken or forgotten me? Well in today's study God wants you to know where He is at while you are in the midst of your trial. In chapter 13 we studied the parables, which were where Jesus would take a spiritual truth and "para", cast it alongside of a "bolla", a story. Well in chapter 14 we are seeing real stories, living stories, and Jesus not only displaying His mighty power, but also casting alongside of this story a spiritual truth.

4 Things He wants you to Know Next Trial

There are 4 things He wants you to know, and apply to your life in your next trial. 4 things to help you through the next trial, for you will know where God is during your trial.

Outline: Where is God in the Trials:

- **Jesus is Praying for You.**
- **Jesus is watching You, You are not Alone in the Trial**
- **Jesus will come to You**
- **In the midst of our trials, God wants us to cry out to Him.**

Example – Promise for Today

Matthew 14:22-27 is the story of a trial the disciples went through, and what Jesus did while they went through it. I believe the example and promise are for us today.

Let's read Matthew 14:22-27

(Matthew 14:22 NKJV) Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

(Matthew 14:23 NKJV) And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

(Matthew 14:24 NKJV) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

(Matthew 14:25 NKJV) Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

(Matthew 14:26 NKJV) And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

(Matthew 14:27 NKJV) But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

Let's break this down verse-by-verse:

(Matthew 14:22 NKJV) Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

Look back on Day / Loaves – Mission Journey

Let's look back at the day. They had just fed the 5,000 with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish. But Mark's account tells us that right before that, the disciples had just come back from the first Missionary journey. Jesus sent them out, and gave them the power to cast out demons and heal the sick. Picture the excitement when they came back to tell Jesus the stories. Oh Jesus you should have seen it, man this guy had a withered hand and I touched it and it was healed, just like you did. Then, there was this other guy, man he was all demon posed, had drool running down his face, kept howling at the moon, and I said demon be gone and it departed, wow it was awesome!

(Mark 6:7 NKJV) And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits.

Get some R&R / Compassion of Shepherd / Feeding of 5000 / Great past Days

Mark's gospel said they were on their way to a little retreat get-away to have some R&R, but then the people saw Jesus and came running, and well Jesus, His heart, moved with compassion, taught them. Then the miracle of feeding of the 5000. Imagine the joy of that, they got to be the ones that handed out the bread – probably smiling all the way saying, yep, we're with Him, we are His disciples. What a great past few days of ministry.

Mark 6:30 - 31 (NKJV) ³⁰Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. ³¹And He said to them, *“Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.”* For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.

Imagine getting in Boat – Totally Exhausted / Little know Heading into Storm / Never Know Next

It says there were 5000 men, so count the woman and children, let's say 12000 total, that would mean these disciples just served 1000 people each. Can you imagine what it must have been like getting into that boat. They are totally exhausted, yet on a spiritual high, probably the highest ever in their life. And little do they know it, but they are heading right into a trial. Never know when that next trial will come. The phone rings, the boss says I need to see ya, a routine check, your kid brings home their report card. We just never know when or where that next trial is coming.

1st Thing to Know – Praying for You

The first thing the Lord wants you to know when you are in a trial, is that He is praying for you; verse 23.

1.) Jesus is Praying for You.

(Matthew 14:23 NKJV) And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

What Praying For? / Context – Praying for Disciples

What was Jesus praying for? I'm sure He was praying for many things, like all the people He had just ministered to, praying for their salvation. But in the context of what is going to happen next in the story (and His response to it), I believe He was praying for the disciples, because He knew the trial they were going to face.

1st Thing to Know / Praying before Trial Began - & During

This brings us to the first thing God wants you to know when we are going through a trial, and that is that He is praying for you. Notice Jesus was praying for them before the trial began; and notice that He departed to pray - not that He prayed, past tense. Jesus prayed continually.

Who sent them Into Trial? / He Allowed It – Then goes into Prayer

Who sent them into the trial? Jesus sent them yet in His sovereignty He knew what they were going into, and knowing what they were to face - immediately our High Priest goes into prayer.

Is there Promise to Believe?

Is there a promise to believe here? You bet, Jesus is praying before and during a storm in our life.

