

The Book of Matthew 15-28

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Matthew 15

Traditions (15:1-20)

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."

God in a Box / 1 Samuel 4

Fighting the Philistines in a brutal battle(1 Samuel 4), as the Israelites' losses mounted, so did their despair. Then someone had a brilliant idea: "Let's bring in the Ark of the Covenant!" The ark of the Covenant, a box about three feet long and two feet wide, was instrumental in tabernacle worship. When the ark was brought into the Israelite camp, the Israelites cheered so loudly that their shout of triumph could be heard in the Philistine camp. But though the Israelites charged ahead with the Ark leading them, they were defeated resoundingly. And the Philistines captured the Ark.

The Lesson?

The lesson? An obvious one. The people of God should not have tried to put God in a box, saying, "This box will represent God, and we will have victory because of it." Instead of looking to the Lord, they looked to the box and were beaten badly.

Today's Passage / Can't see Outside the Box – Regardless what happening Outside the Box

In today's passage of Scripture we see Jesus dealing with man's traditions as religious leaders will come and challenge Jesus on why His disciples don't do the ceremonial hand cleansing before they eat. Traditions, rituals, rules, that men have made up, not God, these traditions so often put God in a box, limits what He can do in that persons life, because they can't think "outside the box", they can't see apart from the box, if it isn't in the box, then it is not of God, regardless of everything else that is going on, "outside of the box".

I Grew Up in Religious System / Come to heart of Matter

I grew up in a very religious system, and for me, and maybe you if you came from a background of a religious system, it is hard to break away from our traditions that were indoctrinated in us as youth, growing up in a religious system. Well the Lord has a wonderful word for us today, the freedom from tradition, the bondage they bring us under. Rather the Lord the Lord just brings us back to the heart of the matter, it is looking at Him (outside the box), and His Word. This Bible contains the Word of God, but it doesn't contain God, for nothing can contain God, not the Universes itself.

No Coincidence – After Walking on Water

It is no coincidence that this passage of Scripture on Tradition comes right after the passage of Jesus walking on water. For we have to think outside of that box, human reasoning, and look upon God and His ability to do great things outside of our human wisdom and reasoning.

So, verse 1 & 2,

(Matthew 15:1 NKJV) Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,

(Matthew 15:2 NKJV) "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

Delegation / Law Moses – Further Revelation / Word of Elders Greater

A delegation of scribes and Pharisees came from Jerusalem to ask Jesus why His disciples did not follow the hand-washing tradition of the elders. You see, although the Jews rightly taught that the law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, they also said that later on, the Lord gave further revelation to Moses that was not written in the Scriptures. This further revelation was passed down orally from generation to generation (much of it is written in the Talmud, which is the Jewish Rabbi's commentary on the OT), and the Jews became so caught up in it, they actually went so far as to say that the word of the elders was weightier than the Word of God. We see that is still applied today in many churches, where they say the words of man are greater than the Word of God.

One Tradition – Hand Washing / Demon Shibna / ½ Eggshell / Between Each Course

One such oral tradition dealt with the ceremonial washing of hands. The Rabbis taught that at night, the demon Shibna would often come and sit upon a man's hands as he slept. They went on to say that if anyone ate with hands that had been sat upon by a demon, the demon could enter into him through the food and take control of him. Therefore, the Rabbis concluded, before eating one needed to wash his hands in the following manner:

One was to take one and a half eggshells of water and pour it over his hands as they were pressed together uprightly, letting the water drip only to his wrists and no further. Then, he would flip his hands over, pointing them downward while yet another one-and-a-half eggshells of water was poured over them. Finally, he was to rub his right fist with his left palm, then his left fist with his right palm. This procedure was followed not only before every meal, but between each course of every meal. (if I had to do this before each course I would probably be 20lbs lighter, that beats any Atkins Diet, or the Zone).

75 miles – Best they can Do

So these religious leaders travel all this way (some 75 miles), and this is the best they can come up with, "why don't your disciples wash their hand before they eat".

Consider all the Past Works / Sermon Mt – Dead – Blind – 5000 / Then Walking on Water

Consider the all the past workings of Christ to this point (the things that happened outside the box). The teaching of Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount; yet no challenge there, raising of the dead, healing leprosy, restoring sight to the blind, feeding the 5000, and no challenge there, and then the walking on the water.

Be Sure the Word out on Walking Water

Now you can be sure that the word got out and about of Jesus walking In the water. If you saw it you would be telling that story over and over, and they would be doing the same who ever heard it themselves.

Ended chp 14 - People getting Healed / Disciples overhear – Get out of Town

We ended chapter 14 with the disciples and Jesus coming through the storm, people recognizing Jesus and then bringing the sick to Jesus, and it says as many as touched him were made perfectly well. Imagine people getting healed, full of joy and excitement, telling everyone you should have seen it, I saw this blind guy touch Jesus and get healed. Then they brought paralyzed guy and Jesus healed Him, the guy is amazing. Imagine the disciples standing by, overhearing, and who could resist, maybe still dripping water, and they say, I just saw Him walk on water. Get out of town they would say, No really it is true, I saw it with my own eyes. No way they would say, hey Joe listen to this one.

Peter – I saw it / Lost my Balance

No way, get out of town. Peter would say oh it's true; I was standing right there (you were in the boat too, they may asked), oh no I was there with Him, literally, standing on the water with Him, Now you may hear stories of me sinking, pay them no mind, it was quite windy out there, I had merely lost my balance, but it is true Jesus walked on water!

3 days – Best they Do / Daydreaming – Debunk Him / Pastor Conferences

So these religious leaders travel 75 miles to confront Jesus, and the best they could come up with is why don't your guys wash their hands. If they walked 25 miles a day, it would have taken 3 days to get there, they had 72 hours to prepare for the confrontation, no doubt they talked of nothing else as they walked, "boy when I see this Jesus, I am going to be all over Him, we are going to debunk this guy once and for all. Maybe daydreaming of returning to the Temple in Jerusalem, great fanfare from the religious leaders, being the guest speaker at all the Pastor Conferences, this is going to really launch my ministry they may have daydreamed.

All they Heard / Do people do that to You

After all they had heard about Jesus doing, that's it? I'd be embarrassed to say that. Do people ever do that to you, oh well look at you Mr. Christian; hmm I just saw you get mad, or I just heard you cuss when the door jammed your finger. That the best you can do, do you know what I use to do 3-years ago. If you are building a case against Christianity it is a pretty weak one.

Jesus Disregards / Traditions Weak – no Substance / Ceremonies – Phrases – Food / Never Told

Back to our story, man's traditions then, man's traditions now, they are weak. Tradition is weak, because it has no substance, no weight to it, because it is based on man's wisdom, it is limited to what's in the box. As I grew up in the religious system, I had to do certain ceremonies at certain ages, eat certain foods on certain days, and repeat certain phrases in certain places. One day I finally asked why? I asked why do we do these things, and no one could answer me, except with the answer "because – that is what we do, that is what we are told to do". The traditions were weak because they had no meaning, no substance. All the traditions I was told to do, but no one ever came and told me, you know the emptiness in your heart, Jesus can fill it, you know that thing you are in bondage to, Jesus can free you of it. Do you know His thoughts towards you, thoughts of peace and not of evil. Do you He is coming back soon for you, do you know He is going to set-up His Kingdom on earth. No one ever told me those things, they could only tell me, "Because – that is what we do". Traditions are weak, because they have no substance. And since they have no substance, they have no power.....traditions can never heal the sick, raise the dead, nor walk on water.

(Matthew 15:3 NKJV) He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

(Matthew 15:4 NKJV) "For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'

(Matthew 15:5 NKJV) "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God";

(Matthew 15:6 NKJV) 'then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.

Corban – Dedicated / Convenient way to Refuse Helping Others/Family / Honor Parents

The tradition of the elders stated specifically that if you had something in your house which was of great value, you could say it was "corban," or "dedicated," which then made that object a gift to God. You could still keep it in your house and use it for your purposes, but it was technically dedicated to God. It was a convenient way to refuse help to people in need—even to those in your own family, but still feel spiritual. Jesus indicts the people for this practice, saying, "The Scriptures declare, honor your father and your mother. But you have made the commandment of God of none effect by your vain traditions."

Example - GTO

An example today would be a man with two cars. A minivan to drive the wife and 4 kids around, and then a 69 GTO mint condition muscle car, for his weekend joyrides. Now he loves that car, washes it and waxes it every Saturday, reads hot rod magazine to it before bed every night, and then tucks it in ever so gently with the custom made car cover, even though it sits in the garage.

Mom&Dad

Well his mom and dad come over one day and say son our car broke down, can we borrow yours for a few weeks until we can get it fixed. We can't afford to get it fixed right now, our next social security check

is still two weeks away, and you know with BGE rate hike, the price of gas, and the cost of dad's heart medicine money is really tight. The man is stunned, oh my, think of an excuse, and think quickly, ah, the car needs windshield washing fluid, ah, I mean the transmission fell out, no, oh it's Corban mom and dad. See I would love to loan it to you, help you out of your tough spot, but this car is dedicated to the Lord, it is a gift to the Lord. You see I only drive it when I pray, yes I put the top down, and I and the Lord go for a ride together. I pray for the people as I pass them, those men in their minivans – losers, I mean I pray blessings on the people. I've dedicated this 400cc of piston-pounding, 0-60 in 3.5 seconds, greased lightening power unto the Lord. Sorry I cant help you, but hey here is 2 dollars for bus tokens, mom take some "Aleve" for your arthritis before you walk the 6 blocks to bus stop through the drug invested neighborhood you live in – God bless you.

I'm so Wonderful / Verse 7 - Hypocrite

Oh, I'm so wonderful, always there to help in time of need. Verse 7, Jesus says you hypocrites. You've embraced mans traditions, which are pure lip service unto me, and have totally disregarded My Word, and disregards the needs of the people around you.

(Matthew 15:7 NKJV) "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

(Matthew 15:8 NKJV) 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

(Matthew 15:9 NKJV) And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

Jesus Definition of Hypocrite

Jesus' definition of a hypocrite, a person says wonderful words with their lips, their mouth says praise God, hallelujah (I own all 7 of the WOW Cd's), but the person's heart is far from God. They say the right words, but have no regard for God's Word, they live a life contrary to the words they speak. If that is your life today, Jesus says you are a hypocrite, and if I was you I would deal with it before the sun goes down.

Jesus Quotes OT

Verse 8-Jesus quotes Isaiah (29:11). Good thing to note here. Jesus is well-versed in the Old Testament He quotes or refers to the Old Testament over 400 times (so I am told – never personally counted). It is a neat study to look for the words in red and look at the OT verses He quoted. Christian it is important to keep yourself balanced with Old and New. The OT is a wealth of stories and applications. Even Jesus said we should do so in Matthew 13. The OT will explode your understanding of the NT

(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."

(Matthew 15:10 NKJV) When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand:

(Matthew 15:11 NKJV) "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

Calls Multitude / Takes Daily Event – Teaches / Superstar – Iran – Coke Cola

Jesus calls the multitude over; another great example, principle for life. Jesus takes a daily event and turns it into an opportunity to teach. Parents this is a great example and principle to apply to our families and kids. Don't wait for Sundays to teach our kids, don't be limited to your family devotions, but take life events around you to speak to your kids spiritual things, same for your co-workers or unsaved loved one. When they show the superstar checking into the Betty Ford clinic, great time to say to the kids, boy you would think all that money and fame would make them happy, but it doesn't, no Jesus, no peace, true contentment comes through Jesus Christ. Watching the news and the ties between Iran and Russia as it is displayed on the news; you know that is interesting you say to that unsaved loved one, that is just what is prophesied in the Book of Ezekiel chapter 38. Boy this Coke Cola is good, do you know son that in India more people have heard the name Coke Cola than they have the Name of Jesus Christ, let's pray for them.

Jesus Uses Everyday Life to Teach / May we have Eyes to See the Opportunity

Jesus uses lifts everyday situations and events to teach His disciples and followers some spiritual truths, good example for us, may God give us eyes to see the opportunities when they come.

(Matthew 15:12 NKJV) Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

(Matthew 15:13 NKJV) But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted."

Man you Upset Them / Jesus won't Water down Word / Disciples take Example – Acts 4

The disciples are like hey Jesus, man you really got those guys upset, they are going to be causing trouble you keep that up. But Jesus won't water the word down to keep people from feeling uncomfortable, (worrying that they won't come back to the church). The disciples will take the example of Jesus to heart. In Acts 4 they will be thrown in prison. and promised to be released if they will relax on three preaching, but Peter and John will say, we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard **Acts 4:18 - 20 (NKJV)** ¹⁸So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Shake their World

People, shake their world, it is the only hope they have, for the uprooting is their destiny if nothing changes. Comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable. When you rest, then they will rest.

(Matthew 15:14 NKJV) "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

Let them Alone – Powerful Words / Tough Time – But casting Pearls to Swines

Jesus says, give them the word and move on. Some powerful words against them, words I would never want to hear from the Lord, "Let them alone". There is a time, and I know it is hard, but there can be a casting of pearls to swine, we will need spiritual discernment of when this time is:

Matt 7:6 (NKJV) ⁶*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.*

Norfolk

When we were in Norfolk there were these 2 guys talking to me a 2 team members, and they just wanted to keep piping on this slavery thing, they would not let it go, our member sharing with them says this has nothing to do with slavery, it is about you and God. They just wouldn't let it go, and kept coming back to it. Finally I said, alright we have to go meet the rest of the team, they are waiting for us (which they were). The one guy said, there you go, you just showed me your heart, you just showed me your character, what you really are. You don't have time or care for individuals, you can't stop for us, I see your heart. I have to say, it really got me, I had that moment where I wanted to say, no that is not true, I'm not like that, but I knew it wouldn't have changed anything. We gave them all they needed, they just wanted to vent on us and argue. I said you don't need me, we have given you the gospel of John, the tract of how to get right with God, and an invitation to come hear the gospel for free, tonight at 7. If you really want to know, it is all there for you. The guy just started on me again, and kept going as we walked away. I said to myself, I wonder if these 2 with me think I'm cold, uncaring, and I even questioned Lord am I doing the right thing, but the Lord confirmed it in my heart. It can be a tough place to be, to say, "let them alone", they have been given all they need, there is a time to move on. Interestingly, verse 21, it say Jesus departed from them, goes to Tyre and the first thing we read of is a Gentile woman coming and getting saved, had He stayed to debate, He may have missed that woman. What is interesting is the 2 people with me, each of them were praying just 1 hour later with people, almost simultaneously, to receive the Lord. Even the Lord says at times, Let them Alone.

(Matthew 15:15 NKJV) Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

(Matthew 15:16 NKJV) So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding?"

(Matthew 15:17 NKJV) "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?"

(Matthew 15:18 NKJV) "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.

(Matthew 15:19 NKJV) "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

(Matthew 15:20 NKJV) "These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

Peter – Book of Acts

Peter won't get and understand this even after Jesus' explanation, we will see that in the Book of Acts where Peter refuses to eat what was considered unclean. These traditions were well entrenched in these people.

Acts 10:13 - 15 (NKJV) ¹³And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." ¹⁵And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

Jesus says let them Alone – But Peter gets ½ Page / God will make sure you Understand

Jesus says of the Pharisees, Let them alone, but Peter asks what does this mean, can you explain, and we got a half page of words in red. Peter says Lord please explain, Jesus says sure thing, pull up a chair. The Lord is always patient to teach us to make sure we understand, so never worry about asking. He loves to teach His little ones. He wants to be sure that we understand. God will spend countless time with the one who truly wants to understand, and so too should we.

Peter's 1st Recorded Question / Peter Left box of Traditions – Place of Limiting God / Come

Next study we will look at the statement of Jesus about defilement, but what I want to close this study out with is Peter. This is Peter's first recorded question in the Scriptures (asking if that was Jesus in the storm was more a statement – bid me to Come). Peter has left the box of traditions, he has left the place of limiting God and what He can do, and it all began in the storm. Peter learned through the storm, god always say to us – Come!

(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.

More than Ever – Want to walk where Jesus Walks / Circumstances – Understanding / Deeper

Like Peter, now more than ever in my life I find I want to walk where Jesus is walking. I want to walk above my circumstances. And, like Peter, I want to walk above my understanding. I want in my heart for God to call me to a place that is supernatural. I want walk in a place that is more spiritual than where I walk now, than where my mind comprehends and understands. Like Peter, Lord take me to a deeper understanding of who you are, a deeper understanding of your ways,

Peter Asks – Lord says Come / Lets Leave the Boat – Lift the Lids / Not be Content

Peter asks, and once again, the Lord says - Come. Whatever it is in your life, may you say Lord, I don't understand, explain to me, teach me. And, may we all leave our boats, take the lids off of our boxes, let us not be content where we are today.

Freedom from Formulas (15:10-28)

The Outline of the Book of Matthew:

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(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."

Recap / God in a Box – Limits God – Bondage for Us / Right after Walking on Water

In our last study we saw how man's traditions puts God in a box and limits His ability to do all that He desires in our lives. Traditions, rituals and formulas put us in bondage, and limit us from enjoying our freedom in Christ. As we had studied, it was no coincidence that Jesus dispels man's traditions right after He had walked on water (end of chapter 14). He says to us to think outside what human wisdom says is right and possible, and to keep our eyes upon Jesus, and our ears open to His Word. And as He said to Peter, Come, that we too will come to where He is at and what He is doing.

Subject of Discussion – Ceremonially Hand Cleansing

The tradition that was the subject of discussion was why they didn't wash their hands according to the ceremonially cleansing that was prescribed by the Religious Leaders, though not by the Word of God, and that theme is our theme with the explanation Jesus gives about defilement, and the Canaanite woman who comes seeking healing for her daughter. We continue to see that it is not traditions, rituals, or formulas that set a man free, but only God Himself. So let's pick up in verse 10 for context.

(Matthew 15:10 NKJV) When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand:

(Matthew 15:11 NKJV) "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

(Matthew 15:12 NKJV) Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

(Matthew 15:13 NKJV) But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted.

(Matthew 15:14 NKJV) "Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

Verse 15, Peter asks Jesus to explain what this meant.

(Matthew 15:15 NKJV) Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

(Matthew 15:16 NKJV) So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding?"

(Matthew 15:17 NKJV) "Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?"

(Matthew 15:18 NKJV) "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.

(Matthew 15:19 NKJV) "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

(Matthew 15:20 NKJV) "These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

What's out of Mouth – is in Heart

Jesus is saying what comes out of the mouth, is what is in the heart.

Covered Bottle Contents

Now if I had a bottle here, and the outside of that bottle wasn't clear, you would never know what really was in the bottle. Was it full, was it half full, was it empty. Let's say it is filled, well then you would never know what the color of the contents were; is it a clear liquid? Or red, or yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, or blue? You would never know until I open the lid, and poured the contents within, out.

When Lid Opened – Contents Known

Well that is what Jesus is saying in essence; when the lid is opened, the contents within will be known. Doesn't matter how beautiful or unbeautiful the vessel is, the contents that come forth from the vessel tell what is the heart of the vessel.

The List is the Law

These things Jesus lists (murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies) are not just random example, it is the Law, the 10 Commandments:

The 10 Commandments:

- 1.) Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:3) / **blasphemies**
- 2.) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing (Exodus 20:4-6) / **blasphemies**
- 3.) Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; (Exodus 20:7) / **blasphemies**
- 4.) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11) / **blasphemies**
- 5.) Honour thy father and thy mother: (Exodus 20:12) / **evil thoughts**
- 6.) Thou shalt not kill. (Exodus 20:13) / **murders**
- 7.) Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14) / **adulteries & fornications**
- 8.) Thou shalt not steal. (Exodus 20:15) / **thefts**
- 9.) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. (Exodus 20:16) / **false witness**
- 10.) Thou shalt not covet (Exodus 20:17) / **evil thoughts**

Law a Schoolmaster / law – then Sacrifices / Lay Hands on Innocent Sacrifice

The Law was given to lead all men everywhere to God, a God who loves them. It was a schoolmaster to lead people to Christ, to see their need for a Savior. In Exodus, we see that after the Law was given, then the sacrificial system was given; it was given for a way for man to make amends before the Holy God for breaking His Holy Law. If you break the Law, then you had to take an innocent substitute, an animal, and lay your hand upon the head of the substitute and confess your sin unto the innocent substitute. It was to bring man to a realization that someone has to die for breaking the Law.

Gal 3:24 - 25 (NKJV) ²⁴Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Jesus saying – Traditions not Cover Your Sin

Jesus is saying to these religious leaders, your traditions will not cover your sin, your breaking of the Law, you need the substitute, because what comes out of your mouth proves the condition of your heart.

Jesus sounds Harsh – Pouring Heart Out / Need Substitute – I am the Lamb

Jesus sounds harsh here, but truly what we are reading here is a God of love, pouring His heart out to sinful man saying you are ill, your thoughts and your mouth confirm it. Don't rely on your traditions, what man has told you, a church you belong to, but look for the innocent substitute to lay your hand upon and transfer your guilt and shame unto. I am that innocent substitute, I am the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, more specifically.....your sin! **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!"

Crucify Him

I think of Pilate asking the people what will you have me do with this Man, and the crowd yells crucify, crucify Him. I tremble, and my heart breaks, as I realize had I been there I too would have yelled those very same words, crucify Him; not as one yelling in anger and hatred, not as one yelling "I will not have this man rule over me (as they did)", but I would have yelled crucify, so that this man can rule over me, for I see there is no other way except I transfer my guilt and shame unto the Innocent Lamb, my mouth and thoughts confirm my guilt of breaking God's Holy Law, and my need for a substitute. *My sin yells louder than any mob that day!* Blessed be the Lord.

(Matthew 15:21 NKJV) Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

Jesus Crosses Borders

Jesus crosses a border to get to these people. Praise God that He crosses borders to get to us. Nothing can stop God from coming to you, only your hard heart can. I am thankful that nothing stopped Him from crossing borders (across the universe) to me, to think what my life would have been, and what my future would be – separated from Him for all eternity.

Have you give your life to Him? Please do not leave this place today until you have.

(Matthew 15:22 NKJV) And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

This woman Gentile – Not Jewish

This woman is a Canaanite, she is a Gentile, she is not a Jew. Canaan was a Gentile region, non-Jewish, and not friends of Israel.

(Matthew 15:23 NKJV) But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

Disciples say She Bugging Us

Matthew 15:23 (b) - And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." - Her tears, no doubt, were having an effect on the disciples, and they came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, send her away. She's bothering us."

(Matthew 15:24 NKJV) But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

(Matthew 15:25 NKJV) Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

Parents are we This Desperate

Parents are we as desperate as she is to bring our kids to Christ?

(Matthew 15:26 NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

Jesus responds Allegorically / Came Jews First

Jesus responds to the woman allegorically. In speaking of children, He is referring to the children of Israel, the Jews. In speaking of bread, He is referring to Himself, the Bread of Life. In speaking of dogs, using the Greek word for a pet dog, He is referring to the Gentiles. In other words, Jesus is saying, "Since I have come first and foremost to the house of Israel, my primary focus must be upon the Jews."

(Matthew 15:27 NKJV) And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

I understand Your Priorities / Not to Destroy – But to Develop

"I hear You," she says. "I understand you're working according to certain priorities, (for the Jews were the ones who were to carry the Gospel out to the world). She says, yet even though the puppy dogs don't get the best bread, they still get the leftover crumbs that fall from the table." Can't you see in your mind's eye a smile break out on the face of Jesus? This is what He was after all along—not to destroy her, but to develop her.

Religious Leaders not Getting It / Disciple Neither / But She Did – God Crosses Borders

The religious leaders weren't getting it (as we have just read), even the disciples had a hard time getting it, yet this unknown Gentile lady got it, God crosses borders, and He came for all the world

(Matthew 15:28 NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Gune – term of Respect

The word translated "woman" is "gune", a term of respect. Jesus used the same word when He spoke of His mother.

Jesus not Difficult – Drawing an Understanding Out

Jesus was not trying to be difficult with her. Rather, He was drawing out an understanding from her that would be helpful not only in her situation specifically, but to us and to all generations historically.

Came with Great Need / But left with Greatest Need

In verse 25 it says that she worshipped the Lord. You see she came to Jesus needing something, it was a great need, her daughter was ill, as great as her need was it wasn't her greatest need – her greatest need was to know Jesus. Once she had Jesus, she had all she needed. When we have Jesus we have all we need, and equally so, it is when He has all of us!

What an Example for All of Us

Jesus Knew All Along / Taught Power of True Worship

Jesus knew all along what He would be doing. He knew He would indeed heal and bless. But in the process, He taught this Canaanite woman, and all who have studied her story, the power and reality of true worship. I encourage you this day, precious people, to put away phrases and forms and instead follow the example of the Canaanite woman. Worship Jesus in simplicity and sincerity and watch Him work powerfully and radically.

Verse 22 / Son of David

(Matthew 15:22 NKJV) And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." - The phraseology this Canaanite woman uses is most enlightening. She approaches Jesus using a phrase made popular by Jews who were in need of healing. "Have mercy on me, Son of David," they would cry whenever Jesus approached. Why did they refer to Jesus as "Son of David"? A thousand years earlier, a prophecy was given to David that he would have a Son, a descendant who would reign forever—Messiah. And when Messiah came, the lame would walk and blind eyes would be opened. Consequently, the Jews who recognized Jesus as their Messiah called Him "Son of David." Now suddenly, this Canaanite lady, upon hearing of Jesus' coming, searched for the most appropriate way to address Him. Having heard Him referred to as "Son of David" by Jews lining His path, she borrowed the phrase from them. She may have even practiced it in front of the mirror before coming to see Jesus:

(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.

Verse 23 / Ever a Situation

(Matthew 15:23 NKJV) But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." - If ever there were a situation to which I would think Jesus

would respond quickly, it would be to a mother crying helplessly over her child. Yet, here this crying woman came to Jesus, and He answered her not a word.

I would Gave Up / So Much Against Her

If I were this woman, I think at this point I would have slunk away in despair. After all, she had nothing going for her.

- Her race was against her. She was a Canaanite—an enemy of the Israelites.
- Her sex was against her. She was a woman—in a time where women were held in low esteem.
- Even the disciples were against her, as they begged Jesus to send her away.

But you've got to admire this lady because she didn't give up. And Jesus knew she wouldn't. You see, if you ever feel you are not hearing from God, keep seeking Him, don't let up or let go, for I can tell you it is because He is trying to draw something out of you!

Verse 25 / Worshipped Him / No Longer Concerned of Phrases / Just open and Sincere

(Matthew 15:25 NKJV) Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" - No longer concerned about the right phraseology and the proper presentation, in desperation and openness, she worships Jesus. In simplicity, she says, "Lord, save me," and a miracle was underway.

Sometimes we think it the Words – How Hold Hands

Sometimes when we're going through tough times, we hear how someone else prays, and we think, That must be the key. King James English is what moves the hand of God. So we pray, "Father, I thankst Thee that Thou beholdest the cries of all of Thy creation. Now, Father, in Thy magnificence and benevolence, have mercy upon me in my situation." And nothing happens. Or we hear someone share how they lifted their hand to the Lord, and He reached down and pulled them out of their depression. And we say, "Now how high did you hold your hand? Was it your right hand or your left hand?"

She throws Formula Aside / Worship works where Formulas Fail / Worship – "to turn and kiss"

This Canaanite woman was in that same situation. She had the formula, but she failed miserably until she threw her formula aside and came in brokenness and openness to worship Jesus. Worship works where formulas fail. The word "worship," or *proskuneo* in Greek means, "to turn and kiss." Guys, when you kiss your wives, hopefully you don't follow a ten-step program to better kissing. I mean, it needs to be spontaneous and expressive, simple and sincere. The same is true of worship. Worship is not a procedure we follow. It's creative and spontaneous, simple and sincere.

David understood Principle / 2 Samuel 16

In II Samuel 6:12, we see an account of one who understood this principle. The ark of the covenant had been in the house of Obed-Edom for some time. David was bringing it back to Jerusalem.

2 Sam 6:12 - 14 (NKJV) ¹²Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. ¹³And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. ¹⁴Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod.

Dress for Success / Not Dress – Not Royal Robes – Disrobing – Spontaneity – Sincerity

There was a time when all the rage was dressing for success. Many years ago, there was a picture of fifteen men standing with the then current President of the United States. Every single one had on a dark suit and a red tie. Evidently, they had all read the same book! In the things of God, however, it's not so much dressing for success, but undressing; not so much robing yourself in royalty and regality, but disrobing in humility and spontaneity. David laid aside his "Dress For Success" manual and danced in his underwear before the Lord with gladness and spontaneity, expressing his heart creatively, energetically, and sincerely.

Michal – Where Dignity

Observing her husband dancing in his boxers, Michal said, "This is terrible. He's the king of Israel. Where's his dignity?"

2 Sam 6:15 - 16 (NKJV) ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet. ¹⁶Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

Fool

“That was great, Dave,” laughed Michal. “You made a big impression out there. You looked like a fool.”
2 Sam 6:20 (NKJV) ²⁰Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, “How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!”

Remember Dad / Worker not Worshipper / You acting like Dad

David’s reply, “Remember your father, Michal? God was against him because although Saul was royal and regal, he was not humble and open. He was a worker, not a worshipper. He didn’t have a heart after God.” In other words, David is saying, “Michal, you’re acting just like your dad.”

2 Sam 6:21 - 22 (NKJV) ²¹So David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the LORD. ²²And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor.”

You seen Nothing Yet / But You won’t See Yourself

“If you think I acted foolishly today, stick around,” David declares. “What I have done, I have done unto the Lord as an act of worship. And those maidens you are worried about? They will see the honor of the Lord working in me.”, but you won’t see nothing yourself, you’ll end up being barren:

2 Sam 6:23 (NKJV) ²³Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

Same True those who Wont Worship / Michal Barren / If feel Dry – Try Worship – Forget Formula

The same is true today. People or churches who feel worship is not important, or that it’s foolish to express one’s heart to the Lord publicly and privately will, like Michal, experience a barrenness, a dryness, and a lack of fruitfulness in their lives. Those of you who feel like the Lord is “answering you not a word,” try worshiping Jesus. Put away your royal robes and futile formulas, your models for prayer and worship, our limitation we put on Him, our putting Him in a box, and say, “Lord, help me express my heart to You today.” When you do, you’ll have you need for whatever the situation is in your life, because you will have Him.

Issue not Right Phrase – But Open Heart / See Him – Have all we Need – In time of Need

The issue isn’t putting the right phrases together in the right tone, but the issue is calling out to Him in sincerity; to open our hearts, to worship Him, to see Him. For when we see Him, when we have Him, then we have all we need at that time, for we have Him, and more so, He has us. That is what the story is before us today, this Caannite woman came with a formula and phrases, but she didn’t have Him. But once she had Him, she had all she needed, and God ended up moving in her life to meet her other needs.

Acts 16 / Imprisoned – Singing – Jailer / Object not Getting Out – Enjoying His Presence

In Acts 16 Paul and Silas are imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Prisons in those times were nasty, dirty, dark, with a sewer drain running from cell to cell. What do they do? They begin to pray and sing worship unto the Lord. What happens, the prison doors swing open, and the chains drop off of them. What happens next is simply amazing. The jailer runs in thinking life is over, for to have a prisoner escape meant death to the guard who lost them. Paul says, hey don’t do yourself harm, put your sword away, we are all still here. Still here!, not running out of those terrible conditions, what? You see the objective was no longer getting out of prison; the objective was to enjoy the Lord. When the doors opened, they were too caught up enjoying the Lord, that their surroundings and circumstances no longer matter.

Acts 16:25 - 28 (NKJV) ²⁵But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed. ²⁷And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, “Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”

How Often I feel That / Feel Imprisoned – Worship Lifts me / Problem no longer Objective

How often that is true in my life. I go before the Lord with heavy heart due to my surroundings and circumstances, I feel imprisoned, but as I enter into worship, casting off all my formulas and practices,

and just open my heart to Him, I find myself being lifted up, refreshed, and comforted. I no longer am pressured or fearful of my circumstances, not set on having to have an answer, rather I am just sitting with Him, enjoying. Whether I have that answer or situation resolved no longer matters, for I am in the presence of God, and that is all that matters, for that is what I truly was craving all along – Him, and His presence. Oh eventually the doors will open and things will happen, but most importantly I am in His presence, enjoying fellowship with Him, for that is what every man was created for, to fellowship with their Creator.

Rev 4:11 (KJV) ¹¹ *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

Psalm 16:11 / I am Full in His Presence

In His presence is fullness of joy. In that moment of worship I have fulfillment, and the things I feel are causing this feeling of lacking, those problems or circumstances, suddenly become pale to me, because I am full in His presence;

Psa 16:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ *You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

When I Sing / Joy in Lord / Lord you Are / I Love you Lord / Holy of Holies / Prepare a Sanctuary

As I lift my voice up in worship, throwing off all my royal robes and regality, not caring what other think, or what is going on around me, and I just worship Him, life changes, for I am in His presence. When I sing, “there is joy in the Lord, there is love in His Spirit” my heart is moved, oh Lord it is true, you bring me joy. When I sing, “Lord you Are” more precious than silver.....oh nothing compares to you, especially all these things I am seeking in this world. When I sing, “I love You Lord”, and I lift my voice, to worship you, oh my soul rejoice.....and it does, for I have you, I am yours, and you are mine. When I sing, take me into the Holy of Holies.....oh Lord, take me out of my circumstances, my distracted world, and let me dwell in your presence. Oh Lord, “Prepare me a Sanctuary”, pure and holy, tried and true, that is my prayer Lord. When we worship, may we not sing tunes, but seek Him.

When do Doors Open – things Happen / Every Problem God gives Self

When we do, prison doors open, things begin to happen, but more so we are in His presence. May we take the example of this Canaanite woman, throw off our religiosity, get rid of our model for worship, and be like her and just cry out to Him, Lord help me.....and He will. I can't promise that every problem will be solved, but what I can promise is that in every problem God will give Himself, and you will have all that you will need until the prison doors swing up.

The Feeding of the 4,000 (15:29-39)

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."

March to Cross

We finish this major section of the Book of Matthew with our study in chapter 15, we have been studying the Life of Jesus the King. Next week the emphasis of the Book changes and we begin the march to the cross. Next week we will see Jesus withdraw from the crowds, and start spending His remaining time teaching the disciples, and preparing them to carry forth the Gospel. He will give teaching covering divorce to the end times. From forgiveness to His resurrection. From man's ambitions to His Second Coming. If you knew you were dying, what would you tell those you were leaving; well these are the things Jesus thought most important to talk about, so we know we will be reading the deepest words ever spoken to man.

Recap / Traditions – Limit God / Ceremonial Hand Cleansing – Gentile Woman / Same Context

We have been in this chapter for the last 2 weeks looking at man and his traditions. Looking how man's traditions and rituals limit the mighty work of God in a person's life, even to the point of damnation. We say Jesus rebuke the religious leaders on their tradition of ceremonially hand cleansing. We saw Jesus draw out of the Gentile woman whose daughter was ill, to not try to seek God out with the right phraseology, or religious jargon, but to throw all those things off and just come with a simple sincere heart. And we finish this chapter in the same theme and context, don't limit what God can and will do, as we look at the story of the feeding of the 4,000.

So let's pick it up in verse 29,

(Matthew 15:29 NKJV) Jesus departed from there, skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there.

(Matthew 15:30 NKJV) Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them.

(Matthew 15:31 NKJV) So the multitude marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

Decapolis

Decapolis - [deh-KAP-oh-lis; "ten cities"] A district containing ten cities with large Greek populations, all but Scythopolis situated E of the Jordan.

***Mark 7:31 (NKJV)** ³¹Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee.*

They come to Him / Reactive – Proactive / Too many Lopsided / Make the Trek / James 4:8

Jesus comes into this region, goes up on the mountain, and lets the people come to Him. Christian, this walk we call Christianity is three things to say the least, it is reactive, proactive, and always interactive.

Can I say this, too many a Christian are lopsided in that their walk is only reactive (as they wait for Jesus

to come to them). Oh He will come to you, and you will be blessed, but look at the story before us today as Jesus sat, and the people came. The people were proactive; they made the trek up the mountain to hear from Him, and to watch Him do His wonders, and in the end they marveled and they glorified the God of Israel. I suggest to you that will be true in your life, when you get proactive in your relationship with Him, as you make the trek, even if it is uphill, to get to Him. People will say to me, I have prayed, read the Bible, but I just don't feel close to God, I don't feel His presence. I say then something is wrong, because what you are saying is contrary to His word, for His word says draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Christian there is a time you have to quit sitting and waiting for God to come to you, and you have to get up and make the effort, make the climb up the mountain to get to Him. Do so, and I promise you that you will see the same as these people, you will see the glory of God, for He says draw near to Me, and I will draw near to you.

James 4:8 (NKJV) ⁸Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Gentile Woman – Powerful Illustration / Jesus no Respond – She Worships / Dog Licking Hand

We saw a most powerful illustration of this last study as the Gentile woman came, seeking Him out, being proactive. She comes and the disciples say send her away she is wearing us out with her crying, and even Jesus doesn't immediately respond so that He might draw out of her what her true heart need was. And then it says, she worshipped Him. The word in the Greek for worship is to turn and kiss, but it was also the word for a puppy dog licking its master's hand. I like that visual picture; if you are a dog owner you know can picture it well. It has been all day, you've been at work, you walk in the door and her comes "Fluffy" full charge ahead, she is spinning her paws on the linoleum floor, tongue hanging out, ears perked up, eyes wide up, full on charge. You bend down and she goes airborne, reckless abandon as she flies into you, bowling you over, and that tongue is lapping away on your face, your hand, your ears, whatever she can get her tongue on, because she cannot get enough of her master, she is that in love with her master. For the dog, it gets what it wants, by giving all that it has. All I want, is you, and I am going to throw myself into you with reckless abandon. That is proactive living. Too many Christians are like cats, "oh you home", "I'll just lay here on the couch and wait here for you to come over and pet me". Oh Christian, may you draw near to Him today, and enjoy and experience Him drawing near to you!

Matt 15:25 (NKJV) ²⁵Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

Worship - κυνέω, proskuneō (pros-koo-neh'-o) - From G4314 and probably a derivative of G2965 (meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, that is, (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):—worship.

Verse 30 - At His Feet / Feet place of Submission – Hopelessness / I Need – What is Your Need

Verse 30 - Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them – The feet for us, a place of submission, a place of we are hopeless, helpless, we can't do this on our own, I need you! What is your need today, I do not know, but I know where you need to go first, I know what you need to do with it first, lay it at His feet. May I remind you, their problems were the same place the waves in the storm were, under His feet.

Matt 14:26 - 27 (NKJV) ²⁶And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

(Matthew 15:32 NKJV) Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

Group Discussion / 3 days – That is Proactive / Same Moses 40d / God Sustained – Moses Slept

Jesus now calls the disciples over for a group discussion. These people have been with us for 3 days now; did you hear that? 3 days! That is proactive living! How often, oh, I prayed for like 3 minutes over that issue, I can't understand why nothing has happened. They tarried with the Lord for 3 days, whatever food they had is gone, and for some it seems they had none to start with, yet they stayed. What I believe we are seeing here is the same as what Moses experienced; 40 days Moses was on the Mountain with God with no food or drink (supernaturally sustained), 40 days of sitting with God. I didn't say he didn't sleep. I wonder what that was like, saying good night to the Lord. I picture the Lord looking at Moses sleep like I look at my 11month old (you parents know what I am saying), I could just stare at him sleep

for hours, I love to stroke his hair, kiss his lips while he sleeps, I wonder what it was like when Moses slept there before the Lord. I wonder if the Father stroked his hair, kissed his lips, looked forward to morning to talk again. Well Moses spends 40 days up on the Mountain, with no food or drink, and the spiritual principle for us is clear, the appetite for the things of the world grow dim when we are in the presence of the King. If you have a great appetite for the things of the world, I would doubt you are spending much time up on the mountain in His presence.

Ex 34:28 (NKJV)²⁸*So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.*

Compassion – Bowels Move – every Fiber / Jesus shows Key – Think it Through / Nica - Camden Verse 32 - Jesus says, I have compassion on the multitude – The word for “compassion” is to have ones bowels moved. The very depth of the body is moved; it is not merely a thought in the mind, but it affects every fiber of the person’s being, to the point it grips their whole body. Can I share with you a key to having compassion? Jesus shows us, a key to compassion is thinking it through. You see Jesus just didn’t say wow they must be hungry because they haven’t eaten in 3 days, but He played out what He saw before Him into the future. They haven’t eaten; their stomach could be churning, but then He takes it further, the lack of food will cause some to weak. They may start out on the way home and faint because of their lack of energy. When they faint, they may head their head on the fall, or lose their footing and fall off the mountain, they may faint in the middle of nowhere and be left to the elements, or the people they are with won’t be able to carry them to help or safety. Jesus plays out how their current situation may or will affect their future. When I see a picture of a starving kid in Nicaragua, I can say how sad. But when I think it out, think it through, I think what it is like to go to bed that night with an empty stomach, to awake in the morning and the first thought is to wonder if I am going to eat today, I think of all the smiles that are missing that day in that child because hunger is robbing their joy. I look at my baby, and I think of his smile, I think of him smiling as he crawls to me, grabbing me and pulling himself up and doing his little bouncy jump with his big smile, and then I think how differently it would be if he hadn’t eaten the day before, I picture his cry, his pain, and I am moved with compassion for those orphans and the poor kids in Nicaragua. God bless you church, as we as a church tithe our tithe, our little church is providing food for those little ones there at the Feeding Center at CC Managua. This past week a brother was telling me about his father being ill, not being able to do even the basic things, needs someone to dress him, feed him, help him, and I thought how sad. But then I pictured it being my father, I think of the man that once carried me, that has always been so strong and healthy, and I thought what it would be like to watch him go through that, and then I found myself having compassion, not just my mind was moved, but my whole body and soul. Compassion, Jesus shows us a key for having compassion, thinking through how the current situation plays all the way through. Don’t just look, but think on it, and you will be moved with compassion. And then, compassion will always lead you into action, because you can’t just sit by and watch, you must do something about it, and that is what Jesus did.

(Matthew 15:33 NKJV) Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

(Matthew 15:34 NKJV) Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

(Matthew 15:35 NKJV) So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

(Matthew 15:36 NKJV) And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude.

(Matthew 15:37 NKJV) So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left.

(Matthew 15:38 NKJV) Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

(Matthew 15:39 NKJV) And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

To be Filled / Jesus doesn’t want to give Just Enough to Get By

The word in verse 33 for fill means to “gorge, to supply food in abundance”. The disciples have come to know Jesus well enough, that He doesn’t just supply people enough to get by. They know when He works in someone’s life, it is to overflowing, it is to abundance, it is to gorge them. If you only get one thing out of this message today, I pray you grasp that, Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior hasn’t come into

our life, just so we can get by, he has come so that we may be filled to overflowing. Not with material distractions, but with the Bread of Life. He has come that we may have life and that more abundant: **John 10:10 (NKJV)** ¹⁰*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.*

Need some serious Money / Judas

So the disciples are like “man we need some serious money to get enough to feed these people and to boot we are in the middle of nowhere (wilderness)”. Judas, why is it that we never seem to have any money? Are those new sandals you are wearing? Anyways, Judas says we don’t have enough money to feed all these people Jesus.

Verse 34 – How Much / Only a Chapters Ago

So, Verse 34 - Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." It was just a chapter ago, how could they forget what Jesus had done up the road there at the Sea of Galilee when He fed 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish?

Some Think it is Repeat

The passage before us is controversial. Many scholars suggest it is nothing more than a retelling of the “feeding of the five thousand” story in Matthew 14. Why? It’s the only explanation they can offer for the seeming stupidity of the disciples. You see, here in chapter 15, the disciples ask Jesus how they are to feed such a large crowd. Why would the disciples wonder how to feed four thousand if only a mere chapter earlier, they had seen Jesus feed over five thousand? “The only logical answer,” conclude the scholars, “is that Matthew 14:14–21 and Matthew 15:32–39 are two different accounts of the same event.” I, however, totally reject their premise for the following reasons:

- There were five thousand men in chapter 14.
- There were four thousand men in chapter 15.
- There were five loaves and two fish in chapter 14.
- There were seven loaves and a few fish in chapter 15.
- The multitude sat on the grass in chapter 14—the implication being it was springtime.
- The multitude sat on the bare ground in chapter 15—the implication being it was summertime.
- Jesus was in Bethsaida, the northern side of the Sea of Galilee, in chapter 14.
- Jesus was in Decapolis (Mark 8), on the eastern side of Galilee in chapter 15.
- After He fed the multitude in chapter 14, they wanted to make Him King.
- After He fed the multitude in chapter 15, they made no such request.