(John 17:9-10 NKJV) "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

Heb 7:24 - 25 (NKJV) ²⁴But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. ²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

I Know Hard – Run Big Dogs – Eagles – Walk on Water

Jesus says I know this will be hard on you, but I want you to run with the Big Dogs, and Fly like an Eagle, I want you to walk on water (next weeks study). As hard as it is I want you to know I am praying for you

Can't Explain Theology / Don't Want to – Just Enjoy It

I can't explain the theology of how Jesus is God, yet He prays for us. To be honest I really don't want to know – I'm just going to enjoy the fact that He does. He is our great High Priest and is always interceding for us.

Side bar – Your Number #1 Fan / Apple of Eye

Can I side-bar here for a second? Do you know that Jesus is your Number 1 fan. It is a hard concept to grasp, for we know how sinful for we are, yet the Bible says he can't stop thinking about you. The Bible says His chosen people are the apple of His eye (Psalm 17:8).

Psa 17:8 (NKJV) ⁸ Keep me as the apple of Your eye; Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,

Flash Back to Day of Salvation / Luke 15:10

Let's flash back to the day you first got saved, and put in perspective what God thinks of you. Let us take a walk back in time to the day you got saved. Turn to Luke 15:10, and lets read one of the most misquoted scriptures of all time.

(Luke 15:10 KJV) Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Who is in Presence of Angels? / Fist Pumping / Twice Mine

Who is in the presence of angels when this was written (which was before the cross)? It was God. It is God who is rejoicing. People miss read this and say the angels are rejoicing, heaven is erupting (and I am sure they are too), but that is not what it is saying, it is saying there is joy before the angels, not the angels. It is none other than God Himself erupting into joy, a Hallelujah! This isn't some golf clap, ohh isn't that nice. It the fist in the air, that's my boy, that's my girl, that is my child. I made you, and I bought you, you are twice mine! This is Jesus' response to what he created you for – fellowship with Him, He erupts in joy and celebration – for you!

Jesus the Groom Courting You / One Moment – Proposal/Acceptance/Wedding

Jesus the groom was courting you and showering you with love. And then in one moment it was the marriage proposal, acceptance, and wedding all at the moment. He is crazy about you.

Hard Times – Intercedes for Bride / When Wife Facing Trials – Let Me Know – Hey Pray

And when the hard times come. He will be there to intercede for His Bride. When Renee is facing trials and difficulties, I don't say to her as I am going out the door, hey let me know how those things work out for you. Nor do I say, don't forget to pray, no this is my bride and I immediately go into prayer for her, interceding on her behalf, because she is my bride. And, we are His Bride, His Church, and He is immediately going into prayer for His Bride when the storms of life upon us.

Jesus Praying (Crazy about You) / Secondly

In you trial know that Jesus is praying for you (He loves you – and is crazy about you), and secondly when you are in a trial, know.....

2.) Jesus is watching You, You are not Alone in the Trial

(Matthew 14:24 NKJV) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

Look at this trial:

They are in the middle of the sea, it is dark, they are straining, and the wind is against them. Sound like any of the trials you have been in, or the one you are currently in?

Middle of Sea / 13 by 8 / Waves Raging – Water Face – Boat Filling

Verse 24 - The boat was in the middle of the sea. Due to its low-lying position in the rift valley, surrounded by hills, the sea is prone to sudden violent storms. The Sea of Galilee is about 13 miles long, and 8 miles wide, and they were right in the middle of it. The boat was not close to either shore, it was the same distance to either side. Notice they were in the sea, the sea is no little stream, it is a large body of water. Large bodies of water can be a scary thing, waves raging, water splashing in your face, filling up the boat. They were no closer to being out of the trial, they were right in the middle.

It was Evening / Darkness All Around / Ever Feel that Way – Can't See way Out

Also note that **it was evening (verse 23)**. Darkness was all around them, and they were all alone. Sometimes we can feel like this, all alone in the middle of some big mess. We can't see the way out, we can't even see how we got into it. It is so dark we can't see anything around us. We feel totally alone, lost and deserted.