Above All – Matt 16

Above all, however, the reason I know these two events are separate is because Jesus Himself referred to them as such in Matthew 16:9, 10. If the “scholars” are right in suggesting there was only one feeding with two accounts, then Matthew wasn’t listening to the Spirit as he wrote his Gospel, and Jesus was mistaken and confused about His own miracles. I find this hard to believe:

Matt 16:9 - 10 (NKJV) ⁹*Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? ¹⁰Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?*

How could they Forget / Application for Us / Decapolis not Galilee – Money - Zeus

Many read this story and struggle with it. “How can this be? How could the disciples forget about the miracle that happened only one chapter previously? Nobody’s that dumb.” I suggest to you that the answer to that very question is very applicable and helpful for me and for you. First, you must understand that Galilee and Decapolis were very different regions. Galilee was the “headquarters” of Jesus’ ministry. Galilee was where He hung out, delivered significant teachings, and developed His disciples. Decapolis, on the other hand, was a confederation of ten Gentile cities with its own monetary system, judicial system, king, and army. Decapolis was financially prosperous and very worldly. Huge monuments to Zeus and Aphrodite dotted the landscape, and coliseums provided Roman-style entertainment.

Problem is – Didn’t Think Jesus would Work Here / Heathen Country /

I believe that’s where the problem was. Here, the disciples were with Jesus in Decapolis. “Certainly Jesus won’t do a miracle here,” the disciples must have thought. “This is heathen territory. Most of this crowd is

Gentile. The Lord isn't going to feed these people. Besides that, they've been with Him three days now. In Galilee, He fed the crowd after only one day.

This is the wrong place. These are the wrong people. This is the wrong time."

Like traditions – Our Preconceived Ideas / Precursor – Canaanite Woman / Wipes all 3 Out

Like traditions, rituals, and formulas; our preconceived ideas of how God works, where He will work, and when He will work all limits what He wants to do. Jesus had already gave them a precursor to this situation but they had missed it. The Canaanite woman; a Jewish man would wake up every morning and recite this prayer, "oh Lord I thank you that I was not born a woman, a gentile, or a dog. Jesus in one moment wipes that whole prayer off the face of the map as this Gentile woman who Jesus referred to a puppy dog is touched and received by Jesus.

What Disciples missed with Gentile Woman – Jesus has Compassion / Beyond Moment

What the disciples had missed here, but saw with the gentile woman, is that Jesus has compassion. Jesus thinks beyond the moment, and He thinks through to the future, and it moves Him with compassion.

God want to move and work in every situation, never is any situation excluded.

How I find Myself / There Heart too hard – Mine Is / Situation Just Bad / Forget He has Compassion

How many times I find myself saying, God is not going to work in this situation. That person's heart is too hard, or even my heart isn't right because I haven't being doing this or doing that. This just isn't the right situation, nobody wants to hear about God here, or this situation is bad and it is just going to stay bad. I forget that Jesus has compassion.

Immediately Changes when I change my Thinking / I start to Look at what Do Have / He There

However, things immediately start to change, when I change my thinking. When I say, Lord you can change this situation, and then immediately once I truly believe that, I find myself to start looking at what I do have (not what I don't have). What do we have to work with here, seven loaves and a few fish, alright I'm not starting from scratch. Once I bring myself to believe God wants to work, then I will notice the things that are already there, from which to work with. What I will see is, He is there.....He is there in every situation, every place, every time, because He has compassion.

God wants to Change Every Situation more than I do / When I change Mind – I start to have Comp

Know and understand this, God wants to see the situation change more than I do, because He has great compassion. But when I change my mind of how and where He will work, and I start to think beyond the moment, and into the future, then I will have compassion, I will have a passion to see that situation change (whether in their life – or in my life), and things will start to change.

So ends the Chapter on Tradition / May we be Free of them

So ends our chapter on God dealing with traditions, rituals, formulas, and our preconceived ideas of how and when He will work. May we be free of them. One thing I noticed is that tradition, rituals, formulas, and our preconceived ideas of how and when He will work, none of them have compassion.

Matthew 16

One Sign & One Sign Only (16:1-28)

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."

March to Cross / Withdrawal / Deepest Words

We finish this major section of the Book of Matthew with our study in chapter 15, we have been studying the Life of Jesus the King. Now the emphasis of the Book changes and we begin the march to the cross. we will see Jesus withdraw from the crowds (for the most part, but still have encounters with people), but for the majority of His remaining time He will spend it teaching the disciples, and preparing them to carry forth the Gospel. He will give teaching covering divorce to the end times. From forgiveness to His resurrection. From man's ambitions to His Second Coming. If you knew you were dying, what would you tell those you were leaving; well these are the things Jesus thought most important to talk about, so we know we will be reading the deepest words ever spoken to man.

One Sitting / One theme – Whole Church is Built On / Death & Resurrection

We will cover this chapter in one sitting today, for it is one thought, one theme, it is what the whole Church is built on Jesus will declare in this passage, and that is the death and resurrection of the Christ. The resurrection is the power of the Gospel, and here Jesus will speak powerful words.

(Matthew 16:1 NKJV) Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven.

(Matthew 16:2 NKJV) He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red';

(Matthew 16:3 NKJV) "and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.

(Matthew 16:4 NKJV) "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

Strange Bedfellows

Verse 1 - Pharisees and Sadducees - Some unlikely bedfellows, but for a common hatred of Jesus they will join forces; evil will do that. Two people who don't really like other will unite to go against a person they both have a common dislike for. But when they are apart they will rip on each other. But can I say this, we as a church need not unite with any one regardless of the common goal, no matter how noble it may seem. I was watching the news last month and they showed a large and very influential church whose Pastor is very influential, hosting a guest speaker whose religious beliefs are very suspect (he keeps them very vague, even leaving open the possibility that he is Muslim). This guest speaker holds high political office, and may even be president someday. Well that day the topic was reaching the starving children of Africa, and both of these leaders and their followers had agreed to lay their doctrinal differences aside (such as one believed in abortion and the other doesn't) for the good and the cause of those children in Africa. I was greatly disappointed to see that Franklin Graham had invited President

William Clinton to speak at the dedication of the Billy Graham Library last week. That sends a mixed message that his ministry is in accord with Bill Clinton's morals. It to me was throwing a strong endorsement to Hillary Clinton's Presidential campaign. Let it be known, both Clintons have had a 100% voting record in public office in regards to any bill or measure that supports abortion. They can say all they want about how they value human life, but when it came time to vote, 100% their vote was in favor of abortion. The Church of Jesus Christ needs not join forces or compromise our beliefs with anyone, no matter how noble and good the cause is. That is being unequally yoked. And once linked and associated with them, people will become confused on what we believe and where we stand (for they will get more air time on TV than those people will read their Bible). God is more than able to supply all our needs for whatever cause He leads us to, He owns the cattle on a thousand hills. But more so than the Lord providing, the Lord confirms this position in His word that we are not to align ourselves with such a people, it is being unequally yoked. I have mentioned a few times in the past of our looking to plant a Bible teaching church in Curtis Bay, and how we have been speaking with other churches on uniting to do so, but I can tell you this, if we are not in agreement on "Every" word of God, we will go it alone.

Psa 50:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills.

Phil 4:19 - 20 (NKJV) ¹⁹And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ²⁰Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

2 John 1:9 - 11 (NKJV) ⁹Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; ¹¹for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

Raising Dead not Enough / Test God – You Fail / Skeptics question Miracles – Little Boy

Verse 1 – Give us a sign – so raising the dead, healing the sick, walking on water, and breaking the bread to feed the 5000 and 4000 wasn't conclusive enough for them; so they test God. Now be assured at this, anytime a person chooses to test God, they will be the one who fails. They come to test God at the tail end of Him feeding the 4000. The critics and skeptics then said, He really didn't multiply the loaves and the fishes. You see what really happened (case of the feeding of 5000) is that Jesus was a great teacher and was able to bring the good out of all people. In those days people wore baggy sleeve shirts, and they would tie the ends around the sleeves to make like a backpack (but it was sleeveback). So when the little boy opened his sleeve up, everyone else gladly did too. So really everybody was stingy, no one wanted to share, but when Jesus got the little boy who had some bread and fish, and the little boy was willing to share his lunch, then everyone was moved and was willing to share the food they had, and it ended up there was more than enough to feed everyone, in fact they took a love offering at the end and collected enough food to go donate at the food bank in town. Jesus showed us we can do more together than we can alone.

John 6:8 - 9 (NKJV) ⁸One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, ⁹"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?"

Walked on Rocks – Mostly Dead – Reed Sea

The skeptics and critics said Jesus walked on rocks in the sea, not really on the water. The people He raised from the dead weren't really dead, just mostly dead if you seen the movie The Princess Bride. And going all the way back to the parting of the Red Sea, it was the Reed Sea and not really the Red Sea, and they crossed where the water was on 12 inches deep, so it wasn't really a miracle. Of course now you have to explain how the whole Egyptian army drowned in 12 inches of water.

Can Reason Jesus Away – waiting Conclusive Evidence / Jesus says 1 Event – Jonah / LOOK

People can reason Jesus away all they want, excuse Him away, and say they are waiting for conclusive evidence before they believe. Jesus says it all comes down to one event, the cross and the resurrection, what will you do with the cross and the resurrection. Jesus had already said this before back in Mathew 12, just as Jonah spent 3 days and 3 nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man spend in the heart of the earth. From Adam to the cross, all man looked forward to the cross (Genesis 3:15); and from today all men look back to the cross. Jesus doesn't say look at my miracles, my teachings, my lineage, but look at the cross and the resurrection, for it is what divides Me from all who came before Me, and all who will come after Me.

Matt 12:38 - 40 (NKJV) ³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." ³⁹But 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. ⁴⁰For 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.

Good Example – back to the Cross and Resurrection / Jesus died, Why? – Jesus rose – Why?

By the way, the Lord gives us another great life example for witnessing. Jesus just sticks to the main point, the cross and the resurrection. He didn't say ok now, I had already told them this before and it didn't convince them, let me try something else, maybe that will convince them. Jesus brings them back to the main point, the cross and the resurrection. When we witness, yea it is ok to talk about creation, prophecy, the uniqueness of the Bible, but we must always bring it back to this one place, the cross and the resurrection, for creation, prophecy, the uniqueness of the Bible, they all point to one thing, the cross and the resurrection, for that is the heart of the gospel, Jesus died, why? For your sin. Jesus rose from the dead on the 3rd day, why? Because God accepted the substitution, God accepted Jesus taking your sin upon Himself, trading places with you, taking your punishment, so that you wouldn't have to face death, for He already has taken the punishment for sin (sin) for you.

Gayle Erwin / LOOK – Resurrection divides Him from all Other

A man came up to Pastor Gayle Erwin and said he was going to start a new religion, and what did Gayle think of that. Gayle said I tell you what, if you die, and can resurrect from the dead, I'll follow you. Jesus doesn't say look at my miracles, my teachings, my lineage, but look at the cross and the resurrection, for it is what divides Me from all who came before Me, and all who will come after Me.

Saying True / Imagine the Sky that Morning / Storm Coming / Storm so Violent the Earth Shook

The saying is still true and used by seaman today. Red sky at night, sailors delight. Red sky in morning, Sailor takes warning. I can only imagine the sky that morning, that Friday some 2000 years ago. Red, blood Red, and they would say, there is a storm coming, a big storm for I've never seen the sky that color of Red before in all my life, it is like a blood red. And what a storm it was, as the wrath of God stormed down upon Jesus as He took on the sins of man, your sin, and my sin. A storm so violent that there was darkness over all the land. A storm so violent earth quaked, and rocks were split open. A storm so violent that the veil in the temple was torn from top to bottom.

***Matt 27:51 - 53 (NKJV)** ⁵¹Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵²and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.*

What a Morning it must have Been / What done with Sign – Have you Read the Sky

What that morning sky must have looked like that Friday morning; and I bet the evening sky the night before the resurrection was a beautiful calm red, what a sunset it must have been, red sky at night, what a delight. For every man, woman, and child, God gives one sign, 3 days and 3 nights, the cross and the resurrection. What have you done with that sign? Have you read the skies?

Most Beautiful Sunrise – No Fear of Storm Coming

As for that Friday morning, it is the most beautiful sunrise you will ever see, you need not fear the storm to come.

(Matthew 16:5 NKJV) Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

(Matthew 16:6 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

(Matthew 16:7 NKJV) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have taken no bread."

(Matthew 16:8 NKJV) But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread?"

(Matthew 16:9 NKJV) "Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up?"

(Matthew 16:10 NKJV) "Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up?"

(Matthew 16:11 NKJV) "How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?; but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

(Matthew 16:12 NKJV) Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Assumed Material Level / Jesus wants Free us from Material Mindset / Church Important - Focus

When Jesus talked about the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, His disciples assumed He was speaking on a material level about something physical rather than something spiritual. Jesus' desire is to free us from this material, physical world in which we're so caught up. He longs for us to gain an eternal, spiritual perspective. But, like the disciples, we so often get hung up in the material realm. Even in our spiritual walk, we often count our blessings only in corporeal terms, and recognize only those miracles we see physically. Only the spiritual realm is eternal. That's why church is so important to me. As I come here to meet with you, to sing songs of praise to the Lord, to study the Word, my focus shifts from the material to the spiritual, from the temporal to the eternal. Jesus wants these disciples, as He does us, to always be thinking in the spiritual realm, and to break free of thoughts always focused on the material realm.

Pharisees Added – Sadducees took Away

Jesus says watch the leaven, the sin of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees added to the Scriptures, added traditions, rituals, rules and regulations that didn't exist unto the word of God. The Sadducees, they took away from the Scriptures, they did not believe in the resurrection, they believed you died and that was, no resurrection. That is why they were "sad you see". The Sadducees only believed in the first 5 books of the Bible, they threw out the prophets and psalms. We still see that today, People who think they are so smart that they throw out certain passages and say God really did not say that. And then man and his rituals, traditions, rules and regulations, are alive and well today in many churches.

Verse 6 Continually take Heed – Beware / Stay with Word – Be Free

Verse 6. the verb content is to continually take heed, and to continually beware of them. You can't allow a drop of it in your life, and we must always be on guard because it will always be coming against us. So it is today, you will always be challenged to add to the word, or diminish it, take it away, lighten it up, and to compromise on it. Jesus says beware of the legalistic, and beware of liberalism. Stay true to this word, and it will unlock your life in wonderful freedom, and it will lock away from you the things that can rob and destroy you (verse 19):

(Matthew 16:19 NKJV) "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

(Matthew 16:13 NKJV) When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

(Matthew 16:14 NKJV) So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

(Matthew 16:15 NKJV) He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

(Matthew 16:16 NKJV) Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

(Matthew 16:17 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

JB – Elijah – Jeremiah / Not God / Still today world says Great Teacher – Not God

Who do men, the world say I am? Some Say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. Notice someone great, but not God. John the Baptist. a powerful preacher who didn't water the word down, all men everywhere must repent; Elijah, a great miracle worker; or Jeremiah, someone who had a burden that he just couldn't keep in. A prophet, but not God. Nothing changed in 2000 years, still very much the philosophy of today's world.; Someone great who walked this earth, no disputing He existed, but not that He was actually God in the flesh. Their logic is messed up; He couldn't be a great teacher and not God at the same time, for anyone claiming to be God, and isn't, is a sheer lunatic.

Jesus cuts through it All / Who do you Say I Am / Every man must Decide – Door Eternity Swings

But Jesus cuts through it all, and says no matter what others think, who do you say I am. It does not matter what popular opinion says, but who do you personally say that I am. That is what is before every

man today, who do you say that I am. This is the most important question ever asked any man. The door to eternity swings upon it: Who do you say Jesus is personally? With one sign, Jesus was all these men. At the cross He displayed the teaching of John the Baptist, man's sin is an offense to the Holy God. At the cross He displayed Jeremiah, a heart breaking for man, a heart of love and compassion for man. At the Cross, He displayed Elijah, as the miracle of resurrection overcame death. At the cross He summed up all the prophets, I am the one prophesied of. One Sign, and one sign only Jesus said.

Peter Nails it / Son of Living God – Life begins when See He Alive – Heart Beats for You

Peter nails it, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. The Christ, which means "Messiah". You are the Son of the living God. That is when life truly begins, when you see that He is the living God. He is not a dead or cold hearted God; but He is the living God whose heart beats for you today. He loves you! And He has life for you.

(Matthew 16:18 NKJV) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

(Matthew 16:19 NKJV) "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Peter Foundation of Church / Peter doesn't Agree – Clarifies it in His Epistle

There are those who point to this passage and say that Peter is the foundation of the church. They say he was the first Pope. Well, man's tradition may say that, but Peter himself doesn't agree. Peter himself will write that Jesus is the Chief cornerstone and the foundation of the Church, not himself. The church is built upon Jesus. Peter takes time to clarify that. The errant of this statement began earlier as this doctrine began to swirl earlier that the Church would be built upon Peter. Peter writes to make sure it is clear, Jesus is the foundation of the Church:

1 Pet 2:6 (NKJV) *Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

Petros – Stone / Petra – massive Stone / Petra – Feminine – Bride of Christ

Jesus uses two Greek words for "stone" in this passage. Petros, or "Peter," means small stone, a piece of a stone. Petra means massive stone. In other words, Jesus is saying, "Blessed are you, little stone. Upon the massive stone of your confession, I will build My church." By the way, the word Petra is "feminine" and Peter was not, but more importantly is the beauty of what is being said as I see it is that the Church is feminine, as it is described as the Bride of Christ.

Verse 18 – 1st Mention of Church / Means called out Ones / I'm into Church

Verse 18 is the first mention of Church in the New Testament, church (eklesia) "called out ones". I'm here to say that I am really into the Church. You might think, Well of course you are. You're a pastor. But let me tell you, I am not into the church because I'm a pastor. I am a pastor because I am into the church. I love it here, I love visiting other Churches. I love being here with you, because I love you, and I love what your spirit does for my spirit; as we are called out together.

Gates shall not Prevail – Council chambers

Verse 18 - and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it - Gates were the place that the city leaders would meet to do city business. It is the same as saying the counsel chambers, Capital Hill. Jesus is saying all the strategizing of Satan in his counsel chambers with all his henchmen will not prevail against the church-No strategy he devises will conquer Jesus' Church.

Binding & Loosing – we in harmony with Heaven / We don't Determine – We Declare / His Will

This binding and loosing is not a picture of heaven doing our bidding; rather, it portrays us in harmony with heaven. Jesus is not saying, "Here are some keys. Whatever you want to do, I'll make it happen." No, it's just the opposite. We are to be binding and loosing even as it is done in heaven. We are to be in harmony with Jesus. The role of the Church isn't to determine, but to declare what already has been spoken. We are in harmony with Jesus when we are in harmony with His word, for His Word, is His Will. Do and live according to His Word, and you will know that you are in His will.

(Matthew 16:20 NKJV) Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

(Matthew 16:21 NKJV) From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

How Excited – High 5's / Don't Tell – Covert Ops / I must Suffer – Quit Listening

How excited the disciple must have been. oh yes we are with the King who will overthrow the Roman oppression. High fives are flying, they gather close to Jesus and He tells them, ok now, don't tell anyone, alright they say, covert operations, oh boy this great they won't know what hit them. Then Jesus says, I must suffer many things, then die.....and they quit listening from there, and they miss Him saying although I must die, I will rise again on the 3rd day. They missed the resurrection.

Miss Resurrection – Miss Everything / He speaks – We quit Listening – Miss the Blessing

People....., miss the resurrection, and you miss everything. You miss the power and the blessings. How often we can do this as the Lord speaks to us. He says I want you to stop doing that, start doing this, and we start to moan about what we are hearing and our moaning drowns out the rest of what He is saying, We cant hear Him saying, because when you do so you will be blessed beyond measure, you will find what you have been looking for you will be filled with what you are lacking. He says no sex before marriage, and people groan and moan. on that is no fun, that is a drag, and the moaning drowns out Him saying because when you do you will have a clear mind, you will not marry the wrong person, you will not have a lifetime of pain. We miss the blessing of the rest of the story. Every command has a blessing on the end of it, before all His Words are to protect and to provide for us, we need to hear Him out, to hear His why, to hear His blessings behind each command.

(Matthew 16:22 NKJV) Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

(Matthew 16:23 NKJV) But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Lord – Not So

A person can't call Him Lord, and say not so in the same sentence. Lord means submitting to all His Words, even the ones we don't like to hear.

Disqualifies Peter as Infallible Pope

This verse disqualifies Peter as a candidate for pope. You see, one of the qualifications for the papacy is infallibility on spiritual matters. So fallible was Peter on this point that Jesus called him Satan. "Well," some might say, "that was before Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit." But in Galatians 2:11, Paul writes, "When I saw Peter I rebuked him to his face." Why? Because Peter was burdening Gentile believers with Jewish rules and regulations. Therefore, even after Peter was filled with the Spirit, he still blundered. I love Peter. But I acknowledge his fallibility.

Tell No One – Until have Story Straight

In verse 23 Jesus says for them to tell no man, and we think but that is what they were suppose to do. Jesus says tell no man because they still didn't have the story correct. Don't tell anyone until you can tell the story correctly. Man, if Jesus would have let them go out right then and there, He would have had to stay 20 more years to clean-up their mess.

(Matthew 16:24 NKJV) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

(Matthew 16:25 NKJV) "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

(Matthew 16:26 NKJV) "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

1 Sign that Identifies

One sign, and that sign is the same sign for us, for it is life, and that more abundant. One sign for the believer, the sign of Jonah, as we identify with His suffering, death, and resurrection.