Mark – Straining (Mental Distress) / For Us – Mind Racing – Can't Think / Hrs Ago all Wonderful

In Mark's account of this story it says they were straining. This word used here for **straining** in the Greek implies more than just muscular activity, but a mental distress and anxiety, and engulfing fear. For those who have been there, you know what this feels like, your mind is racing so hard you can't think straight, and it just compounds the situation. Yet only a few hours ago, life was wonderful, mission trips and miracles.

(Mark 6:48 NKJV) Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

Rowing against Wind / Experienced Fishermen

Verse 24 - For the wind was upon them - The disciples were having trouble rowing because they were rowing against the wind. The force of the wind and the waves make it extremely difficult to row, almost like you are not even moving. If you are moving it feels like it will take you forever. Remember these are not wimps, we know that at least 5 of them were professional fisherman - experienced seaman, yet they were straining.

For Us – Everything against Us / Efforts Futile / All Effort – No Progress / No way Out

We face this so often in our lives, it seems like everything and everybody is against us. We get knocked around by the world and all our efforts just seem futile. Any progress we do make is so small it hardly seems worth the effort to gain so little. I strain and I strain to get through this, but I seem to be going nowhere and the end of this trial has no end point.

YET – Even from Land in Darkness – Jesus See Them / Jesus won't Take Eyes off You

Yet, even from the land, Mark's gospel says that, "**Jesus could see the disciples straining**". Notice that even though the disciples could not see Jesus, Jesus could see them. Even in the middle of a large body of water, in the dark, Jesus still had His eye upon them. When you are in a trial, know that God hasn't abandoned you, He is so interested and in love with you, He hasn't taken His eyes off of you.

(Mark 6:48 NKJV) Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

Jude 1

Jude 1:1 *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:*

Preserved in Christ

Preserved in Christ – "means to guard from loss or injury by keeping the eye upon". Jesus is always keeping an eye upon us we are His responsibility. Just like the disciples, the same holds true for us, even in the middle of a dark crisis, Jesus has His eye upon us.

Know He is Praying / Not Alone – He is Watching

Know that in your trial, Jesus is watching you, you are not alone in the trial. In your trial know that Jesus is praying for you, He is watching you, His eyes are upon you, and thirdly.....

3.) Jesus will come to You

(Matthew 14:25 NKJV) Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

4th Watch / Nature of Jesus – He had to Come to them

Jesus watched them for awhile (the 4th watch is between 3-6am – so it probably around 4am since it is still dark), He let them struggle on their own, But **He came to them**. Here we see the nature of Jesus, He couldn't stand to see His loved ones struggling, He came to them.

Walks not Only Prove Deity & Power / But No Storm can Stop Him from Coming / Walks Over!

Jesus walked on the water not only to prove His deity, but also to show that there is no storm that can keep Him from coming to us. You see so often we limit God, we think our problem is too big for Him. We think even thou He created the universe, He can't help us with our problem. Jesus says, let me put your trial in perspective, what you have been laboring and toiling over for hours, I will walk over it, the waves will be my footsteps.

He is Mighty – Can't be Stopped – Is Coming / Know Jesus is Coming

We see here He is mighty, He can't be stopped. We see by His nature that He will come to us. Next time you are going through a trial know that Jesus is coming to you, is not going to stay a spectator in the stands and watch you struggle.

Jim Redmond – 92 Olympics

That's what Jim Redmond did. His son Derek a twenty-six-year-old Briton, was favored to win the 400 meter race in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Halfway into his semi-final heat, a fiery pain seared through his right leg. He fell to the track with a torn right hamstring.

As the medical attendants were approaching, Redmond fought to his feet. He set out hopping, pushing away the coaches in an attempt to finish the race. When he reached the stretch a big man pushed through the crowd. He was wearing a T-shirt that read "Have you hugged your child today?" and a hat that challenged, "Just Do It." The man was Jim Redmond, Derek's father.

"You don't have to do this", he told his weeping son.

"Yes I do", His son declared.