Phil 3:7 - 11 (NKJV) *7But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Irony – Live Self – be Miserable / More say Live for You – More Abundant / Think back Happy Time

Here's the irony: The more you live for yourself, the more miserable you'll be. But the more you say, "Lord, I'm going to live for You completely, wholeheartedly, and totally," the more abundant your life will be both now and eternally. If you think back on the happiest times of your life, you will most likely find they were when you were really going for it in Jesus—when He was the priority in your life and the passion of your heart.

(Matthew 16:27 NKJV) "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

What Works? / What did with Sign

The works will be based on what did a man do with the sign that was given, 3 days and 3 nights. It was Friday, Satan was celebrating, but Sunday was a coming. Have you looked at the sky this morning, have you read the signs, 3 days and 3 nights, the doors of eternity swing on what you will do with that sign.

Reward

Reward? Eternal Life.....Beloved who have just lost loved ones who had given their lives to Jesus Christ, had read the signs, and committed their lives to Him, I can stand here today and with full confidence and assurance and say "rejoice" the resurrection is true, the resurrection is sure, the Lord says to you, one sign, and as I have rose from the dead, so too have they, and they are with Me now, and so too will you. One sign! It says it all. My love, My power, the heart of the Living God.

(Matthew 16:28 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Chapter 17

"Wait," you say, "the disciples are all dead and Jesus' kingdom hasn't come yet. Did Jesus make a mistake?" Stay tuned. The answer lies in chapter 17.

Matthew 17

The Transfiguration (17:1-9)

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."

King Withdrawing / Investing Disciples / Today – take the 3 for Transfiguration

The King is withdrawing Himself from the multitudes and the skeptics, and we will see Him start to invest more one-on-one time with His disciples, those whom will carry the gospel to the outer parts of the world. Today, we will study the passage of Scripture in which Jesus calls only 3 disciples with Him to the mount, and He will be transfigured before them. What is the significance of the transfiguration? Lets get into the word and see.

Chapter 17 really begins with verse 28 of chapter 16, so lets begin there:

(Matthew 16:28 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

(Matthew 17:1 NKJV) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

(Matthew 17:2 NKJV) and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

(Matthew 17:3 NKJV) And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

(Matthew 17:4 NKJV) Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

(Matthew 17:5 NKJV) While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

(Matthew 17:6 NKJV) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

(Matthew 17:7 NKJV) But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

(Matthew 17:8 NKJV) When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

(Matthew 17:9 NKJV) Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

Doesn't Take all 12 / What other 9 Think / Inner Circle – Can't Leave Alone /

Jesus does not take all 12 disciples, just these 3. I wonder what the other 9 were thinking when Jesus just called Peter, James and John. Some call them the inner circle because they got to be with Jesus on special occasions (raising Jairus' daughter from dead, taking them for prayer at the Garden of Gethsemane, and here). This is possible, but I present to you another possibility, and that is just look at the three: Peter, get behind me Satan, James and John shall we call fire down from heaven upon them- the Sons of Thunder. Jesus may have said to himself, I can't leave these 3 alone for a minute or who knows what kind of mess they will make.

What Important – Jesus take us Apart from Crowd – Just for You

What I think important for us to see here is that sometimes God chooses to call us apart from the crowds, take us to a certain place, a special place, and reveal something to us, which is just for us, for that time, this is just for you at this time. You'll share it later, but for now it is just for you.

Don't tell till After Resurrection / Imagine questions from the 9

Jesus will tell them don't tell anyone until after I have risen from the dead. Imagine keeping this event quiet. Imagine coming back and the other disciples say, so what did you guys do up there? Ah just talk. What did you talk about? Ah, just stuff

Sometime Show stuff we can't Explain – Till other pieces Come / Why Transfiguration - Moses

Sometimes God will show us stuff that really does not make sense, or we can't fully explain to others until other pieces come into place, and then what God had shown us is magnified. Imagine trying to explain this event to the other disciples. They may ask, well why did He transfigure, I don't know, well why was Moses and Elijah there, I don't know. But put it together, with the one sign, the death, burial, and resurrection, and it all comes together to make perfect sense. And that is what we will do today in our study. If you have ever wondered why the transfiguration, I think you'll see it clearly today.

Sometimes calls us Aside / Tell after Pieces in Place

So sometimes God chooses to call us aside and show us something special; and at other times He chooses to call others aside, and not us, and when that happens may we not get offended at that. But He will give you something that is just for you, and then tell you, ok the pieces are in place now, go share it with others. And, may we be open when someone comes and says, God had shown me this, and now wants me to share it; may we be open enough to consider, even though it wasn't spoken directly to me from the Lord, God may be speaking to me through this person. The quick litmus test will be, how does it align with Scriptures.

(Matthew 17:1 NKJV) Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

Not sure which Mt. / Lord doesn't say – Build Shrines – Miss the Event / Probably Mt Harmon

Verse 1 - led them up on a high mountain by themselves - A high mountain. We are not sure which mountain this is, for good reason as we seen that Peter want to build monuments and shrine at the top of it, so the Lord doesn't state exactly which mountain so man doesn't miss the event by looking at the mountain. Oh what a mountain, do you know what happened up there, wow this mountain is special – and they miss the special One, and the whole point of the story. So we don't know which mountain, but most scholars think this is Mount Hermon, and it is a very high mountain.

What Mt Top Experience / Get new Fresh Revelation / Come Apart or Fall Apart

What a mountain top experience this must have been. Jesus calls them apart to revel to them new truth that they do not know, a fresh revelation of the Holy Spirit. Once again, we see Jesus calling His disciples apart. It has been often said that if we don't come apart, we'll fall apart. We need to get away from the trials and the daily routine of life to retreat into a "high mountain" where we can be apart with Jesus lest we fall apart under the pressures of the world. Coming apart with Jesus is necessary for every believer.

(Matthew 17:2 NKJV) and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

Luke's Gospel – they were Sleeping / Dispels Super-spiritual / God gives even in Sleepy State

Luke's gospel tells us that they were sleeping when this happened, even though Jesus took them up there to pray. Imagine this light breaking through your sleep. So this dispels that we have to always be in some super-spiritual state to see or hear from God. These guys are sleeping and they get to be blown away by this spiritual revelation. God will work in ways and places that we would never imagine, we just need to leave ourselves open to always be looking for God to reveal spiritual truths to us, even if our spiritual state is or has been a little sleepy. God will do that sometimes, give you a spiritual truth or

revelation out of nowhere in the middle of our spiritually sleepy state, to wake us up. Maybe the Lord took these 3 up to the Mount because they were getting ready to come apart, they have been told the one sign, they have been told the death of Jesus, and now they are getting ready to come apart, asking what will happen to us when He dies, will they come after us to kill us too, will we be left alone? Jesus assures them they will make it through the 3 days, because He tells them, don't tell anyone until after I arise. So you'd have to be alive still to tell the story.

Luke 9:28 (NKJV) ²⁸Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray.

Luke 9:32 (NKJV) ³²But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.

Note – Mark and Matthew say 6 days, Luke says 8. The start of counting would be dependant on where Mark/Matt start and end their counting as compared to Luke's. Was it after Peters confession, or after Jesus teaching, we do not know.

Luke 9:31 – talking to Moses/Elijah about Death-Exodus / Moses not lead to Promise Land

Luke 9:31 says Jesus is talking to Moses and Elijah about what He is about to accomplish through His death. The word for "decease" is "Exodus". That is interesting to use the word Exodus in relationship to Moses, for we know that Moses led the people out of Egypt from the bondage of slavery, but could not lead them into the Promised Land, he could not lead them into a place of rest either, but Jesus could and would. This could very well be what Jesus was telling Moses and Elijah. Moses, I'm going to finish the job, I am going to take them where you couldn't, all the way into God's Rest, into a land flowing with milk and honey. Although the children of Israel made it to the Promised Land, they never did have rest, they always had wars throughout their lives. Jesus is going to finish the Exodus, and bring the people into rest.

Luke 9:31 (NKJV) ³¹who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease (Exodus) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.

Moses see the Glory

Interesting again that Moses had asked the Lord, show me your glory, and God says no man can see My glory and live, but I will show you my afterglow. So Moses here again Moses gets to see the glory of God **Ex 33:17 - 18 (NKJV)** ¹⁷So the LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

Why Moses & Elijah / Why Transfiguration / Moses – Law / Elijah – Prophets / Law – God Standard

But why Moses, why Elijah, why the transfiguration? What does all this mean, why did God reveal this to us in the Scriptures? Moses through the Scriptures represents the Law, and throughout the Scriptures Elijah represents the prophets. The prophets forth told the word of God, spoke to the people God's word, and His Law. Moses brought forth that Law as given to Him by God. The Law is Gods standard, perfection, keep these Laws perfectly, and you can come into the presence of the perfect God. Keep the whole Law and you will be perfect and you can walk into heaven. The Old Covenant was based on mans ability to keep the Law.

Jesus age 33 – Kept whole Law / Pilate – God / Based on Works – Walk In / Metamorphosis – Change / Root – Meros – Get Allotment / Jesus earned way to Heaven – Justified by Works

Jesus at the age of 33 had done just that. He has kept the whole Law, to perfection, Pilate will confirm this when He says I find no fault in this man. God the Father confirms it when He says this is My Beloved Son, I am well pleased with Him. I believe what we are seeing here is that Jesus, based on His works, and could have walked right into heaven at that moment. Transfigured is the word "metamorphosis" and it mean to change form. We use it to describe a caterpillar in a cocoon changing into a butterfly. Jesus could have put off His humanity, transformed Himself into glory and entered into heaven. One of the roots of this word "metamorphosis" is the word "meros", and it means to get an allotment, a piece, a portion, respect. Jesus had earned His way to heaven through His works, He was the only man ever on earth that was justified by His works, and He could have received His allotment, His portion, His piece of heaven, based on His works, His works of sinlessness. But He doesn't – Praise the Lord.

metamorphooō - met-am-or-fo'o -From G3326 and G3445; to transform (literally or figuratively "metamorphose"):—change, transfigure, transform.

meros (mer'-os) From an obsolete but more primary form of μείρομαι meiromai (to get as a section or allotment); a division or share (literally or figuratively, in a wide application):—behalf, coast, course, craft, particular (+ -ly), part (+ -ly), piece, portion, respect, side, some sort (-what).

But He Does Not – Would have to Leave Behind His Loved / Imagine Peter Watching / Pitied

He does not. For that would have meant He would have to leave behind those He loved. Imagine if He had ascended then. Peter, James, and John watching Him go, imagine looking at each other and saying Hope has left. We are left to ourselves, and there will be no metamorphous for us. We are a most pitied people

I'll never Leave You – Love too Much / Climbed 3 – No Sin – No Burden

I will never leave you nor forsake you. I love you too much to leave. Love stays even when times get tough (a word for you married couples). He came down from Mount Hermon, so He could climb Mount Calvary.

- He went up to Mount Hermon with only three; He climbed mount Calvary with you and I.
- He carried no sin to Mount Hermon, but carried the sins of the world to Mount Calvary.
- He climbed Mount Hermon with no burden upon His shoulder, but He climbed Mount Calvary with a cross that was made for you and for me.

Could have Launched / So Long – Showed it could be Done / I'm Fair & Just / Passed us Down

Jesus could have launched right off that mountain into heaven, saying, "So long, gang. I came and showed you that man can live sinlessly. Don't condemn or indict Me for giving you an impossible task. I came and proved it could be done." At that point, the world would have been damned, and God could not have been held accountable for being unfair. But instead of launching into heaven, what did Jesus do? He came down from Mount Hermon. On the way down from Mount Hermon He passed us on our way up Mount Calvary, He passed us carrying our cross, and he came before us said, Let me take it from here, let Me carry that for you. He came down from Mount Herman so that He may climb Mount Calvary

(Matthew 17:4 NKJV) Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." (Matthew 17:5 NKJV) While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Good Here – Get busy Building / World – Spirit / Get some Rocks / Moses – this Best you Find

Peter says oh it is a good thing we are here, I will get busy building some shrines. Here again Peter is thinking in the worldly mentality and totally missing out that Jesus wants him to be thinking spiritually. Good thing I'm here, we can start building some shrines, James and John go get some rocks and I'll get the mortar. Moses and Elijah are probably looking at Jesus saying is the best you could find, this is who you are going to crash the gates of hell with. Oh Jesus, bring us back from the dead please!

Mark – Didn't know what to Say / Pastor Chuck

Mark says Peter said that because he didn't know what to say. As Pastor Chuck says, "Better to remain silent and let people think you a fool rather than open your mouth and dispel all doubts".

Mark 9:5 - 6 (NKJV) ⁵Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"— ⁶because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

Quickly back to Chp 15 / Traditions to make God Understandable / Mt Hermon Tours / Not Equal

How quickly we return to chapter 15. Man instituting traditions and rituals to try to make God more understandable. God is Spirit and His Spirit will reveal Himself to man, He needs no help from us. But Peter wants to build 3 monuments to commemorate this moment. We will build 3 shrines, we will start the Mount Herman Tours, and I Peter will give special guest appearances to retell the story. He will say, "you see James and John were sleeping, but I was deep in prayer, so deep it looked like I was sleeping too, but I wasn't. As I prayed a great light appeared, and Jesus was transfigured before my eyes". We'll bottle the dirt up and they can take some home, and sprinkle it on anything they want to see changed in their lives, metamorphosing their problems into joy. But God interrupts, quiet, enough, this is My beloved

Son in whom I am well pleased. In other words Peter, don't try to put Elijah and Moses on the same level with My son. Mans traditions and rituals always do the same thing, they diminish who God is.

Hear Him – Perfect Tense / Should be theme for Every Believer

Verse 5 - Hear Him - It is in the present perfect tense. It is continually hear Him, now and always. This statement should be the life of every believer-Hear Him, now and continually. This should be our life theme, hear Him. Every day, every moment, we should be seeking His voice to hear Him, asking what do I now do with what I have heard!

(Matthew 17:6 NKJV) And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

(Matthew 17:7 NKJV) But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid."

(Matthew 17:8 NKJV) When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

1st Words after God Spoke

The first words they hear from Him after God the Father says to hear Him, is "arise and do not be afraid". In the midst of their fear, Jesus says arise and do not be afraid.

Fear – Part of Mortal Bodies / Jesus speaks the Same Words / 1 Peter 5:7 / See no Man

Fear is part of our life here in this fallen world, and in these mortal bodies. What is your fear today, I do not know, could it be a failing relationship, job stresses, children or childlessness, illness, loneliness, or heartbreak? Jesus would speak the same words to them He spoke in the storm, "do not be afraid", it is the same words He will speak after the resurrection to them, "do not be afraid", and in all cases He gives us the key to not being afraid in our situation, and that is to fix our eyes upon Him. The great fisher of men says in His word for us to "cast" (a fishing term) all our cares (all meaning all), upon Him, for He cares for you. That word cares means "to be interested", and He is, He is deeply interested and concerned about every (all) concerns you have, not one is insignificant to Him, if it isn't to you. He says do not be afraid, and here is how, look at Me, fix your eyes upon Me, and My greatness (My love, My power) will put your fears into perspective. And, I like the OKJV of this passage, as it says and when they lifted their eyes up, they saw no man, only Jesus. Don't look to man in times of fear, don't look for man to solve, look to the One who came down from Mt Hermon, and ascended Mt. Calvary.

Matt 14:26 - 27 (NKJV)²⁶*And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."*

Matt 17:7 - 8 (NKJV)⁷*But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." ⁸When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.*

Matt 28:10 (NKJV)¹⁰*Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."*

1 Pet 5:7 (NKJV)⁷*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Matt 17:8 (KJV)⁸*And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

(Matthew 17:9 NKJV) Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

Tell story After Resurrection / Nails – Robe – Words / You will experience the Transfiguration

Tell the story of the transfiguration after the cross and resurrection. Then tell them, hey people listen, Jesus was perfect and pure, He could have walked right into heaven based on His works:

- But because of His love for me, and His love for you, He choose the nails. He chose 6 inches of steel to pierce his hands and feet. With every pound of the hammer the smashing of the steel would ring through His ears, with reverberating pulses of shooting pain through His body. Beloved, can you hear the steel ringing thorough your ears today?
- He could have walked into heaven illuminated, radiant, with a robe a white as snow (as white and pure as He is); but He chose to have that very same robe ripped from His body after the threads of the robe had started to imbedded in the blood that had flowed after the 40 lashes, and when they would rip the robe off Him, the blood that had clotted would pour all over again.

- He could have walked into heaven right from that mountain, right after He heard those words this is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, but instead He choose to experience separation from His Father, as He would turn His back on Him for He is too Holy to look upon sin, and Jesus would cry out My God My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?

Tell no one until the Son of Man is raised from the dead, and then it will all make sense, and it will speak volumes of My love for sinful man. The perfect, pure, and holy God choose the cross, man's cross as He crossed us on our way up to Mount Calvary, I'll take it from here; and you My beloved will be changed, you will experience the transfiguration yourself, you will experience a metamorphosis, you will be white as snow before the Father in heaven, you will hear those words yourself, this is My beloved child, you will experience the transfiguration yourself.....because I chose to climb down Mt Hermon, and ascend Mt. Calvary.

Mark 15:33 - 34 (NKJV) ³³Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

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

It is Time!

(17:10-27)

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(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."

King Withdrawing / Investing Disciples / Today – take the 3 for Transfiguration

The King is withdrawing Himself from the multitudes and the skeptics, and we will see Him start to invest more one-on-one time with His disciples, those whom will carry the gospel to the outer parts of the world. last study Jesus calls only 3 disciples with Him to the mount, and He was transfigured before them. What a sight that was, and now we pick up in verse 10:

(Matthew 17:10 NKJV) And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

(Matthew 17:11 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.

(Matthew 17:12 NKJV) "But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands."

(Matthew 17:13 NKJV) Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Malachi 4 / Elijah in spirit of John Baptist / Revelation – 2 Witnesses

Malachi prophesied that Elijah would come before Messiah appeared. Believing Jesus to be Messiah, the disciples asked Him why Elijah hadn't yet made his appearance. Jesus says, if you will, Elijah had already come—in the spirit and power of John the Baptist; and He says, indeed Elijah is coming first and will restore all things (speaking still yet future); Elijah will be one of the two witnesses there in Jerusalem for the 3 ½ year period before the Second Coming of Christ.

Mal 4:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

Rev 11:3 (NKJV) ³And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

Vision all Peter Talk About / Saw Miracles – Transfiguration – Ress / But says More Sure – Word

You would think that vision would be all that Peter would talk about, but it wasn't. I love to have fun with Peter, making jokes about him. I love him because he is so likeable, and so relatable. But I want you to notice a strength about him and these disciples, and that is they knew the word (Elijah is to come first), and not only did they know the word, the word was preeminent in his life. We see him being a man of the word here, and look how he grows in the word as we read his epistle. Peter walked with Jesus, saw the miracles of Jesus, was one of only three to see the transfiguration of Jesus, and then He saw the resurrected Christ; yet what does he write in his epistle, we have a more sure thing than what we have seen with our very eyes, we have the Word of God, - *Hear ye Him!*. He put the Word of God over what he actually seen. The memory of visions will fade, but the Word of God endures forever, what a good word for us today, may we not wait to see something, may we open up to read something.

(Matthew 17:5 NKJV) While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

2 Pet 1:16 - 21 (NKJV) ¹⁶For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." ¹⁸And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And 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; ²⁰knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, ²¹for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 17:14 NKJV) And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying,

(Matthew 17:15 NKJV) "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water.

(Matthew 17:16 NKJV) "So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

(Matthew 17:17 NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

(Matthew 17:18 NKJV) And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

(Matthew 17:19 NKJV) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

(Matthew 17:20 NKJV) So 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.

(Matthew 17:21 NKJV) "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Expect this after Mountain Top / Flat Tires – Ac / We don't live on Mt Top / Special Times

So you can expect this, and you have experienced this, that right after a mountaintop experience you come down from the mountain and Satan is waiting. They come down from the mountain and this scene is going on here. How often you have this wonderful weekend at a retreat and you get home and your gets a flat, or your air conditioner breaks, or your spouse didn't have a mountaintop weekend taking care of the kids all alone, and you can immediately sense that when you walk in the door. So, don't be surprised; just be reminded we don't live on the mountaintop, we live here in the valley, mountaintops are special times set apart for us by God, so we don't come apart. He takes us up to the mountain, so refresh us, to give us new and fresh spiritual revelations, so that we may come down and handle the valley situations. Jesus confirms this by saying, *"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."* We need to go up to the mountain, to have victory in the valley, let me say that again, we need to go up to the mountain, so we can have victory in the valley.

Epileptic – Moon Struck / Russia Believers / Epilepsy painful Enough / Give Compassion

Verse 15 calls the boy "epileptic" which is not a good translation. The Greek is "moon struck", which means there is no medical reason behind it. Just like we say, oh it must be a full moon tonight, which has rhyme of reason behind why people do what they do. When I was in Russia, I had long conversation with the new believers there because they believed that epileptics were demon possession, even if the person was a professing believer. How sad and discouraging for that believer to be labeled with that, and have to know that is what other believers thought of him. Epilepsy is painful enough to live with, then to hear the whispers that you are demon possessed also, oh the pain upon the pain. If you have ever watched a person suffer an epileptic attack, it will break your heart. For many, they never want to see your face again they feel so embarrassed; may we take our past study on compassion and play it all the way through our minds, and go out of our way to bring them comfort.

Luke – Only Son / Relegated to Caretaker- No Joy – No Shooting Hoops /

Luke tells us this is his only son. This father has been relegated to the position of a caretaker, not getting to enjoy the simpler things of parenting. Not enjoying throwing the ball around the backyard, not going to the video arcade with him, shooting hoops, talking to him face-to-face, or get ambushed as he would walk in from a long days work. This father misses the sweet parts of fellowshiping with his son, and his life is relegated to being a caretaker, making sure his son doesn't fall into the fire, or drown in the lake, or walk

out in front of traffic.

Luke 9:37 - 39 (NKJV) ³⁷Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. ³⁸Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him.

Think of Those Time – Then Remove Them / Maybe People Here / Want to Know – Fast & Pray

Think of those times with your child, then remove them, and you can relate to this father somewhat better. But you can also relate to some of the very people that may live next to you, may someday sit next to you here, and may you have compassion for them. Compassion is seeing something that moves you so much, that you can't sit by idly, you have to get involved somehow or somehow. For most of us, we have no idea what it is like for these parents, but Christian do you, do you really want to know, Jesus says fast and pray for them, and you will. This is the place of the Bible Study where you have to ask yourself, will I deny myself and skip a meal, and spend that time rather preparing and eating a meal, but to just sit and pray for them. Try it; you will be amazed at what the Lord will do in your heart for doing so.

Easy to Feel Overwhelmed – Unknowing / Do some Research / Apply 1 Cor 13

It is easy to feel overwhelmed, I don't know anything about epilepsy, downs syndrome, cancer, leukemia, and such; this may be true, and a little research would do us well to at least know the basics of illness. But for us, believers and a Church, we have all the application for meeting their spiritual and emotional needs right here before us in this Word of God. Just apply the word, apply 1 Corinthians 13, and we can assure we are giving the best we have, and that is love:

(NIV) 1 Cor 13:4-8a - ⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails.

So the disciples said we can't cure him, and Jesus answers:

(Matthew 17:17 NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me."

Bring Him / No one Asks Jesus Guide the Doctors

Jesus says to "bring him to Me" – One thing you may noticed in the Scriptures is that no one ever came to Jesus asking Him to guide the surgeons hands, or to give the medical staff wisdom. Nothing wrong with that by any means. But what we do see is they brought those in need to Jesus, and Jesus Himself says to bring them to Me. Let us do that in our prayer, let us come to Him saying, here they are Lord, they need you, Lord help them.

Parents you have that Responsibility / Pray – Talk – Church / Not Legislation – but Jesus

Mom and Dad, you have the responsibility to bring your child to Jesus. Pray for them constantly. Talk to them continually. Bring them to fellowship regularly. How many of our kids must be led away before we understand that the solution lies not in dealing with the drug lords in Columbia or banning music or videos through legislation in Washington? The solution lies in bringing our kids to Jesus.

Bring Them / Parents – are you Willing / Job 10 Kids – Might not Sin against God

Jesus says, "bring him to Me". Parents are you willing to make the sacrifice to bring your child or that loved one (for that matter) to God? Sacrifices cost us something. With prayer it cost us time. With fasting it is the denying of our self, the pleasures and comfort of that meal. What sacrifice are you willing to make for your child, or that loved one? Job gives quite the example, he had 10 kids, and every morning he awoke and offered sacrifices for them. Imagine the time it took to prepare the altar, get the wood, get the animals, fan the fire, and then sacrifice the animals. That took a large amount of time, yet Job would do it everyday. Why? Job says so that they might not sin against you Lord. Parents we have a tremendous calling and responsibility, and it will cost us, we will have to make sacrifices, in order that we might bring our kids to Jesus, so that they might not sin against Him:

Job 1:5 (KJV) ⁵And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

(Matthew 17:18 NKJV) And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

Suicidal Thoughts

Important to note here, that suicidal thoughts and behavior are the influence of Satan. This boy continually throwing himself into the fire or water, was influenced by Satan. Now I am not saying that every person attempting suicide is demon possessed, but they are definitely being influenced by Satan. Satan comes to kill and destroy, but Jesus comes to give life. If you ever have thoughts of suicide, know Satan is coming against your mind. Recognize that it is him, and come to Jesus. Let us not forget the increasing rate of suicide among our teenagers too parents; make the sacrifice for them!

John 10:10 (NKJV) *¹⁰The 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.*

(Matthew 17:19 NKJV) Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

(Matthew 17:20 NKJV) So 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.

Move Mts Literally / Circumstances as big as Mountains – Need not Bury You

Now is Jesus literally saying to move mountains? I don't it, just as mustard seeds don't have faith. Move mountain literally, I don't think so, for what is the spiritual need to move a mountain. The Church could never agree on where to move the mountain to anyways. There would be twice as many church splits over mountain moving than there currently is over what color carpet in the sanctuary should be. I believe what He is saying is that there are things before us that seem like mountains to us, circumstances as big as mountain, insurmountable odds against us, with what appears to impossible situations. But they need not bury you.

Back in Verse 17 – How Long / IT IS TIME / Shown Examples and Words

(Matthew 17:17 NKJV) Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." - Jesus said back in verse 17, "how long shall I be with you, how long till you have faith? how long until you break free of the world, the perverted generation?" As much as Jesus is saying how long, He is saying at the same time "it is time" I have been with you long enough, I have taught you by My word and My example, I have shown you how to have victory over the enemy. Jesus is saying, "it is time, it is time to break through".

Seed Small – Buried by Dirt – Breaks Through / Genetically Preprogrammed

The mustard seed was the smallest seed in that geographical region, and it is tiny. But yet, this tiny little seed, buried under mounds of dirt 100's of times greater in weight, can push up through all the dirt to break forth into the light. The mustard seed is genetically preprogrammed to move the earth upon it, it is genetically preprogrammed to break forth through the ground into the light. These disciples, you and I, have been genetically pre programmed by God Himself to break forth into the light. Those things that seem insurmountable, burying you, keeping you in darkness.... it is time! It is time to break through.

Context – Influence of Satan / No Strategy Satan can Devise Against You / Gates of Hell

The context of this story isn't asking for a new job, getting that house, or something like that; the context of this story is about the binding the influence of Satan in a person's life. Jesus is saying there is no mountain, no obstacle that Satan can put before you, that can't be moved. There is no strategy that Satan can devise against you that will bury you, or defeat you. Jesus had just said, the gates (strategy) of hell can not overcome the Church (you are the church – the called out ones).

(Matthew 16:18 NKJV) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

(Matthew 16:19 NKJV) "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Personal Application / People say Never have Victory

The personal application for us today is that no Christian should be swayed by the influence of Satan. People will say, I will never have victory in this area of my life, it is like moving a mountain, I feel buried. God says, "it is time, it is time to break through, it is what you are preprogrammed to do. You need not be influenced by Satan or this world (aka – the perverse generation) any more.

- Men it is time to say I am going to quit looking at those things. By faith a man can say, "I believe Father I have all I need preprogrammed by the Holy Spirit in me to quit.
- Another here can say, "Father I need only say the word and you can give me a renewed love for that person I am bitter against".
- Another can say, "I need not to continue to be thrown into the fire of my lust".
- Or, "I need not be drowned in the lake of my depression.
- I do not have to continue with this critical heart of mine, my tongue that shreds people, my jealousy, whatever it may be.

How Often we Say – The Situation won't Change

Yet how often we say I just don't have the power to change this situation; I wish Jesus would do a miracle like I have seen Him do in other people's life. As Jesus said to the disciples, you need not wait for a miracle from Me, you have what you need; for we have the Spirit of the Living God living with within us.

The 2 Willing / Unleash the Spirit in your Life

The seed is preprogrammed to break through the obstacles, all the seed needs is to be watered, the watering of faith. Here is where prayer works, or doesn't work; through our belief (faith) or unbelief. It is the "2" willings. Am I willing for this to change, and is God willing to change it. I have free-will to choose sin, just as I had free-will to choose salvation. So if I am willing, in many cases just sick and tired of it, then it comes down to believing God is willing. Oh we know God can, we know of His power and have read and saw His miracles; but we question if speaking out into the air, is really going to change the situation. Listen Christian, and listen closely, God wants to change this situation, He has saved you and wants to conform you into His image, God wants to change you more than you want to, because He is perfect and pure, and that is what He wants to make you right now, He doesn't want to wait until heaven, right now, for "It Is Time". God wants to change you, but He will not violate your free-will, just as He didn't in terms to your salvation. When you believe that God wants to change that thing in your life, then your whole prayer life will change, for you will see that prayer is the releasing of God's Spirit in your life to move freely and do what He wills to do in your life. His Spirit dwells in you, and is ready, programmed, to unleash the power of God in your life. Oh you will see a power in your prayer, for you will know, it is a guarantee to happen, and you will have boldness and confidence to come into prayer.

Christian, It is Time – time to bind these things, time to quit saying I can't, and it is time to believe God is willing.

Personally Believe Binds Satan in Others Life / How Long Last – Don't Know

I personally believe that we can bind the enemy through prayer as he tries to influence other people. That still leaves the person's free-will, their flesh, to do as they wish, but at least at that moment their flesh is not being magnified by Satan's influence. How long does that binding last? I do not know, hence the call for continual fasting and prayer. The same applies for our life. We may only have victory for 1 minute before our flesh, the world, or Satan comes right back at us. It is ok, the prayer line is uninterrupted, and the beauty of that also, it keeps us in continually communion with God.

(Matthew 17:21 NKJV) "However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Disciples Think How could we Know / It is to be a Lifestyle

The disciples, no doubt, would have been thinking, This kind does not go out but by prayer and fasting? How were we to know we would be faced with a lunatic? We didn't have time for prayer and fasting! And that's exactly the point. Jesus is calling for a lifestyle of prayer and fasting, not an emergency session. Had the disciples been praying and fasting all along, they could have spoken the word of faith that would have resulted in deliverance and salvation.

Lifestyle – Know not Tomorrow Holds / Too late once War Comes / West Point

Prayer and fasting should be a part of our lifestyle because we don't know what tomorrow holds. If I hear Jesus right, He's saying, "It's too late to pray and fast when the emergency is before you. You must develop a life of prayer and fasting so that when the problem surfaces, you're already prepared. In the Army Training manual at West Point, the first page says, "the way you train in peace time is the way you will fight in wartime".

Prayer – Attaches / Fasting Detaches / Ephesians – Be Filled – Soaking in the Tub

There is a powerful interaction between prayer and fasting. Prayer attaches us to God; fasting detaches us from the flesh. Sometimes I find myself going 100mph, and I say, I am going "too fast", therefore I am going "to fast". Fasting slows us down from the world and everyday life, and refocuses us on God and the spiritual things. As we become attached to God through prayer, separated from this perverse generation, we then are filled with the things of God. In Ephesians it says to Be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is like sitting in a sauna, or a whirlpool, you are just soaking in things of the Spirit, the Spirit is permeating you. And when the devil is waiting for you at the bottom of that mountain, you don't even view him as a threat, you read through him, you know your God is more than able, and you say, be gone!
*(Ephesians 5:17 NKJV) Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
(Ephesians 5:18 NKJV) And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,
(Ephesians 5:19 NKJV) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,*

Lifestyle Reduces Influence / Constant Realization that Greater is He

This lifestyle, reduces the influence of Satan on our lives. As we soak up the Lord in prayer, filled with the Spirit, we have live in the constant realization that greater is He that is in you then 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.

Flip Side / God give you Free-Will / Spiritual Warfare

On the flip side of this Christian, just as God gave you free-will to choose Him, He also gives you free-will to run your life. For some people, they never ask, so never get help. Some people are too proud to ask for directions. Prayer is faith, for it is the ultimate submission, it is saying I can't but You can, and I believe you will! This is spiritual warfare, and the powers against us are powerful. The word principalities means "high ranking", powers means 'super-human'. The word "rulers" means 'darkness and shady'. The word "spiritual" means supernatural, wickedness and depravity". The powers against us are mighty, therefore our battle plan against them but be too.

Eph 6:10 - 13 (NKJV) ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

It is a Lifestyle / Christian It is Time

It is a lifestyle of prayer and fasting. Christian, "it is time", it is time to make this your lifestyle!

How?

Make a Plan / Make them Non-Negotiable

Make a plan, it can't be as needed, emergency situations, it has to be planned. Make a plan on what goes, what gets adjusted, and when you are going to pray, when you are going to fast, and then make those things non- negotiable. When you believe that God wants to change these things, then you'll pray begin to pray with power.

It is time!

(Matthew 17:22 NKJV) Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,

(Matthew 17:23 NKJV) "and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

New Concept

New concept here and that is of being betrayed. He had told them prior that He would be killed, but had not said before about being betrayed. That no doubt adds to the sorrow of His death, and that is that someone close to Him will betray Him.

Tucked Away – Light-hearted Story

Tucked away in this chapter that spans the heights of the Transfiguration and the depths of the Cross, we find this simple story about a fisherman, a fish, and a coin.

(Matthew 17:24 NKJV) When they had come to Capernaum, those who received the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the temple tax?"

Collecting Temple Tax

As they entered Capernaum, tax collectors approached the disciples. They were not raising money for the Roman Empire or for the political system. They were collecting the temple tax.

Only Matthew Records

Only Matthew records this of all the gospels, of course that is because he was a tax collector.

(Matthew 17:25 NKJV) He said, "Yes." And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from strangers?"

(Matthew 17:26 NKJV) Peter said to Him, "From strangers." Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free.

(Matthew 17:27 NKJV) "Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

King doesn't tax Kids / Jesus is the Temple

So Jesus asks Peter, does a King tax his kids, or his subjects, and Peter says the King taxes his subjects not his own kids. If this is a light-hearted story as I think it is, then Jesus has to be chuckling right here, they want Me to support the temple,, support the temple, I am the Temple.

1 in 10million / Just between Peter and Jesus

They estimate there are around 10 million fish in this sea where Peter casts his line, so the odds of catching this fish is 1 in 10 million, yet he does. I like this, a miracle just between Jesus and Peter. There are some things in life that it just between you and Jesus, and when they happen they are so wonderful. Out of the miracles of the world, He comes into your life and my life, and performs one just for us, a private audience. He is a God who cares for you, thinks of you, personally and individually.

PVC Pipe

I remember one time I was helping renovate a home that was going to be turned into a shelter for abused woman. I was renovating the swimming pool. When it rained the pool would flood the whole backyard and patio, and I had just finished digging a hole to make a French drain, that would run the water away from the house and patio. So I dug this big hole, and said now I need about a ton of rock. Drag I am going to have to order a truckload. Just then I look up and here comes this guy with a wheel barrel full of broken up concrete. He says hey I am ripping out my patio, and was wondering if I could dump my concrete in your hole so I don't have to haul it to the dump. Awesome, so then all I needed was 6 inches of 1 inch PVC pipe to finish off the drain pipe to the pump. It was now way late, and I really wanted to finish because I wasn't going to be able to come back for a week, and I was concerned that another rain would flood the porch, maybe even the living room. I searched all over and could not find anything. I checked with everyone else working there but no one had any 1 inch pipe. So I like bummer, I don't have time to get to the store and my appointment, so I'll just have to clean-up and finish next week. So I clean

everything up, I have the dust pan in my hand, go over to the garbage can to dump it, I lift the lid, the garbage is all the way up to the very top of the can, in a pyramid shape, and you'll never guess what was on the very, I mean very top of the pyramid, a piece of 1 inch PVC pipe, exactly 6 inches long. I love those stories.

Dan in Ukraine

But here is one more, my friend Dan and his wife quit their jobs to travel by RV across the country teaching in churches, and evangelizing along the way. We they were continually living on faith. One day, on their wedding anniversary, they had no money, but Dan said to his wife, what would you like to eat today. She said stop, we have nothing. Dan said if you could have anything, what would it be? She said oh, steak and lobster tail, with fresh vegetables. He said he stepped outside the RV (they were stopped at an Interstate Rest Stop), and as he was standing there he sees this guy with a grocery bag walking towards. Then guy stops right in front of him, places the grocery bag before him, smiles and walks away. You guessed it, Dan looks in the bag, and there was a dinner for two, steak and lobster.

What is Your 1 in 10 Million / You are His 1 in 10 Million

What was your 1 in 10 million? You've had one, you just need to recognize that it was Him. And equally amazing, is that He has the ability to think of each of us, as if we were His 1 in 10 million, the only one on His heart. God loves you, His 1 in 10 million, enjoy that with Him today.

Matthew 18

The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – (18:1-4)

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."

March towards the Cross / King of Kings

We are on the march towards the cross now in this section, and we will be studying over the weeks to come, Jesus equipping the disciples to carry the gospel forward, and then we will get to the death and resurrection of the King. This gospel although coming first to the Jews, will go to all the world, thus why Jesus is the King of Kings. That is one of the errors Pilate made when he fixed the sign above Jesus' cross, calling Him the “King of the Jews”, for truly the sign should have read, “The King of Kings”. In our passage today and the next few weeks, the King will tell us who is the greatest in His Kingdom.

Chp 17 Shine Miraculously / Chp 18 – Speak Practically

In chapter 17, the disciples saw Jesus shine miraculously with kingdom light. Here in chapter 18, they will hear Him speak practically about kingdom life. We go from showing Kingdom Light, to teaching Kingdom Life. Kingdom Life is no easy stuff, we will be challenged in the weeks to come, but those who will respond to this challenge, will find themselves walking in a whole new light, a whole new life, and a whole new love, for these are the things of the Kingdom of God. I pray that you have come here today to be changed, that you will be open to change, that you desire to be great in the Kingdom, because your heart desire is to be pleasing to your King.

(Matthew 18:1 NKJV) At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Luke 9 / Arguing

According to Luke 9:46, the disciples weren't just asking who was the greatest, they were actually arguing about which one of them would be the greatest in the kingdom of which they had just been given a sneak preview.

***Mark 9:33 - 37 (NKJV)** ³³Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?" ³⁴But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. ³⁵And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." ³⁶Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, ³⁷"Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."*

Last Excuse

Ok, there goes your last excuse for those of you who say God can't use me. Here they are arguing amongst themselves who is going to be the greatest in the kingdom, shortly after Jesus had just said I must suffer many things, be betrayed and die. And they argue who is the greatest. If God will use them, God will use you. Find a place to serve, and step out believing that God will bless you, and those you reach out to.

(Matthew 17:22 NKJV) Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men,

(Matthew 17:23 NKJV) "and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

We not Far Off / Missionary – Pastor – Orphanage - Crusade

The disciples are asking for selfish reasons, and expecting a person to be named. We may not be at that point (asking for names), but I think man today can be equally confused on this subject. Man's supposition on who is great in the kingdom of God, differs greatly from God's. If we were to ask Jesus this question today, who is the greatest in the kingdom, we may not be expecting a name, but could be expecting Him to say something such as, the greatest in the kingdom is:

- That missionary who forsook all to proclaim the Gospel.
- The person who pastors a mega-church
- That person who served in an orphanage all their lives
- That person who held large evangelistic crusades.

Man Associates Occupation/Accomplish w/Greatness / Want to be Great – Do This

How man associates occupation and accomplishments to greatness in the kingdom; we consider it up there, because that is the way the world works it down here. But God's answer is anything near those things, He says you know who is great in heaven, or better said..... do you want to be great? Then do these things, and the things He gives for us in this chapter, are all things every last person in this room is capable of doing; the things He outlines for us here, are dependant only one thing, ourselves, and our willingness to do them. I am glad He didn't say, you want to be great, build a mega-church, or hold large crusades, who build an orphanage, or go to the Sudan and preach the gospel, if He had I would probably be quite depressed right now, but what He will say, I am excited, for I know I can do these things if I will, with the help of His Spirit.

Heart Matters – Family Matters / Greatest Seek what Best for Family

These things are all "heart matters", and "family matters". Jesus is saying, the greatest in the kingdom seeks out what is best for the family (both his own, and the church family):

Outline for the "Greatest in the Kingdom"

The Greatest in the Kingdom has:

- The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4
- The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14
- The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4

(Matthew 18:2 NKJV) Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, (Matthew 18:3 NKJV) and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:4 NKJV) "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 18:2 NKJV) Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,

Word for Infant

This word for child is used mostly to mean an infant, or very young child.

Little Nugget / Something Pure & Gentle / The God who Calls You – Receives You

But there is a little nugget here before we get into our study; this one verse, shows me something of the personality and character of Jesus (who is the expressed image of God). He called a little child to Him, and the child came readily. If you go to the mall and watch parents lining up their kids to sit on Santa's lap, you will invariably see tears and terror on the faces of the children. Told to sit on the lap of a big man with a big beard and black boots, it's no wonder they're fearful! But there is never an indication that kids were afraid of Jesus. There was something pure, gentle, and lovely about Him that made children come to Him rather than run from Him. You can't kid a kid. Jesus says let the little children come unto Me, that

tells Me that when children saw Jesus they were drawn to Him, they knew a place they would be received, not turned away, a place that a child would receive what every child wants, to be loved and accepted. This is who your God is, and that is who calling you to Himself right at this very moment, the pure and gentle God, who wants to draw you to Himself, and minister His love and kindness on to you. **Col 1:15 (NKJV)** ¹⁵*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

Matt 19:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴*But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

Approach of Children Church / Only get 90 minutes – Responsibility on Parents

This is also the approach we take in our Children's Church, and that is that the children will want to come, they will look forward to being with Jesus. We want to establish a lifetime of looking to being with Jesus, sitting on His lap, being loved by Him, and loving on Him. That is our goal here, but parents we only get them 90 minutes to 3 hours a week, the greatest responsibility is on you. I beseech you parents, bring you children to Jesus, daily!

(Matthew 18:3 NKJV) and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 18:4 NKJV) "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus says two things a person is to do to be great in the kingdom of God, be converted, and become as little children.

Converted – Repent / Call for Repentance – Man's Free-will

Verse 3 - unless you are converted - Converted, means to be changed, to be turned-around. Doctor Luke tells us in Acts 3 tells us to repent therefore and be converted so that our sins may be blotted out and times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. So there is a call for repentance, and no man may come into His presence without first repenting. Repentance is man's free-will decision, will he or won't he. Repentance is a must in salvation, without repentance there is no forgiveness of sin:

Acts 3:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹*Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,*

Little Children / Not Rebellious Side (after converted) / What Children Are

Verse 3 - and become as little children - But after the profession and commitment to repentance, Jesus goes on to say "and become as little children". What are little children like (as Jesus would be referring to). Well Jesus is obviously not talking of the rebellious side of a child that comes with our sin nature (mine, mine, and mine); Jesus isn't talking about that because He just said you must be converted (repent). Jesus is talking about what is in all children, and I have picked 3 that I see woven though the Scriptures and all children are:

Become as Little Children:

- Kids are Sincere,
- Kids are Sensitive
- Kids are Simple

Kids are Sincere

Are what Are / Without Wax – Bible Times

Kids are what they are, you can see right through them. The word "sincere" literally means "without wax" in Biblical times, and referred to the practice of merchants in Bible times who patched broken or chipped pieces of pottery with wax. If a vessel was not "sincere," an unsuspecting buyer would take it home and put it on his front porch only to see the wax melt and the vessel break in the heat of the sun. There is no wax in a kid, you can see right through them of what they are.