"Well then", said Jim, "we're going to finish this together." And they did. Jim wrapped Derek's arm around his shoulder and helped him hobble to the finish line. Fighting off security men, the son's head sometimes buried in the father's shoulder, they stayed in Derek's lane to the end.

The crowd clapped, then stood, then cheered, and then wept as the father and son finished the race.

What Made father do That / Not Strength of Son – Weakness / Childs Pain

What the made the father do it? What made the father leave the stands to meet his son on the track? Was it the strength of child? No, for if his son had the strength to do it alone - he would have let him. It wasn't his child's strength - it was his child's pain and weakness. His son was hurt and fighting to complete the race. So the father left the stands, ceased being a spectator, and came to help him finish. God does the same for His children.

Jesus Praying – He is Watching – He is Coming

In your trials precious Christian know that Jesus is praying for you, His eyes are upon you, and that He is coming for you. And, lastly, know that.....

4.) In the midst of our trials, God wants us to cry out to Him.

(Matthew 14:26 NKJV) And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

(Matthew 14:27 NKJV) But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

Thought He a Ghost / After All Miracles – See hard to believe / In spite of Weak Faith – He Came

They thought Jesus was a ghost. Why? We don't know for sure. But even after seeing Jesus feed the multitude and perform many miracles, the disciples still were having a hard time believing His power (sound familiar). But in spite of their weak faith, Jesus came to them.

Marks said Would have Walked Past / Will not Force Self

Mark's gospel says that Jesus would have kept walking had they not cried out. He would have walked by had they not cried out to him. Jesus knew they were there, but He would have kept walking had they not called out to Him. Jesus is coming to us, but we have to acknowledge our need for help, He will not force Himself upon us.

(Mark 6:48 NKJV) Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

We know – Praying – Watching – Coming / But wants us to Call / Don't Handle Alone

We know that Jesus is praying for us, His eye is upon us, and He is coming to us, but we must call out to Him to help us. As soon as we enter a trial in our life, call out to Jesus. Don't try to handle your problem alone.

My Misunderstanding / Not Weak / Heart towards my Bride

I use to have such a misunderstanding of God when I was young in the Lord; I thought He was too busy managing the universe to be bothered by my problems, I thought God would think I was a wimp by crying out for help. But now I understand His thoughts towards me, just as my heart is for my Bride, His is for me. Concerned with every detail, and doesn't want me to shoulder them alone.

See the Result of Crying – he Talked to Them

Verse 27 - But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; - Here we see the result of calling on Jesus. **Immediately** - He talked with them. **Be of good cheer** - its me Jesus.

Opposite Fear is Peace / Calling brings Peace

Verse 27 - Do not be afraid - the opposite of fear is peace is peace, we are not afraid because we have Peace in knowing that Jesus is with us. Calling on Jesus bring Peace, for He is the Prince of Peace,

Not Only not Afraid - But Be Good Cheer / the King of Universe is Here

Jesus not only says to us "do not be afraid", but He also says, "be of good cheer". Be Happy. The King and the whole army of heaven are around us, the worst that can happen is that we go to heaven.

Not saying Trial will End – But Guarantee Peace

I am not telling you your trial will end when you cry out to him, but what I can guarantee is that Peace (The Prince of Peace) will come. And when you have peace everything else will just seem like minor irritants.

Dan 3 / Spurgeon

Daniel 3:25. Story of Meschack, Shadrack and Abednigo were thrown into the fire, but while in the fire who was with them.... but Jesus Christ. Charles Spurgeon said, "As sure as ever God puts His children in the furnace, He will be in the furnace with them."

Disciples Looked at Problem instead of Jesus / Florence Chadwick

They were troubled, the disciples looked at their problem, instead of looking at Jesus. In the early hours of July 4, 1952, a powerful swimmer named Florence Chadwick attempted to become the first woman to

swim from Catalina Island to the coast of California. The 21 mile swim through shark infested waters began on a foggy morning. Less than a half a mile from the finish however, Chadwick had to be pulled from the waters. Later she said, she hadn't been defeated by fatigue, but by the fog. She said, "If I could have seen the land, I might have made it." Two months later, she made it. Again, fog limited Chadwick's vision, but this time she overcame despair by keeping a picture of the coast in her mind.