Don't Cover Up – Don't Hide / My 1yr Old – Diapers&Ducks

Kids aren't trying to cover themselves up, hide who they truly are, it is something that really doesn't even cross their mind. My 1 year doesn't care if he has clothes on or not. He doesn't care about the diaper either, he doesn't care that he is naked. Sometimes he crawls around and you think he is stepping on ducks all over the place (quack, quack); he doesn't care, he doesn't laugh, nor does he get shy, it is just what I am.

Kids Sincere – Naked Before All / Be Great – Be Sincere / Burn – Bema / I've been Waiting / It Time

Kids are sincere, they are what they are, they are naked and open before all. God is saying the same, you want to be great in the kingdom, be sincere, be open and honest. Quit trying to convince yourself or others that you are something you are not. It says that all our wood, hay, and stubble will be burned-up before God when we get to heaven, and only the precious metals will remain. Guess what, that means the wax will be melted away too. As you stand before the "bema seat judgment of Christ", who you are will be laid naked and bare before the Lord. The Lord says become as a little child now, be naked now, be honest before Me now. When we are honest before the Lord, when we say Lord, I agree with these faults weaknesses of my life, it is then that the Lord can say, alright, I've been waiting for you to be honest about these things, because I want to change these things, but I can't violate your free-will. God can't, unless you will, unless you will agree, "It is Time" (last weeks study).

1 Cor 3:11 - 15 (NKJV) ¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. ¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. ¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

2 Cor 5:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Open Before Lord – Can Conform

So kids are sincere, totally open and naked before the Lord, and because they are, God can conform them into His image, and that is greatness in the kingdom of God – Do you want to be Great? This is a place where it is ok to strive and seek, not to be admired by man, but to please the Living God:

Rom 12:2 (NKJV) ²And 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.

Kids are Sensitive

Want to Please parents / Bite Lip / Lord wants us to Be Sensitive – Cut it Off / Sanctification

Secondly, kids are sensitive. Even my teenager, when all is said and done, at the end of the day, in his heart he wants to please me and his mother. He is sensitive about pleasing us. Even my 1 year old is sensitive to pleasing his father. He is starting to figure out kisses, and that they mean something. The other day I puckered-up my lips, and he crawled on me, put his lips (actually his mouth) over my lips, and gave me a kiss. Oh it was so sweet; but then, he took his little razor teeth and bite hard on my lips. I couldn't help but to grunt out loud, pull my face away from him. Now he really didn't know what he did, but he quickly pushed off me, crawled 2 steps away, and then turned back and looked at me to see what had happened. Oh I felt terrible, I gathered him up in my arms and said it is ok honey, you didn't know that would hurt daddy. But he know something wasn't right. Even at the age of 1 he is sensitive, he wants to please his mommy and daddy. Little children are sensitive, and that is what the Lord wants us of, to be sensitive to offending Him, and others (as we will read through our passage today He will say if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off, if it is your eye, pluck it out). God has a continual calling upon us to become holy, as He is holy. There is sanctification the position, as He sees us Holy before Him in Christ; and there is sanctification the process, as He is calling us to separate from the former conduct of the world, and be conformed into His image, to be Holy as He is Holy.

1 Pet 1:14 - 16 (NKJV) ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

Huge in Our Overall Study / Sensitive to Hurting Father and Family / Heart & Family / Stumble - Div

This is huge in our study today, the sensitivity about offending God, and offending the church family, for these things are both heart matters, and family matters. If we are not sensitive to offending God and family, then the rest of our study will fail, we will constantly cause others to stumble, and constantly bring

division into the family of God. Do you want to be great in the Kingdom of God? This study today, and the next 2 weeks in this chapter will change your life, they will have a profound change on your spiritual walk, and you can be a spiritual giant for the glory of God. I pray that you will.

Kids are Simple

Love the Simplicity of Kid / Fingertips – not Challenge but Asking

Kids are sincere, kids are sensitive, and thirdly kids are simple. You have to love the simplicity of a kid. I like little Jonah a few weeks back in Children's Church, the teacher said God hold the whole world in His hand. Jonah said how come I can't see His fingertips. Not challenging, but sincerely asking, because His faith believed God was holding the world. Just simple faith believing what has been told him.

Who Accepts the Lord – 80% / Someone Loves Me – where do I Sign Up

Who accepts the Lord when given the opportunity to respond to an altar call? The little children do. They aren't worried what Joey or Sally are doing, they are just raising their hands saying me, oh pick me! They've heard that someone loves them, cares about them, and wants to be with them, and they say oh pick me. Eighty percent of the decisions for Christ are made by the age of 18. How important for us to invest heavily in our children's church and youth group.

Kids keep Life Simple / Not worried how Much Accomplished / Playing & Mom and Dad

Kids keep their lives simple, little kids don't worry at the end of the day how much they accomplished, they aren't under some works trip. The life of a kid is simply to play and enjoy mommy and daddy. The Lord says the greatest in the kingdom, will just keep life simple, they won't get all wrapped up in or twisted up in this or that. They will simply enjoy the fellowship of the Father.

No Fret Tomorrow / Dependant on Parents

A child doesn't fret about tomorrow, doesn't worry about tomorrow. I wont say a little child is trusting the parents for tomorrow, for they don't think about tomorrow; the child is more so, dependant on there parents for today and tomorrow. The simplicity of a child.

Psalm 131 / Weaned Child – Screaming Milk nor Checking Refrigerator

Those childlike qualities of sincerity, sensitivity, and simplicity are key ingredients of kingdom life. David wrote in Psalm 131, "I will not look into things that are too great for me, but will behave myself quietly as a weaned child." In other words, "I'm not going to get spun out or hung up on things that are too lofty or too great. Like a weaned child, I'll just keep it simple." A weaned child is neither an infant screaming for milk nor an adult checking out the refrigerator wondering who's going to pay the bills. A weaned child neither cries nor analyzes. He simply trusts that his father and mother will take care of him. And that quality is what Jesus held up to the disciples as a model.

Psa 131:1 - 2 (NKJV)¹ *LORD, my heart is not haughty, Nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, Nor with things too profound for me.*² *Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, Like a weaned child with his mother; Like a weaned child is my soul within me.*

Psa 131:1 - 2 (NRSV)¹ *O LORD, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.*² *But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.*

Worn over Accomplishments – Theology – Tomorrow

We are children, God says don't get yourself all worn out over accomplishments, there is no quota. Enter into the activity as fellowshipping with your Dad. Our Father says don't get all worn out over the high lofty things, the deep theological issues, nothing can overcome the basics, oh someone loves me, cares about me, and wants to be with me, oh pick me. God says don't worry about tomorrow, that is My responsibility, be dependant on Me, trust Me, so we can spend today togethertotally, and at the end of the day you'll say I can't wait for tomorrow. Don't complicate your life with all the things of the world, just keep life simple, be dependant on Me, I'll take care of your needs.

Jesus was all these Things

Jesus was all these things, thus His greatness in the kingdom. He was sincere, sensitive, and kept it simple.

Sincere

His sincerity, you can read right through Jesus. Jesus was so transparent you could see right through Him, literally at the Transfiguration. Jesus made Himself of no reputation, even though He was God. He just laid Himself bare before all man to see who He truly was:

Matt 17:2 (NKJV)²and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.

Phil 2:5 - 8 (NKJV)⁵Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Sensitive

He was sensitive; His will was always to do the will of the Father, and the Father said that He had, and that He was well pleased with Him. And we have seen Jesus tremendous compassion, sensitivity upon those that were hurting:

Matt 17:5 (NKJV)⁵While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!"

Matt 9:36 (NKJV)³⁶But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

Matt 14:14 (NKJV)¹⁴And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick.

Matt 8:2 - 3 (NKJV)²And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."³Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**" Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Simple

Jesus kept it real simple, He fellowshiped with the Father, and only sought to do what the Father wanted Him to do:

Mark 1:35 (NKJV)³⁵Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

John 4:34 (NKJV)³⁴Jesus said to them, "**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.**"

(Matthew 18:4 NKJV) "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Great – is to be Humble / Sincere & Sensitive – keep thinking More or Less / Simple – With Dad

To be great in the kingdom, we need to be humble. These three, sincerity, sensitivity, and simplicity, will keep you humble. Sincerity will keep you from thinking more of yourself than you are. Sensitivity will do the same. Simplicity will keep you from thinking less, and from thinking more, for just keeping it simple, hanging out with Dad, will keep us in that place of grace.....it is all about what God has done for us. The word for workmanship in Ephesians 2 means "poem". We are His poem.

Eph 2:8 - 10 (NKJV)⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Older Get – More Childlike

As the years go on, I find myself being more childlike, in that I am more dependant on Him, the more I know Him, for the more I know Him the more I see who I truly am, and I need to run back under His grace. We need to be as little children, not in attitude or knowledge, but in heart – to be sincere, sensitive, and simple.

If You have Complicated – Go back Happiest Times / Come back here Often

If you have complicate your Christian life over the years, can I tell you, let all that go, go back to the happiest times you have had as a Christian, and that was when you were first saved, you weren't

concerned about theological debates, you were just happy that the God of the Universe revealed Himself to you. You weren't worried about successful ministries, you were just happy to read the words that spoke of His love for you. You weren't trying to figure out who was friend or foe; you just loved everyone, because you were soaking in His rays of love. Go back to that place, that place of just enjoying being saved, and you will once again get to enjoy that place of being like a little kid again, like you felt when you first got saved. And then, as needed, keep coming back to these three things, and keep yourself in that simplistic beauty of when you were first saved.

Lionel Train

I am reminded of the story of a distinguished elderly gentleman walked into a toy store and saw a Lionel train going around the track. With a sparkle in his eye, he said to the salesgirl, "I'll take one." "Oh, your grandson will love it!" she replied. "You know, you're absolutely right!" he said. "Make that two." Want to be great, become as little children, go back to have that child-like faith and simplicity.

Go have Special Time

I encourage you to go away with the Lord and have a special time of prayer with Him today, go over these 3 things, get back to the Heart of the Child, and you will find yourself experiencing His joy and presence.

The Heart of the Father (holiness)

Matthew 18:5-14

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."

March towards the Cross / King of Kings

We are on the march towards the cross now in this section, and we will be studying over the weeks to come, Jesus equipping the disciples to carry the gospel forward, and then we will get to the death and resurrection of the King. This gospel although coming first to the Jews, will go to all the world, thus why Jesus is the King of Kings. That is one of the errors Pilate made when he fixed the sign above Jesus' cross, calling Him the “King of the Jews”, for truly the sign should have read, “The King of Kings”. In our passage today and the next few weeks, the King will tell us who is the greatest in His Kingdom.

Chp 17 Shine Miraculously / Chp 18 – Speak Practically

In chapter 17, the disciples saw Jesus shine miraculously with kingdom light. Here in chapter 18, they will hear Him speak practically about kingdom life. We go from showing Kingdom Light, to teaching Kingdom Life. Kingdom Life is no easy stuff, we will be challenged in the weeks to come, but those who will respond to this challenge, will find themselves walking in a whole new light, a whole new life, and a whole new love, for these are the things of the Kingdom of God. I pray that you have come here today to be changed, that you will be open to change, that you desire to be great in the Kingdom, because your heart desire is to be pleasing to your King. As we had studied last week, these are heart matters, and these are family matters, thus the outline for chapter 18:

Outline

Outline for the “Greatest in the Kingdom”

The Greatest in the Kingdom has:

- The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4
- The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14
- The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

Recap Heart of Child

To recap our last study we studied the “Heart of a Child (simplicity). Jesus said we were to be converted and become as little children. We broke down what a child is; they are “sincere”, as they are what they are, they are open and naked for all to read, and we talked of how that is what the Lord wants of us, to just be open before Him and man, not trying to cover our faults, but to be open and honest, and how if we do that He can then work those faults and weakness out of us. Secondly, that children are “sensitive”, they are sensitive to pleasing their parents. We talked of how important it is for us to be sensitive before our Father, to be sensitive to offending Him, and to offending others. That plays greatly into today's study. Thirdly, children are simple. We talked of how God wants us to just keep it simple, to keep our walk with Him simple, and to overcomplicate our life, rather just enjoy and soak up our fellowship and love with the Father;

Become as Little Children:

- Kids are Sincere,
- Kids are Sensitive
- Kids are Simple

So let's read our text, and continue our study of being great in the Kingdom of God:

(Matthew 18:1 NKJV) At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

(Matthew 18:2 NKJV) Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them,

(Matthew 18:3 NKJV) and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 18:4 NKJV) "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

(Matthew 18:5 NKJV) "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

(Matthew 18:6 NKJV) "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

(Matthew 18:7 NKJV) "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

(Matthew 18:8 NKJV) "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.

(Matthew 18:9 NKJV) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

(Matthew 18:10 NKJV) "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

(Matthew 18:11 NKJV) "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

(Matthew 18:12 NKJV) "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?

(Matthew 18:13 NKJV) "And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

(Matthew 18:14 NKJV) "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Last 4 Verses – Importance of Individual / Not Globally but Individually

In those last 4 verses Jesus makes a specific point of the importance of the one individual to Him. He is continuing on the topic of the child and He says I transverse the universe to come for the one. It is not salvation globally, but salvation individually. A child is that important to Me, and My child, as in the one who has received Me as Lord and Father, is that precious to Me that I would leave heaven and come to earth for them:

(Matthew 18:11 NKJV) "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

(Matthew 18:12 NKJV) "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?"

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(Matthew 18:14 NKJV) "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

In Context – Great in Kingdom – Treat Well / Do you want to be Great

Jesus is saying in this context, do you want to be great in the Kingdom, then treat the little children well, and treat the person that has given their life to Me well, for they mean that much to Me, that I traveled the universe for them. I left the throne, to come for them, I love them that much, individually, not generally, so if you want to be great in the kingdom, treat them well.

So our outline for today's study is:

Little Children and God's Children

- Receive Them As: As God Himself (18:5)

- Stumble Them Not: To Cause Offense (18:6-10)
- See Them For: God's Love for Them (18:11-14)

Receive Them As: As God Himself (18:5)

(Matthew 18:5 NKJV) "Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

How did Jesus Receive – Gentleness & Love / Blessings to Children's Church / Matt 25

How did Jesus receive this child? He received the child in gentleness and love. Kids were just drawn to Jesus, because he was so drawing. He drew them with His love and gentleness. For those of you that minister, receive these children in our Sunday School, Youth Group, or in various ministries in the community, I pray multiple blessings upon your life for your ministry of love to them. I know the blessings are assured, because Jesus says you are receiving Me when you receive them. When were you hungry, when were you thirsty, naked, poor, when were you as a child.....when you did it to one of the least of these, you did it on to Me. Sunday School workers post this on your mirror as you get ready to teach that Sunday.

(Matthew 25:34 NKJV) "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

(Matthew 25:35 NKJV) 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

(Matthew 25:36 NKJV) 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

(Matthew 25:37 NKJV) "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?'

(Matthew 25:38 NKJV) 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?'

(Matthew 25:39 NKJV) 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

(Matthew 25:40 NKJV) "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

He Loves Them – Put them in Your Heart / Bobby Moffatt / No Applauses – Eternal Rewards

God loves kids, and He gives strong words about how He wants to protect them, and you can be sure His providing for them is equally so, thus He has put it in your heart to do what you do. Again I pray a great blessing upon you and your family for your labor of love, and know that we here appreciate what you do. A number of years ago, a Scottish pastor stood before his congregation and resigned, saying, "In the past two years, I have seen only one conversion in this congregation: wee Bobby Moffatt. With such little fruit, I can no longer serve in this ministry." And he walked away from the pulpit a broken man. Little did he know that wee Bobby Moffatt grew up to be Robert Moffatt, the missionary who opened the entire continent of Africa to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you are teaching Sunday school right now, it's very possible that you have a "wee Bobby Moffatt" in your class. If you work with kids, realize that Jesus places a very high value on children. He says if you receive them, you receive Him. I am not sure if there is any greater ministry than to give yourself to children. You won't get applauses or rewards, but eternally things will be seen.

Our Children's Church – No Afterthought / Bad Theology - Anger Kindled against Hurt Them

Our Children's Church will never be an after thought or what's left over in the budget, we chose to invest greatly in our kids, because they are worth it, and Jesus shows us the Biblical pattern, He loves the little ones. Let me also add here a point about extreme 5 point Calvinist theology; one of their points is the God predetermines, He predestines, who goes to heaven, and who goes to hell, and the person has no say in the matter. They carry that theology out even further that even little babies die at birth, die in their mother wombs, die in the abortion clinic, or die before the age of accountability and understanding of sin, that some of those children have been predestined by God to hell. Jesus is God, He is the expressed image of God, and as I read this story, see His gentleness and love towards children, read verse 6 of His anger kindled against any who would hurt a child, I just can't agree with that kind of theology, I see it as a contradiction to the heart of Jesus as we see in the Scriptures, and the Word itself.

(Matthew 18:6 NKJV) "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

God loves the little ones, and gives strong word now on not to cause them to be stumbled.....

Notes on Children Predestined to Hell (Scriptures that counter that Belief):

- They believe only the children of 2 adults are saved if they had died prematurely. Some say if one of the adults are saved; they will cite (1 Cor 7) which speaks of a spouse and children being sanctified by the believing spouse. Verse 16 counters that because God doesn't say they are saved, but says that by the believer's witness, the spouse may get saved. Psalm 49:7 counters that belief also because it says that no man can redeem his brother or give a ransom for them. To say that children who die prematurely are predestined by God for hell because their parents are not believers, is contrary to what is said in (Deut 24:16) that the fathers shall not be put to death for the children's offense, nor the children put to death for the fathers offense.
- The Scriptures seem to be constant that there is an age of reasoning (accountability) that a child reaches an age where they can understand their sin and offense before the Holy God, and have the mental capacity to repent or reject the witness of the Holy Spirit.
- In the Jewish barmitza, the father says Lord I am no longer accountable for this child he is responsible to you, and the child would say Lord I am now responsible to you. So there was an age at which they were now accountability for themselves before God. The barmitza was usually around the age of 12
- In (Deut 1) God says that all the adults didn't enter the Promised Land because of their unbelief, but the children would because they did not have knowledge of good and evil (v39).
- King David's son when he had died, David said I will see him in heaven. That child was the child of an adulterous relationship that he had with Bathsheba.
- Jonah wanted God to destroy all of Nineveh, but God said that He wouldn't because there were 120,000 children in that city.

Stumble Them Not: To Cause Offense (18:6-10)

Now the call to not stumble a child, whether a wee one, or a child of God.

Stumble Part I

(Matthew 18:6 NKJV) "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

(Matthew 18:7 NKJV) "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

Offense – Stumble/Trip/Wrong Way

Offense means to stumble them, trip them up, to cause them to go the wrong way.

Donkey not Hand / Only Difference is Depth you Die At / Picture of Millstone

This is the donkey millstone, not the hand millstone. This is a large millstone, weighing in the hundreds of pounds, and it would be attached to a wooden pole and rolled over the grain by a donkey. The hand millstone is about 30-40 pounds, and obviously pushed over the grain by hand. Guess what, tie either around your neck, and you still die in the same amount of time, maybe 3 minutes, the only difference is at what depth you die in, 500 feet or 2000 feet!

Definite Impact – Jewish people not Seafaring People / No Drowning as Capital Punishment

Jesus says, "If you cause one of these little ones to question Me or to be thrown off course in their walk with Me, it would be better for you to drown." This would have made a definite impact on Jesus' audience because the Jewish people of that time had a genuine fear of the open ocean. Yes, they were fishermen, but only on the Sea of Galilee. The Jews have never been a seafaring people. In fact, unlike other coastal countries of their day, they refused to use drowning as capital punishment because of their fear of the sea. Thus, Jesus was giving a very vivid and very real description of terror. "If you cause these little guys to stumble," He said, "you're in grave danger."

Jesus says Woe to You / Evolution forced on Them / Not Accident – Bought with Blood

Jesus is saying woe to you who are teaching evolution to these little ones, whether it is in the home, the public schools, or the so-called "higher education' campus'. Evolution is being forced on our kids in the

public schools. Evolution says you are here by chance, actually by accident; therefore you really have no purpose in life. Compare that now to creation, a world created just for you, and a God who formed you in your mother womb, who knows you by name, a God who has a plan and purpose for your life, a God who came and traded places with you to bear your sin upon Himself, how a person would be worth His own blood, and my how different life will be. You are not an accident, you are wonderfully made to be loved by your Creator; woe to those who teach otherwise, and lead these little ones away from their Creator. **Psa 139:13 - 18 (NKJV)** ¹³For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. ¹⁷How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

John 10:3 (NKJV) ³To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

Jer 29:11 (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.

Darwin

By the way, did you know that Darwin supported missionary work? The evolutionist leaves that part out. Read his some of his entries in his journal, and you'll see him mention the missionaries he knew, and how he admired their work. One missionary he ate with almost daily while he was on the ship that sailed to the Galapagos Islands. His wife and children attended church without his objections

Abortion / Considers Life so Valuable send Only Son

What can be said about abortion? There have been over 40 million abortions in the USA since Roe versus Wade. Life is so valuable that God would send His only begotten Son for life.

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

God says – Better for Cement Shoes / God's Anger is Kindled

God says better to be thrown in the water than to trip one of these kids up, for judgment is coming upon them, the millstone was the earlier version of cement shoes. Oh yes, that is God anger towards those that cause a child to stumble. Woe to you, you drug dealers on our high school and middle school campus; woe to you, you child molesters; woe to you, you internet sites that allow the kids access to you spew of garbage. Woe to you, I have custom made shoes for you.....

Stumble Part II

Now Jesus goes on to speak of being sensitive to sin. We will look at it in 2 areas, Personal Holiness, and Protecting Holiness, for Holiness is the heart of the Father. Sensitivity to sin is part of the heart of the child, and to be great in the kingdom of God, one must become as a child.

Sensitivity to Sin

- 1.) Personal Holiness
- 2.) Protecting Holiness

(Matthew 18:7 NKJV) "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

(Matthew 18:8 NKJV) "If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire.