How we Defeated – when Lose Focus

So too it is with us. How often we are defeated by our trials because we don't keep focused on Jesus. How can we overcome our trials when we face them,? By remembering the four things we learned....

Outline: Where is God in the Trials:

- **Jesus is Praying for You.**
- **Jesus is watching You, You are not Alone in the Trial**
- **Jesus will come to You**
- **In the midst of our trials, God wants us to cry out to Him.**

Verse 32 says:

(Matthew 14:32 NKJV) And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Beloved, next trial, or the one you are currently in, know these things. My Bride is in need.....I'm on My way!

Walking on Water

Matthew 14:28-36

Last Study

Last study we looked at "Where is God in the Trials?". We saw that in our trials,

Outline: Where is God in the Trials:

- **Jesus is Praying for You.**
- **Jesus is watching You, You are not Alone in the Trial**
- **Jesus will come to You**
- **In the midst of our trials, God wants us to cry out to Him.**

Know where God Is / Questions Why / Not Exempt / Correction - Jonah

So we know in every trial of our life where God is, what He is doing. But the question always arises, why the trials. We have studied in times past that being a Christian does not make us exempt from the results of the fallen world. Until the Lord returns, the world will experience heartaches and heart-breaks. But in all trials God desires to do a work. Some trials come for reasoning of correction (Jonah is a good example of that); a trial comes to set a person back on the right course, who had decided to go the opposite way God had intended them to go, to be disobedient to the Lord.

Others for Perfection / Disciples Taking Over the Gospel / Know Self - Him

But then there are the trials of perfection, as God uses trials to perfect and mature His children. He will use the trials to show a person more about themselves, and more about Himself. For these disciples, Jesus sends them into the storm, into the trial, why, because His departure is near, and He is readying them to pick-up where He leaves off, for it will be they that will carry the gospel to the outer parts of the world.

People say if Only – Judas / Given Better – the Word / Account left for Us to Apply / Romans 10

People say that if only I could see a miracle, if God would show me Himself in a special way then I will believe. Or if God would show Himself in a special way, then I will really be set to follow Him, I will totally sold-out, and on-fire for Him. Well, Judas is on the boat, he sees it all, he sees Jesus walking on water, yet still he would sell-out, but not for Jesus. God has given us something better than miracles, He has given us His word. And we have the blessings to read this account, and apply it to our lives, and see God in a special way, and have the faith and trust to follow Him, totally sold-out, and totally on-fire.

Rom 10:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Jesus Sends Them / Account for Our Application / So we too "Can Walk on Water"

Jesus send them into the trial. God is teaching them. God is teaching them about themselves, and about Him, and God records this account for us, for our application, so we too, can be like Peter, and "if you will", Walk on Water.

Let's pick up in verse 22 to stay in context, and start our verse-by-verse in verse 28:

(Matthew 14:22 NKJV) Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

(Matthew 14:23 NKJV) And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.

(Matthew 14:24 NKJV) But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

(Matthew 14:25 NKJV) Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea.

(Matthew 14:26 NKJV) And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

(Matthew 14:27 NKJV) But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

(Matthew 14:28 NKJV) And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

(Matthew 14:29 NKJV) So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

(Matthew 14:30 NKJV) But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

(Matthew 14:31 NKJV) And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

(Matthew 14:32 NKJV) And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

(Matthew 14:33 NKJV) Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

(Matthew 14:34 NKJV) When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

(Matthew 14:35 NKJV) And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick,

(Matthew 14:36 NKJV) and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

Verse-by-verse,

(Matthew 14:28 NKJV) And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

Command – Order / Wouldn't try this at Home

Command means to order, it was a military term used by Captains to order the troops. Peter is saying, Captain give me an order, for I surely wouldn't try this at home.

Teaching Usually Goes – Peter Sank – Looked at Waves / Only 2 People in History / Built Faith

The teaching on this passage usually goes about how Peter sank because he took his eyes off of Jesus and back on his problems, the wind and the waves; now that is true, but lets get this part, Peter walked on water. Only 2 people in the history of the world has ever done such a thing, Peter and the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Peter performed his first miracle, and though it was short lived, it built trust and faith into His life.

1 of 2 / John & Mark Record Storm – Leave out Peter

Peter only one of two men to have walked on water, yet how amazed I am that Mark and John don't record it in their gospel account. They record the storm but leave out this detail. Interesting to me.

Pictures guys Ribbing Peter / You were Sinking Like Rock / True – But before that Walking Water

I picture the guys, the disciples, hanging out at the campfire. Then one of them gets up and acts out Peter sinking, ok guys who am I as they all laugh. Peter you were sinking like a rock as they laugh and Peter says true, but before that I was walking on water.

Humanly Impossible / Splashing your Face – Wetting my Feet

I was walking on what was humanly impossible. Same Waves splashing Your Face – Wetting my Feet
The same waves that were splashing in your face, were only wetting my feet.

Why Peter not John / Silver & gold / Peter can Say – He is Able / Beyond Human Reasoning

That is why it will be Peter, not John, that day only a short time later will say to the crippled man, silver and gold have I not, but in the name of Jesus, arise and walk. Peter will and can say, trust me He is more than able. His power super passes what human reasoning says is impossible.

Acts 3:1 - 10 (NKJV) ¹Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. ²And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; ³who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. ⁴And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." ⁵So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." ⁷And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. ⁸So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. ⁹And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Peter's Faith Matured Quickly because of Trial / Similar Stories / How we can Relate

Peter's faith matured quickly because of his trial, and because of his willingness to step out in faith and test the waters. John's day will come, he too will be a grant in the faith. Peter will say arise and walk, I did! I love how similar these stories are. A man can't walk, waiting to be helped, and a command is given, a hand is extended. How often it is that the trial, a storm, I walked through, made it to the other side of, is the very same trial that a brother or sister will later go through, and I can come to them, say trust me, He delivered me, He will deliver you, and I can extend a hand and say, let's go through it together, for I already know how this one ends.

Side Bar / Most Unforgiving People / Experience is both Success & Failures

Let me side bar here for a second. Sometimes it seems the most unforgiving people in the world is the church. That once a person fails, or as in Peter's case, falls short, that they just don't have what it takes, are somewhat of a disappointment. Experience is both success and failures. It is the combined total of both that makes up experience. We take all of our experiences and build off of them to bring us to that place of maturity.

Notice How God Matures Them / Mark 4 / Kept Rowing

Do you notice how God takes us through steps in the maturity process? In Mark 4 we read the story of Jesus calming the storm, and in that story, Jesus was with them. Now, as Jesus takes them to a higher level of faith, He lets them go through the trial at sea without Him there. Now in storm at sea, we see the disciples are learning, because this time they kept rowing against the wind (maybe as long as 8 hours). They could have turned back and let the wind blow them safely back to shore, but they kept rowing because Jesus told them to cross over the other side. For them to turn back, would be for them to go against what Jesus had told them.

Mark 4:35 - 41 (NKJV) ³⁵On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." ³⁶Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him. ³⁷And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. ³⁸But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" ³⁹Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" ⁴¹And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

(Matthew 14:29 NKJV) So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.

1 Word – No More / Peter doesn't ask for More / Word a Command

Jesus says "Come". He says nothing more than just a word. Peter comes on that word, and that word alone. Peter doesn't ask, and then what?, or what if?, or are you sure?: Peter steps out of boat on that one word, because that one word was a command. Jesus purposely says just one word, because faith is what He is building here in Peter.

God may speak 1 Word to You / Speak again After Respond / Christian Confuse Spirituality

God may and will say only one word to you, be that if it is, go, stay, come, wait, listen, speak, whatever it may be, and He will speak again after we respond to the first word. Many Christians confuse spirituality with lack of faith or downright disobedience. They say God told me to do this or this, but I am waiting for more information I want to make sure I am in God's will. That sounds spiritual, but if God has already told you to do it, then get busy doing it, or you are really in disobedience.