(Matthew 18:9 NKJV) "And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

Hell is Real / Mentioned 50

Verse 9 – cast into hell fire. Hell is real, contrary to what many may say to today. Jesus says hell, because it is. The word Hell is mentioned 49 times in the Bible, Jesus used the word hell some 10 times,

and the various references to hell (sheol, gehenna, hades, and the abode), is used over hundred of time (I counted 115). Hell is a real place.

Not Literal – Sermon on Mount is Spiritual

Cut your hand off, pluck your eye - Jesus doesn't mean this literally for He has shown us on the Sermon on the Mount, that the spiritual things are what is in the heart (it not what you are doing externally but what is in your heart – you might not murder but if you have hatred in your heart you are guilty before Him. You might not commit adultery, but if you have lust in your heart), so therefore the spiritual things can only be dealt with in the heart. You can cut your hand off and pluck your eye out, but you will still have lust and hatred in your heart.

(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.

1.) Personal Holiness

So first the subject of personal holiness.

Deal with it Violently / Can't Let it hang Around / Deal with It – Before it Deals with You / It Time

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said what He says here, "If something you are doing causes offense, deal violently with it. Get it away from you no matter what the price or how painful it may be." We cannot let sin hang around, we must deal violently with it, that is what Jesus is saying, deal with sin violently, don't say well it isn't really that bad. He says get aggressive, get violent, and crush it. Why, deal with it violently before it deals with you violently. Christian, if you are allowing a habitual sin to hang around in your life, today, "It is Time" (our chapter 17 study), it is time to deal with it, before it deals with you.

2.) Protecting Holiness

Context of Children

Jesus speaks again what He had spoken back on the Sermon on the Mount in reference to the sensitivity of sin, but this time it is in the context of causing another to stumble. A huge application for us today as a group of believers. God wants us not only to be living in personal holiness, but to be protecting the holiness in other peoples lives also.

2 Woes / Cause Child to Stumble / If so – Deal Violently / Party – Sex – Woe to You

Verse 7 - The first "woe" is a lamentation, the second one is a condemnation. In other words, Jesus said, "Problems in this world are inevitable. But if people are being derailed in their faith because of your cynicism and unbelief, woe unto you." And in our context of this study, of stumbling a child, if you are doing anything that would cause a child to think since you do it, then it must be ok for them to do it, then deal with it violently. In regards to another brother, woe to you who call that friend and say, come on lets go party like we use to, or take a hit of this you'll love it. And, listen careful those having sex outside of marriage, doesn't matter if you are in love, or married in God's eyes (so you think), what you are doing is causing that other person to sin before the holy God. You are causing them to sin, and that is God's child, and He says "woe unto you".

(Matthew 18:7 NKJV) "Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!"

Also Want to Talk Christian Liberty / Context is Greatness in Kingdom / Sensitive to Others

But I also want to talk to you about causing another Christian to stumble with your liberty in Christ. Again, the whole context of this chapter stems from verse 1, the disciples ask who is the greatest in the kingdom. Jesus answers here in this chapter 18, do you want to be great in the kingdom, then do these things. Have the heart of a child, a simplistic heart, have the heart of the Father, a holy heart, a heart that is sensitive to sin, and sensitive to the needs of children, and in this case the children are God's kids, our

brothers and sisters. Do you want to be great Jesus would ask, then make sure that you don't cause the children to stumble.

(Matthew 18:1 NKJV) At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Heart of Child – Sensitive / Sorry – Most Christians not Sensitive of Others / My Freedom

Our last study was so vital, so important as we were challenged to have the heart of a child, to be sincere, to be sensitive, and to be simple. We were challenged to be like a child and be sensitive. I am sorry to say, that for many Christians, there is no sensitivity about causing another brother or sister to stumble, to steer them off course, to cause them to go the wrong way. For many Christians and maybe that is you today, your heart is such that as long as it isn't sin, you don't care what others think. You are exercising your freedom in Christ to do so, and you feel the other person needs to get over it, or grow-up. Before you get too comfortable in that position, let me take you back to the close of chapter 17.

Best Commentary / Jesus and Temple Tax

The best commentary on the Bible is the Bible, and the best example to follow in life, is the example that Jesus set. Jesus gives a living example in the story of the coin in the mouth of the fish. They say hey Jesus pay up to support the temple, which is ridiculous being that Jesus is the temple. But Jesus says, so that we might not offend them, Peter go get you rod and reel.

(Matthew 17:27 NKJV) "Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

Jesus Demonstrates sensitive others Needs / Sincere People coming to Temple

Jesus Himself demonstrates for us, the sensitivity of causing others to stumble, of being sensitive about others needs. Yes Jesus is the temple, but at that very moment the temple was still set-apart for the people to come and make their sacrifices and offerings before the Lord for atonement of their sin. Sincere people came there to meet with the Lord. Yes there were hypocrites making it their kingdom and trying to elevate themselves, but there also were sincere people coming there to meet with God, their were sincere priests there who were ministering on behalf of God; and for both, the temple tax was needed to supply and maintain the temple and the priests who worked their. Jesus for their sake, paid the temple tax, rather start a rebellion of all the other people says if Jesus doesn't pay, neither shall I.

Do you Want to Be Great / Will you Lay it Aside for Sake of Brother

Do you want to be great in the kingdom, then are you willing to lay that thing aside, for the sake of your brother, your church? I know it is your freedom in Christ to not, but for the sake of the kingdom, for the sake of the brother or sister, are you willing. The whole heart of today's message, the "Heart of the Father", for God was willing to lay it all down, for us; and now the request is coming back to us, will we be willing to do the same.

IBC Root Beer / Short Time to Impact

My favorite soft drink is IBC Root beer, and IBC Crème Soda, oh it is the best soda, but unfortunately they bottle them in what looks like beer bottles, and I, while leaving the Food Lion, want no one seeing me unloading my cart into my car, think that I am buying alcohol. Is drinking a sin, no, but God has spoken to me very specifically that others, especially our youth, will think it is ok for them to drink, since I do. Do I have the liberty to drink a beer, absolutely, do I have the liberty to drink and IBC for sure, but God spoke, I responded. Life is short, and every day I am running out of less time to impact this world, and the impact I make, I want to be spiritual, I want to leave God's mark on people.

1 Cor – Rom 14 / Meat offered to Idols / It is Just Meat – But not to All

In 1st Corinthians 8 and Romans 14, there was a situation that was causing a lot of problems in the church. A lot of the pagan practices involved animal sacrifices. So a person would make an offering at the pagan temple, and then the temple priest would take a portion for themselves, and then take the remainder and sell to a butcher, who then would sell it to the public. Well there were a lot of new believers who thought it not right to eat the meat that was first offered up at the pagan temple, and if they found it was they wouldn't eat it. But other believers, they knew it was just meat, and that their was one God, and one God only, Jesus Christ, so offering the meat to a pagan god meant nothing, because that

false god didn't really exist. Paul says to those Christians who knew that it wasn't sin, and didn't mean nothing, hey as true as this may be, for the sake of love, don't exercise your liberty.

1 Cor 8:1 - 9:1 (NKJV) ¹Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. ²And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. ³But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him. ⁴Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. ⁵For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. ⁷However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. ⁸But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. **⁹But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.** ¹⁰For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? ¹¹And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? ¹²But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. **¹³Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.** ¹⁴Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?

Paul says if our liberty causes another to sin, then we ourselves then are in sin, and have sinned against Christ.

Rom 14:1 - 15:1 (NKJV) ¹Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. ²For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. ³Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. ⁷For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. ⁸For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." ¹²So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. **¹³Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.** ¹⁴I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. **¹⁹Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.** ²⁰Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. ²¹It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. ²²Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin. **¹We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.**

Want to be Great / No Example / Examine - Hear

Do you want to be great in the kingdom, then for the sake of that weaker brother or sister are you willing to leave that thing, whatever it may be, for their sake. I am purposely not giving examples, because I do not want you to be distracted from the point I am making. I pray that you will examine yourself today and say, Lord is there anything in my life that could cause another to stumble. I pray also that should you ever be approached by someone who "in love" says beloved, you may not realize this, but what you are doing is causing me and/or to stumble.

If Sin Matthew 5 & 18 / Situation in Church

Now if it is clearly sin, as spelled out in the Scriptures it needs to be dealt with in accordance to the principles of Matthew 5 and 18. However there are situations that arise here in the church, that something a person is doing may be causing another to stumble that falls in that grey area, or is not really sin at all, it is meat offered to an idol. If we see it here in the church, here is how we choose to handle it here among our family. We will say, brother/sister, here is the situation, there is something you are doing (knowing or unknowingly), and we see that it is or could cause a person or persons to stumble. We don't see this as sin, we recognize you have your Christian liberty to do what you are doing, but for the sake of the other brother or sister, would you be willing to lay down your liberty for the sake of that person. It will be your choice, but I can tell you this that whoever will sacrifice for the sake of unity, for the sake of building the

kingdom, will always receive a blessing from the Lord. He will say, oh now that is greatness in the kingdom.

(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.

(Matthew 18:15 NKJV) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Someone Else does the Approaching / Satan at Work / Before do – Prayer / Compassion

Now someone may approach you personally and say the same, or you may be the one who is approaching someone. Let me say this, before you go you need to be sure that you are going in love. And, as we know the appeal can turn confrontational, Satan can work in those situations, you may come across as legalistic and unloving. I will say to you, ask you, before you do so, how much time have you spent on your knees praying for that person. If you think it is so bad, are you moved with compassion about how it is affecting them. Prayer will give you compassion for that person, and you can come to them in love. If you can't pray for them, then you are just a complainer.

Not Despising

You have to make sure that you are not doing it because you despise them. Sad to say how prevalent that is in the church today, verse 10.

(Matthew 18:10 NKJV) "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven.

Guardian Angels / Camden as baby

This verse supports that we have guardian angels. I really believe that kids can see these angels. When Camden was a wee baby he use to stare at blank ceiling and just smile. I would ask him, do you see angles. Interestingly, the older he got, the less he did it, and now at the age of 1 I can't remember the last time he did it.

Parents we can Let Go

Parents, we can let them go, we can rest at night that God is protecting our kids.

Angels see Face of Father

But on the subject of those that offend a child, and one of God's children, it says here the angels see the face of the Father in Heaven. I take that as the face of God gets angered, offended when someone is hurting and offending one of His little ones, and the angel sees the Father's face, and know He is not pleased, and it is time to get into action.

See Them For: God's Love for Them (18:11-14)

Now God says for us to see them, for the love that He has for them, so that we might see their worth before them.

(Matthew 18:11 NKJV) "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

(Matthew 18:12 NKJV) "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?

(Matthew 18:13 NKJV) "And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.

(Matthew 18:14 NKJV) "Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Analogy Provides Insight / Unconditional Love / Not Dumb Sheep – Love Independent of Obedienc

This analogy provides some interesting insights into our Lord. First, it tells me that His love is absolutely unconditional. Notice that although the lost sheep was one who had strayed, the shepherd didn't say, "That dumb sheep was off wandering where he shouldn't be. Why wasn't he with the rest of the flock? Well, maybe he'll learn a lesson out there." No, his love was independent of the obedience of the sheep.

Whether Straying or Staying – 1st - Unconditional / Why Stay – Wolves and Poison

So, too, whether you are staying or straying, God’s love for you is absolutely unconditional. Then why not stray? Because there are problems out there: wolves, poisonous weeds, and all kinds of dangers that could bruise and break us. Slowly but surely, we’re learning that it’s safest to stay close to the Shepherd.

2nd - Love is Individual / Crossed Universe for You

Second, His love is individual. He loves each of us as if there were only one of us. I tend to think, “Lord, You have millions and millions of sheep. Billy’s always talking to You and working on the next crusade. Or that prayer warrior was up at four o’clock in the morning talking with You daily. And then there’s me—the dumb sheep who’s strayed.” But I’m beginning to understand that the Lord sees people individually. He would have sent His prophets and apostles and recorded the Scriptures just for me. He would have sent His Son just for me. He would have died just for me.

3rd - His Love is Emotional / Doesn’t Rebuke – but Rejoices

Finally, His love is emotional. When He finds the wandering, straying sheep, what does He do? Does He rebuke him? Lecture him? Shake him? Skin him? No, the Word says He rejoices. When we wander away, and the Lord comes after us and finds us, there follows an emotional outburst not of anger but of joy. He gathers the straying sheep in His arms and rejoices greatly because He loves him deeply.

God loves you.....

The Heart of a Brother (unity)

Matthew 18:15-35

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."

March towards the Cross / King of Kings

We are on the march towards the cross now in this section, and we will be studying over the weeks to come, Jesus equipping the disciples to carry the gospel forward, and then we will get to the death and resurrection of the King. This gospel although coming first to the Jews, will go to all the world, thus why Jesus is the King of Kings. That is one of the errors Pilate made when he fixed the sign above Jesus' cross, calling Him the “King of the Jews”, for truly the sign should have read, “The King of Kings”. In our passage today and the next few weeks, the King will tell us who is the greatest in His Kingdom.

Chp 17 Shine Miraculously / Chp 18 – Speak Practically / Heart Matters & Family Matters

In chapter 17, the disciples saw Jesus shine miraculously with kingdom light. Here in chapter 18, they will hear Him speak practically about kingdom life. We go from showing Kingdom Light, to teaching Kingdom Life. Kingdom Life is no easy stuff, we will be challenged in the weeks to come, but those who will respond to this challenge, will find themselves walking in a whole new light, a whole new life, and a whole new love, for these are the things of the Kingdom of God. I pray that you have come here today to be changed, that you will be open to change, that you desire to be great in the Kingdom, because your heart desire is to be pleasing to your King. As we had studied last week, these are heart matters, and these are family matters, thus the outline for chapter 18:

Outline

Outline for the “Greatest in the Kingdom”

The Greatest in the Kingdom has:

- The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4
- The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14
- The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4

To recap the study on the “Heart of a Child (simplicity). Jesus said we were to be converted and become as little children. We broke down what a child is; they are “sincere”, as they are what they are, they are open and naked for all to read, and we talked of how that is what the Lord wants of us, to just be open before Him and man, not trying to cover our faults, but to be open and honest, and how if we do that He can then work those faults and weakness out of us. Secondly, that children are “sensitive”, they are sensitive to pleasing their parents. We talked of how important it is for us to be sensitive before our Father, to be sensitive to offending Him, and to offending others. That plays greatly into today's study. Thirdly, children are simple. We talked of how God wants us to just keep it simple, to keep our walk with Him simple, and to overcomplicate our life, rather just enjoy and soak up our fellowship and love with the Father;

Become as Little Children:

- Kids are Sincere,
- Kids are Sensitive
- Kids are Simple

The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14

To recap the “Heart of the Father”, we saw how we are to receive the little children and all of God’s children’s as if we are receiving Jesus Himself. We are not to cause a brother or sister, or little child to stumble because of our sin or personal liberties. And we are to see all the children, God’s and little ones as God does, and that is so precious that God would leave the throne of heaven to come for the one, if that one was the only one.

Little Children and God’s Children

- Receive Them As: As God Himself (18:5)
- Stumble Them Not: To Cause Offense (18:6-10)
- See Them For: God’s Love for Them (18:11-14)

The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

Heart of Brother / baby in Family / Football - Jace

Now in our study before us today, we look at the “Heart of a Brother(as we look at correction and forgiveness), and that is a heart that is always looking out for the brother. I am the baby of the family, and I can remember how no one was allowed to mess with me, except my brother. He could do what he wanted as a big brother, but no one was ever allowed to pick or touch me. I remember once around the age of twelve or thirteen, I was being totally obnoxious with one of the older kids as we played football, and that older kid was my brother’s best friend. Well, enough was enough, and this kids threw me to the ground, started roughing me up, and I reach over and grabbed a rock and threw it off his lip, blood started to flow, and I knew I was dead. But just before his wrath was unleashed upon me, I hear this growl coming from behind, and a force I thought was a pack of wild dogs coming out of nowhere, pouncing on that kid. It was my brother, and that boy retreated quickly. He knew the my brother protecting me was no match for him. If it was another fight over something else like a girl or something, it would have been close, but not in a fight over me. It was my brother’s best friend, I deserved the whopping, but it was brother for brother.

Virginia / Live – Play - Bleed

I can remember several years later, we were in our early 20’s, it was before I knew the Lord, and we were at a party and it was late in the evening, and the liquid courage was flowing amongst some of the other young men there. I was in another room and someone came to get me and said you need to get in the kitchen. When I got in there, there were a handful of guys surrounding my brother, it seems there were a couple who were jealous of my brother because their girlfriends were showing him some attention (which I could never quite understand considering I am the better looking of us – but anyhow). There was no thought, nothing to ponder, this was family, and I stepped into the circle next to my brother. Now it is 5 against 2, and it would have been ugly all around, and I think myself fortunate to leave with only a few broken teeth and bones. But this is family, you live together, you play together, and if need be you bleed together, because this is family. Five against two was just enough odds for them to say we will meet again at another time.

Williams Kids

How sweet it was this week, we had the Williams children for a few hours Thursday as Bethany was in for surgery. We were at the feeding center, then an outreach at the park (100 some strangers around us), and it was so warming to watch how they always looked out for each other. The 10 year olds were always keeping an eye on the 2 year old, coming and picking her up to carry her somewhere, or just to hold her. I don’t think you can teach that, I think that is just something that happens in a family, they look out for each other.

Great in Kingdom – Looks out for Family

These things we are studying in this chapter are matters of the heart, and they are family matters. Jesus says if you want to be great in the Kingdom, then look out for the family, and take care of the family.

Passion for – Not Against / Grow – Protect – Stand beside / Misunderstood / Love Enough

As a family of God we need to have a passion for each other, not against each other. I want to see you grow, I want to protect you, I want to stand with you. This passage of Scripture so often misunderstood (legalism, judgmentally, self-righteousness), afraid to be applied because it is the passage on Church discipline. It is the passage of confrontation and correction, and that it is. But this is the passage of passion, this is a passage of brother/sister I love you, and I want to protect you and see you do well in the Lord. I want to protect you from yourself (when you are doing something sinful), and I want to protect you from the world when you are outnumbered by the world, the evil one, and you are about to be taken down. I love you enough to come and tell you it is sin. I love you enough to forgive and forget your sin when it is against me. I do this because of my great love and passion for you. By these two I will do all I can to keep unity in the family, and to protect the whole family

Outline: The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

- Loves Enough to call it Sin (18:15-20)
- Loves Enough to Forgive their Sin (18:21-35)

So let's read our text, and continue our study of being great in the Kingdom of God:

(Matthew 18:15 NKJV) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

(Matthew 18:16 NKJV) "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

(Matthew 18:17 NKJV) "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

(Matthew 18:18 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

(Matthew 18:19 NKJV) "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 18:20 NKJV) "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Loves Enough to call it Sin (18:15-20)

Jesus on the subject of being great in the Kingdom says if you want to be great in the Kingdom, then protect your brother from sin when he is in it, go to him to help him correct his errant ways. This discipline is for the sake of the brother, to grow him in the ways of the Lord, and to protect him from wages of sin.

Humility & Honesty / Doctor notices Lumps

The first aspect of kingdom life is humility (heart of child). The second is honesty. If I say I love you, but don't talk with you in honesty when you trespass against me because I'm afraid you won't like me, my love is not real. That would be like a doctor who notices a lump on your body but doesn't want to hurt your feelings by telling you that you need surgery. Love without truth is hypocrisy. But truth without love is brutality. If I speak the truth without love, I leave folks bruised, bloodied, and beaten.

Eph 4:15 Truth on Love / Not Punishment – but Reconciliation/Restore / Corinth / Strong Stances

The key is to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). If there's a trespass, a problem, or a difficulty between us, love requires me to lovingly speak to you about it personally. If you won't listen to what I say about the sin or the trespass, I am to come to you again, bringing one or two witnesses with me. If you won't hear them, I am to go to the church. And if you won't listen to the church, you are to be treated as an outcast. Why? It's not for punishment, but for reconciliation. It's not punitive, but restorative. In chapter 5 of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, he gives the account of a man who, although he was living with his stepmother in immorality, refused to take correction. Paul told the church at Corinth to turn him over to Satan that his flesh might be destroyed but his spirit saved. In other words, "Let him live in the world for a while until he gets so sick of it that his flesh will be destroyed. Then, hopefully he'll come around again

and be saved.” And that’s exactly what happened. He did indeed turn from his sin and return to the Church (2 Corinthians 7:11, 12). Why? Because the church took a strong stand and said, “This can’t go on.”

Eph 4:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—

1 Cor 5:1 - 5 (NKJV) ¹It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! ²And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. ³For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

2 Cor 7:10 - 12 (NKJV) ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. ¹²Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

(Matthew 18:15 NKJV) "Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Biblical Sin / Not Just because Not Invited to Movies

Here is how this is to be done practically. First the sin must be a biblical sin, one that can be identified in the Scriptures, not just the upset you because they didn’t invite you to the movies with the rest of the guys or something like that.

Alone / Keep Silent – Not Gossip / Defense Mechanism

Notice the word “alone” here; that means “alone”. That alone would include the period of time that transpires between their offense against you, and you going to them. We are to keep it alone, keep it between the two of you, so that you might gain a brother. The problem with man is that we have the tendency to want to tell others first, to vent, to.....rip and tear. Well, let that word get back to the brother, and 9 times out of 10 the defense mechanism kicks in, the gossiping back and forth transpire, and the chance of friends, let alone brothers is just about all but destroyed. Jesus says you go alone.

If Come Person Comes to You – Verse 15 First

If a person comes to you and says hey, so-and-so did this too me, then your response should be, “are we on verse 16, have you carried out verse 15? If not, then you need to go back one verse brother. If a person doesn’t want to do verse 15, then they need to remain silent until they are. Anything before verse 15 is just pure gossip, and we are not to entertain it.

(Matthew 18:16 NKJV) "But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'

About Restoration – Not Winning / Personal Approach – Calms Situation

Now the point here is about restoration, it is not about winning the argument. I believe the best approach to this is that when we go grab that witness or two that we don’t try to sway their opinion by telling them all our details and perspective, but rather we should just say we are at Matthew 18:16, and will you come. Imagine if you do that, and when that person is approached, and they are told alright I’ve told them nothing, they are this for the first time themselves, I think the person comes down a notch or two in their defense mechanism/pride/ego because they don’t feel you have been gossiping about them, and telling everyone in the world. If they are truly open for repentance and what is best for spiritual growth, they will know this can be fixed and ended right there. Just maybe though, you may be wrong, you missed something of the story, and you will be glad you handled it the way you did. If you are one of the witnesses, Proverbs says:

Prov 18:13 (NKJV) ¹³ He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.