Moses at Red Sea

I am reminded of Moses at the Red Sea, and the Egyptian army is upon them, and the people cry out to Moses. Moses cries out to the Lord, and the Lord says what are you crying out for, keeping moving forward. I told you already that I will destroy them, I told you already they will think you are trapped at the sea, but it is I that have set the trap for them, so they will know I am the Lord, that I am your God, and they will leave you alone forever. Qui talking Moses, quit praying, and get moving. There is a time to quit praying about something, and start moving, and that time comes immediately after the Lord has spoken a command to you, whether that is go, come, stay, whatever it may be, it is now time to obey.

Ex 14:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel cried out to the LORD.

Ex 14:15 - 18 (NKJV) ¹⁵And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. ¹⁶But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. ¹⁷And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. ¹⁸Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

Ex 14:1 - 4 (NKJV) ¹Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: ²"Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. ³For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' ⁴Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

Mission Trip / Sunday School – Feeding – Home Fellowship / Go if He has Spoken

Often I am asked well what will I do on a mission trip, expecting me to give a detail day by day i hour by hour break down. I tell them well here generally what the trip is about, But individually God has a detail plan waiting for you when you get there. Bar none, every person, every trip, had more than enough ministry waiting. I always say just go (if He has told you to go) and we will see what the Lord will do. What will I do if I teach Sunday school-just come (if He has told you to help). What will I do at the Feeding center, just come (if He has told you to serve). What will happen at the Home Fellowship, just come. If you have heard Gods voice command you, after you have asked, then respond.

Ha-ha Peter – But did you See Me?

Ha ha Peter you were sinking like a rock; yes but did you see me walk on water?

Faith of Salvation / For-All-I-Trust-Him / Even when things don't look Good

Faith – from the perspective of salvation is "believing what we can't see". But then there is Faith, beyond salvation, and that is F-A-I-T-H, *For All, I Trust Him*. For all I trust Him, even when things aren't looking so good, even when difficulties are ahead, challenges before me, obstacles blocking me.

Heb 11:1 (NKJV) ¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith says Whatever you Command Me – That I will Do / Even if Humanly Impossible

Faith says whatever He commands me to do, that I will do with His Help. It may be hard, it May seem humpty impossible, but Lord you say to do it that I will do

Forgiveness / Purity / Party / Spouse / Cup of Cold Water / Faith says Whatever He Commands Me

I tell you what sometimes it may seem easier to walk on water than it is to forgive, but if He says to forgive, that I will do, with His help. Faith says whatever He commands me to do, that I will do with His help. walking on water may seem easier than Sexual purity, may seem easier to walk on water than saying no to that phone call to go party, than loving your spouse, giving a cup of cold water to that person you really don't like; faith says whatever He commands me to do that I will do, with His help

(Matthew 14:30 NKJV) But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

(Matthew 14:31 NKJV) And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Shortest Prayer / No Need to Drag Out

Lord save me. Shortest prayer in the Bible. It worked. No need to drag out your prayer. When you are in need just get to the point. Imagine Peter praying one of these Bible College student prayers, oh Lord, of all that is seed and unseen, full of might and power, the Lord of all.....bubble, bubble, bubble. He would have been 20 feet under before He reached his need. He got to the point, and he meant it, Lord save me.

Philippians 4

Philippians 4:6-7 make your request be made know. Pray from the heart, no need to make them long and flowery:

Phil 4:6 - 7 (NKJV) ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Immediately / 4 points Last Study

Verse 31 - And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him - Peter prays and notice immediately Jesus grabs him. Jesus is always right there for us in our trials because (our last study):

Outline: Where is God in the Trials:

- **Jesus is Praying for You.**
- **Jesus is watching You, You are not Alone in the Trial**
- **Jesus will come to You**
- **In the midst of our trials, God wants us to cry out to Him.**

No Faith to Little faith / They will become Great Men of Faith

Verse 31 - and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" – In the last storm (Mark 4) Jesus said you of NO faith, now He says you of little faith. Notice Jesus says "little faith", and not "no faith", because Peter had a little faith, enough to step out onto the water. Their faith is growing, maturing, as they will pick-up where Jesus leaves off, and they will become great men of faith, and take the gospel to the outer parts of the world;

Mark 4:40-41 (NKJV) ⁴⁰But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" ⁴¹And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

(Matthew 14:32 NKJV) And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

Maybe Feel Raging Sea – He comes to Still the Storm

Maybe you feel like you are rowing against the raging winds, and dry land is forever away, know that He is coming to you to calm the storm, to bring you peace in the middle of your storm. I won't guarantee you the trial will be over, but I can guarantee you He will come to give you peace in the midst of the storm.

(Matthew 14:33 NKJV) Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God."

First time Call Son of God / All other Miracles

Here for the first time recorded, the disciples say, truly this is the Son of God. They saw the other miracles we have studied up to now, withered hands, dead being raised, the feeding of the 5,000, but it wasn't till the other side of this storm of life, this trial of life, that they will recognize and say, truly you are the Son of God.

Peter Storm a Stairway

Peter walked on top of the waves. The storms, the waves of life, become stairways that take us higher in our understanding of who He is.

The Bread God – Storm God / God does Wondrous Works in Storm / Greatest Understanding

For many people, all they have is the Bread God (the God who provides and makes life smooth and wonderful). But for these disciples, all they had seen the Bread God wasn't enough to make them say "Truly You are the Son of God", it was the Storm God that brought them to this place. God does wondrous works in the midst of the storms. I love the provisions of the Bread God, and so thankful for them, but I can attest that my greatest understandings of who He truly is to me, have come in the times of the storm. And, after the storms I am ever more grateful and appreciative of the Bread God.

Bread God Rains Blessings / Storm God Meets us in Storm

There is the Bread God, the God who rains prosperity down upon us. And then there is the Storm God, the God who allows storms in our life, and meets us in the storms.

Bread only –Not Healthy Diet / Need know Stories of How He Comes

Worshipping the Bread God only is not a healthy diet, for at some point in life the storms will come and a person will need to not only know the Bread God, but the Storm God. And every person will need to know

the stories of how the Storm God comes to His children. They will need to Know storms are a part of life. They need to Know the stories of storms, the story of these disciples, stories of Job, Joseph, Jeremiah, Daniel, Noah, Meschack, Shadrack and Abednigo, and how God allows the storms, how He even sends people into the storms, but how He comes through and to in the storms.

(Matthew 14:34 NKJV) When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.
(Matthew 14:35 NKJV) And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick,
(Matthew 14:36 NKJV) and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched it were made perfectly well.

Blue Color of Heaven / Continual Reminder

Throughout the Scriptures, blue is the color of heaven. The Jewish Nation wore blue on the hem of their garments. It was to remind them that were a unique people, a special people, to be a holy people, a heavenly people. As they dressed each morning, passed each other through the day, they were to remember they were pilgrims on this earth, headed for a heavenly city, whose "Builder and Maker is God".

Num 15:37 - 41 (NKJV) ³⁷Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ³⁸"Speak to the children of Israel: Tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. ³⁹And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you may not follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, ⁴⁰and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be holy for your God. ⁴¹I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God."

Heb 11:8 - 10 (NKJV) ⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Maybe not Healed / Touch the Hem of His Garment / We shall be Like Him

Maybe you are not healed, maybe you are still in the storm of an illness, a relationship, and you wonder Lord why haven't you healed? Can I encourage you to touch the hem of garment of Jesus, and be reminded of eternity. Maybe you may suffer for a few weeks, months, or even years, but I pray as you touch the hem of His garment today and be reminded that you are heavenly bound. And when that day comes, when you see Him, you will be like Him. And that you will have a new body custom made for you, a body that will not be, and cannot be, touched by infirmities, sickness, and weakness of the this world.

1 John 3:2 (NKJV) ²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

And while the waves may still be splashing against, know that the Lord

Outline: Where is God in the Trials:

- **Jesus is Praying for You.**
- **Jesus is watching You, You are not Alone in the Trial**
- **Jesus will come to You**
- **In the midst of our trials, God wants us to cry out to Him.**

And know the Lord is also working out perfection in your life!