Prov 18:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷ The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him.

(Matthew 18:17 NKJV) "And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

About Restoration – Not Winning / Pastor First / Several Years Ago

Now the point here is about restoration, it is not about winning the argument. If he refuses to hear and repent, then it needs to be elevated to the church. I think it should be brought to the Pastor and let him deal with the person as he sees best for that person and the sake of the flock. God's discipline is always for correcting and restoration, not destruction. For whom the Lord loves He chastens. But there are those times that someone needs to be brought before the whole church, for his chastening, and for the protection of the church. I remember several years back I figured out a brother was hitting person to person up for drug money, after he got me twice I figured it out. He denied it, brought a witness, he admitted it, and we told him plainly that if he does it again we will bring him before the church. We can't allow you to spin a lie to get your drugs and keep destroying yourself, but the drugs he was doing were dangerous (crack) and we need to protect the flock. Some people prey on churches; they go from church to church and take advantage of the good hearts of the people of God.

Heb 12:6 - 11 (NKJV)⁶ *For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." ⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

If Won't – Turn them Over / How Treat a Tax Collector – Lost & Love / Keep Not Company

Verse 17 - But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. -

If they won't repent, we are to turn them over to Satan as Paul says, and then treat them as a tax collector and heathen. How are we supposed to treat a heathen and a tax collector? As if they are not saved. What is our calling for the lost? To love them and lead them to Christ. So we are not to cast them off, but to love them and try to win them to Christ; while at the same time not allowing ourselves to be tainted by their sinful ways. Sorry, I/we can't fellowship like we use to until you repent. I can't allow you in my home, around my kids and family, and just act like what you are doing is alright, it isn't and you need to repent. If I allow that, then I am giving them approval of their lifestyle.

2 Thess 3:6 - 9 (NKJV)⁶ *But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. ⁷For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; ⁸nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, ⁹not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.*

2 Thess 3:14 - 15 (NKJV)¹⁴ *And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. ¹⁵Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

(Matthew 18:18 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

(Matthew 18:19 NKJV) "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

(Matthew 18:20 NKJV) "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

Confirming what Said in Word / Bind & Loosen / Call it Sin – Restore Repentant

We are confirming what has already been said by the Word of God. What we bind is certain; there is no negotiation of it. But when repentance is sought, then forgiveness is to be given, and the brother is restored

Paul Signs Off

Paul signs off in (1 Corinthians 16:23-24), The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1 Cor 16:23 - 24 (NKJV)²³ *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. ²⁴My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

Those Say that not Love / Open Rebuke Better – Can't Ignore / Done in Love

There could have been those in Corinth who said, 'If you care so much about us, Paul, why did you point out our carnality and rebuke us for our immorality? Why were you so rough on us?' Yet, under the inspiration of the Spirit, Paul simply says, 'I do love you.' Because open rebuke is better than secret love (Proverbs 27:5), the rebukes and exhortations which come our way should be embraced as friends. It's much more comfortable for me to ignore a prickly situation or issue. But that's not love. Love says, 'I care more about your excelling and your succeeding than about what you think of me. If you think I'm not a nice guy, that's OK if what I'm saying will provoke you to love and to good works, to think through what you're doing and perhaps repent from the direction you're heading.' Faithful are the wounds of a friend (Proverbs 27:6). But make sure your correction is done in love ...

Prov 27:5 - 6 (NKJV)⁵ *Open rebuke is better Than love carefully concealed.* ⁶ *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

Last Supper – Jesus Washed Feet / Only Right to Give Correction – If Wash Feet / Rem Silent

As the disciples sat at the Last Supper, under the table were 24 dirty, stinking feet. To remedy the situation, Jesus didn't give a lecture on foot washing. No, He girded Himself with a towel and washed feet Himself (John 13:4-5). I have the right and responsibility to give admonition, exhortation, and correction; to openly rebuke and wound if necessary only if I am willing to wash the feet of the people with whom I deal. If I'm not willing to walk with them through their difficulty, stand by them in their trouble, kneel with them in prayer, it would be wiser for me to keep silent. As a brother sometimes we live together, play together, and sometimes we have to bleed together. Paul was one who had the right to correct, admonish, and rebuke the Corinthian Christians because he worked with his hands to support himself, put up with their insults and risked his life to be with them. Thus, it was truly from his heart that Paul said to the church at Corinth, 'My love be with you all in Christ Jesus.'

Jesus is the Shinkenah Glory / What Jesus wants to Establish in Church Family

Verse 20 - "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." – In the Talmud the rabbis taught that where two or three were gathered and spoke the Law (the Torah) that the "Shikinah Glory of God" was in your midst. Jesus changes that and says where two or three are gathered and in agreement with the word (Jesus is the Word) then there I am, and I am the Shikinah Glory. This is what the Lord is desiring to establish here in this passage, and that is that we can all together, as a family, dwell in His glory, experience, enjoy it, radiate it and emanate it unto our family and world around us, and that glory is revealed when we are in unity together, walking together, in one together.

Loves Enough to Forgive their Sin (18:21-35)

(Matthew 18:21 NKJV) Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

(Matthew 18:22 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Humility – Honesty – Forgiveness / Rabbis Taught / Peter think Doing Well

In kingdom life, there is humility, honesty, and finally, forgiveness. The rabbis taught that one who had been wronged was to forgive the perpetrator two or perhaps three times at the most and then after that no more. So Peter felt noble and generous in asking, "Should I forgive him seven times?"

Lose Count / Also Saying – We will Continually Offend

Jesus makes the point that you are to forgive so much and so often that you can't even keep count of it. If you think this through, Jesus is also saying then that we will constantly be offending each other. When we see Him, we will be like Him, but until then, we will only be glimpses of Him.

1 John 3:2 - 3 (NKJV)² *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.* ³ *And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

Poem

Why do some of God's children have such a difficult time getting along with each other? A poem I heard states the problem perfectly:

To live above, with saints we love
Will certainly be glory.
To live below, with saints we know—
Well, that's another story!

Small Church – Big Church

Here is the blessing and curse of a small church; and that is in a small church you are pretty much forced to learn how to fellowship with people that don't share all your personal opinions or beliefs. Here's what happens in a large church, a person goes into a church of 1000 and it doesn't take long for him to find a dozen guys who like to golf, especially if the church has a golf fellowship every month (same if it was quilting, sewing, surfing, etc). So every time a person comes to church that is who they gravitate to. I don't know if it is so much a click but just people gravitating to each other. The problem is they are rarely challenged, because they have common opinions and beliefs.

When the Service is over they gather into their groups and the "once saved always saved" group gets together and says, now I thought the message really summed up the eternal security issue, the pastor all but came out and said he was Calvinist. Then the group across the sanctuary says, wow I think that message really hit home about mans need to decide for himself eternal life, the pastor all but said he is an Armenian. The Missionary group gets together and says man I am fired up about evangelism, let's pray now for the lost. Then you have the one group that meets by the doors, and they say ok guys we only 10 minutes before the Baptist Church gets out, so is it Bob Evans or IHOP?

Rarely Challenged / Increase to Offend

They rarely are challenged because the people they hang with are just like them: But here in a small church a person is much more likely to be challenged by opposite opinions and personalities. Thus comes the increase of being offended or offending someone.

(Matthew 18:23 NKJV) "Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

(Matthew 18:24 NKJV) "And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

(Matthew 18:25 NKJV) "But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

(Matthew 18:26 NKJV) "The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'

(Matthew 18:27 NKJV) "Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

(Matthew 18:28 NKJV) "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'

(Matthew 18:29 NKJV) "So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'

(Matthew 18:30 NKJV) "And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

(Matthew 18:31 NKJV) "So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

(Matthew 18:32 NKJV) "Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

(Matthew 18:33 NKJV) 'Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?'

(Matthew 18:34 NKJV) "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

(Matthew 18:35 NKJV) "So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

Want to Be Great

Want to be great in the Kingdom, then forgive others.

Parents teach Forgiveness

Parents I think we do well with teaching our kids to go ask another whom they have hurt and offended to forgive them, but I think it important that we teach the other on forgiving. After the child says I am sorry for hurting you; we should say to the other child, ok Joey now do you forgive him. We need to teach our kids not only to ask forgiveness, but to give forgiveness,

10K Talents / Debt Unpayable

10,000 talents equaled about 60,000,000 denarii. 1 denarii was about 1 days wages. The guy owed 60 million days of wages. So if the guy worked the American 5 days a week, with weekends off, and 2 weeks vacation a year, it would take him 240,000 years to payoff his debt. If he worked a straight 365 days, then it would take him 164,384 years. However if he was fortunate enough to get time and half for Saturday and double time for Sunday, then he could shave 30,000 years off his debt, and pay it off in 135,747 years. The debt was un-payable, yet the other mans debt was only 100 days, and the man would not repay the kindness of forgiveness.

In Light of Cross – How do we Justify / Judge Not

Jesus is making the point to us about our debt, and we have to ask ourselves in every situation, in light of the cross, just where do we justify not forgiving? He who has been forgiven much, loves much.

Consider what we have been forgiven of. As we have been forgiven, that is how we should forgive. As we are not judged, nor shall we judge.

***Luke 7:47 (NKJV)** ⁴⁷Therefore 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 6:37 (NKJV)** ³⁷"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."*

Freedom in Forgiveness / Tormented Life

There is wonderful freedom in forgiveness, and how many lives are destroyed because of a past hurt that a person just can't let go of. If you won't forgive, you will be the one who is tormented; you will live a tormented life. I know there are those here today that have been hurt greatly, I don't diminish that, but let me say this, however much they have taken from you, don't let them take any more. Look to what you've forgiven, and move on into freedom.

(Matthew 18:34 NKJV) "And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him."

Not Sure Anything More Christ like we Can Do / On the Cross

I am not sure there is anything we can do on earth that can be more God-like than forgiveness.

Forgiveness is the opportunity for the Christian to be just like Jesus. Jesus hung on the cross and yet He could say, even with the excruciating pain of the nails in His hands and feet, even in the face of His mockers and naysayer, yet He could say, "forgive them Father they know not what they do":

***Luke 23:33 - 34 (NKJV)** ³³And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. ³⁴Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.*

Want to be Great

Not sure there is anything on earth we could do that could make us more like Jesus than forgiving another. Miracles, with the increased knowledge He has given us we walk over water with bridges we build, we don't move mountains we fly over them, we heal the sick with medicine, feed multitudes with harvesting machines and trucks over massive road systems, but forgiveness.....I am not sure there is anything on earth that we could do that makes us more like Jesus. In the context of this chapter, Jesus would say, so you want to be great do you, then do this, forgive one another.

***Matt 18:1 (NKJV)** ¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"*

Chapter 18 Recap

Outline for the “Greatest in the Kingdom”

The Greatest in the Kingdom has:

- The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4
- The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14
- The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4

Become as Little Children:

- Kids are Sincere,
- Kids are Sensitive
- Kids are Simple

The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14

Little Children and God’s Children

- Receive Them As: As God Himself (18:5)
- Stumble Them Not: To Cause Offense (18:6-10)
- See Them For: God’s Love for Them (18:11-14)

Outline: The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

- Loves Enough to call it Sin (18:15-20)
- Loves Enough to Forgive their Sin (18:21-35)

Matthew 19

The Binding of Marriage (19:1-6)

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."

March towards the Cross / Greatest in the Kingdom / No Coincidence

We are on the march towards the cross now in this section, and we will be studying over the weeks to come, Jesus equipping the disciples to carry the gospel forward, and then we will get to the death and resurrection of the King. In chapter 18 Jesus taught us how to be great in His Kingdom, and we ended that chapter with how we are to handle a situation when a brother offends us, and how we are to be a people who forgive those who seek forgiveness. It is no coincidence that immediately following that study we come into this study on marriage and divorce. If you want to have a great marriage, apply the 3 studies we did on how to be great in God's Kingdom, for if we can apply the lessons from chapter 18 into our marriages, I will guarantee that our marriages will be great (see outline below). . But when chapter 18 isn't applied, we have relational problems with other people, especially marriage relations. Marriage is hard, that is the plain fact of the matter. I am reminded of a man named Tom at his 25th wedding anniversary celebration:

At the banquet of Tom and Susan's 25th wedding anniversary, Tom was asked to give his friends brief account of the benefits of a marriage of such long duration. "Tell us, Tom, just what is it you have learned from all those wonderful years with your wife?" Tom responded, "Well, I've learned that marriage is the best teacher of all. It teaches you loyalty, forbearance, meekness, self-restraint, forgiveness -- and a great many other qualities you wouldn't have needed if you'd stayed single."

Chapter 18 Recap

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Outline: The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

- Loves Enough to call it Sin (18:15-20)

- Loves Enough to Forgive their Sin (18:21-35)

Today Look at Marriage / Next Divorce

So today we will look at marriage as God intended it to be, and in our next study we will take an in-depth look on divorce, what is and isn't acceptable according to God's Word. The context of this passage is divorce, but Jesus goes back to the beginning, of how He intended for marriage to be, and if we who or married, or those thinking of getting married, will apply His principles, we will all have blessed marriages, and our study on divorce will just be for informational purposes.

The Church as Advocate

As a church it is our desire to mature and prepare couples for a lifetime of enjoyment of God and each other. To that end we seek to provide pre-marital counseling to help couples make the adjustment to married life by laying a strong foundation for the marital relationship. The job of the church is not done on the wedding day. We desire to stay involved in the couple's life as they grow to maturity. I see that is what Jesus is doing here, the context may be divorce, but Jesus makes a preemptive strike on divorce by giving the beauty of marriage (as He goes back to how God intended it to be in the beginning).

Outline - God's Word on Marriage:

The Binding of Marriage (19:1-6)

The Breaking of Marriage (19:7-12)

Lets read all 12 verses for context and then we will take a look at verses 1-6 today:

(Matthew 19:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

(Matthew 19:2 NKJV) And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

(Matthew 19:3 NKJV) The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

(Matthew 19:4 NKJV) And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

(Matthew 19:5 NKJV) "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

(Matthew 19:6 NKJV) "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

(Matthew 19:7 NKJV) They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

(Matthew 19:8 NKJV) He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

(Matthew 19:9 NKJV) "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

(Matthew 19:10 NKJV) His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

(Matthew 19:11 NKJV) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

(Matthew 19:12 NKJV) "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

50 Years

One of the greatest blessings on earth is a good marriage. A young couple was visiting with an older couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. "Fifty years!" the young husband exclaimed, "That is a long time to be married to one person." The old gentleman looked over at his wife with love in his eyes and said, "Those 50 years would have been a whole lot longer without her." One of the greatest blessings on earth is a good marriage.

Starting back in verse 1:

(Matthew 19:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

(Matthew 19:2 NKJV) And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

(Matthew 19:3 NKJV) The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

Love Nature of Savior – Never Tire of Ministering – Healing - Teaching

I love the nature of our Savior as we see here he never tires of healing, ministering to those who are hurting; and He never tires of teaching, even those things He has already taught on before (Sermon on Mount). Whatever your need is today, the Lord wants to meet it, minister to you. And He never tires of teaching you, even if it is something He has already presented to you in times past and you haven't quite grasped hold of it yet. May we be a people with the same nature of our Lord, may we never tire of ministering to those who are hurting, and may we never tire of teaching (especially you parents), may we have the patience to teach and invest until the message is rooted and grounded, and even then come by to continually water.

(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."

Unfortunately Only want to Argue / Debate rather than Celebrate / Missed Greatest Kingdom Study

Unfortunately in this situation as Jesus heals the multitudes, the Pharisees are only interested in arguing with Him. This should not be surprising, for the Pharisaical mentality always wants to debate rather than celebrate. How sad within Christendom that mentality exist amongst the saved, rather than celebrating and worshipping our wonderful Savior, people want to argue and debate theology, or judge and condemn the body. These Pharisees obviously missed the study on being Great in the Kingdom, the Heart of a Child. The older I grow in the Lord, the more I find myself just wanted to be a worshipper, all the other things seem to tire me, but never worship. When I am in a state of worship, nothing seems to be able to touch me either, for in that place of worship I know everything in my life is going to be alright, for the One that I worship is in my midst (Heb 2:12).

Plot – Set-up / Herod Killed John Baptist / Hoping to Split Followers

The plot to kill Jesus starts getting deeper here, this is a set-up. This district was ruled by Herod Antipas. John the Baptist had been beheaded because he had preached against Herod's adulterous marriage (Mark 6:14-29). The Pharisees are trying to trap Jesus. They already knew it was wrong to get a divorce except under certain circumstances. The Pharisees were hoping to split Jesus' followers by having Him take one side or the other. Or better yet, say something to get Herod offended and be turned against Him.

Pharisees Divided in 2 Camps – School of Rabi Shammai – Hillel / Duet 24 / Hillel - Liberal

Jesus knows the trap. The strict Rabbi said only a sexual sin was reason for divorce. The lenient Rabbi's said for any reason the man could divorce his wife, even if it was because she burnt his toast. The difference came on how they interpreted the word "uncleanness" in Deuteronomy 24:1. 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 considered "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 three times in a row, "I divorce you,".

(Deuteronomy 24:1 KJV) When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

Divorce for Frivolous Reasons / Much like Today / Pharisees know Wrong – Church ?

Consequently, not unlike today, divorce was occurring for the most frivolous reasons. I think one of the greatest statements today for the church about getting divorced for “any ole reason” (irreconcilable differences, grown apart, lost the spark) are these Pharisees! They are testing Jesus, they are trying to get people to turn on Him (especially those who would be made uncomfortable when Jesus said no way are you to get divorced for any ole reason – it is the same today); they test on what they know is wrong, and they know Jesus won't water it down so His response is going to cause division amongst His followers. They figure chip away a little here, chip away a little there, and eventually His impact will be almost down to nothing. My point, if these legalistic, critical spirit, unloving Pharisees know it is wrong, how could believers ever even tread in this area? But they do, because of the hardness of their heart, and the selfishness of their flesh.

(Matthew 19:4 NKJV) And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

(Matthew 19:5 NKJV) "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

(Matthew 19:6 NKJV) "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Jesus goes to Root of Matter / Jesus always Elevated / Leave Spiritual Destitution – Walk Spirit

In answer to their question, Jesus said, “Go back further than the Law of Moses. Go back to the Garden of Eden, for there you will discover the root of the matter.” When Jesus taught He always elevated everything to the ultimate positive. Rather than talking about the negative, He turns it to the positive in that why would you even want to get divorced? When Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount He elevated everything from there physical thinking to a spiritual thinking. He ties murder and anger together, adultery and lust together. Throughout the whole Sermon He is elevating how we are to live, for He is bringing to light the law is spiritual, not just physical. Jesus is saying leave your spiritual destitution and come live and walk in the Spirit. The Kingdom of God is at Hand. May we take that principle and apply it to all that we do, and all that happens, and may we leave the physical and walk in the Spirit.

Eve brought to Adam – Inaugurating Divine Institution / Overarching – God's Idea not Man's

When God brought Eve to Adam, He was inaugurating a divine institution which was divinely delineated. The overarching principle to be considered here is that marriage is God's idea and not man's idea. As such it behooves us to look at God's design for marriage in Genesis. Man may write his books, and make his laws, give his worldly counsel, but marriage was created and ordained outside of this world, it came down from heaven, therefore no man can ever give wisdom on the matter apart from the spiritual.

So let's go back to the beginning, Genesis chapter 2:

(Genesis 2:18 NKJV) And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

(Genesis 2:19 NKJV) Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

(Genesis 2:20 NKJV) So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

1st Not Good / no Mr and Mrs Adam / Showing his Need

All through the 6 days of creation God says it is good, He saw it and said it is good, but here is the first time that God says something is not good in the Bible - that man was alone. There was a Mr and Mrs Hippopotamus, a Mr and Mrs Orangutan, Mr and Mrs Giraffe, but there was no Mr and Mrs Adam. Adam knew that he had no helpmate, no completer. As God brought all the animals before Adam, he was showing Adam his need, He was drawing out of Adam a desire for the same. God showed Adam his need, before Adam even knew he had a need. God will show you that need, not to frustrate you, but to bring you into the greatest fulfillment you can have. When God brings the fulfillment of your desire to you,

it is because of that wanting, that desire to be filled, that when God does fulfill, you will be appreciative, you will be full of joy and praise. It didn't come easy, but through much prayer and seeking.

Not Convenience – but Companionship / Fill Void / Primary Source in World / Sports

Marriage was not meant to be an association of convenience; rather it was to be a covenant of companionship. God intended marriage to fill a void in Adam's heart. Eve took away Adam's loneliness. When man and woman become husband and wife, they commit to be intimately involved with each other for the rest of their life. The Scriptures teach that your marriage partner is meant to be your primary source of encouragement in this world. It is a sin against your mate when you seek to satisfy your loneliness outside of the home such as through sports, hobbies, clubs, work, civic organizations, etc.

Someone to Correspond to Him – Capacity to Think, Reason, Feel / Eve Equal to Share

The Lord made Adam someone to correspond to him (Gen 2:20), someone who had his equal capacity to think, to reason and feel, to hurt and cry, who could aid him in subduing the earth. In all of God's creation, Adam could not find anything to meet his needs (perhaps to help him appreciate God's wonderful creation of Eve). Eve was an equal to whom Adam could relate and share life with. As an image bearer of Christ, Eve would add her strength to Adam's and the two together would accomplish great things for God. Ecclesiastes 4:9 depicts this increased return of their labor when it says, "two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work."

Ecc1 4:9 (NKJV)⁹ *Two are better than one, Because they have a good reward for their labor.*

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Nathaniel Hawthorne (born Nathaniel Hathorne; July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was a 19th century American novelist and short story writer. He is seen as a key figure in the development of American literature for his tales of the nation's colonial history. It most known writing is probably "The Scarlet Letters"

One wintry day Nathanael Hawthorne, the American author, went home with a heavy heart, having lost his government appointment. He cast himself down, as men generally do under such circumstances, and assumed the very attitude of despondency. His wife soon discovered the cause of his distress. But instead of indulging in irrational hysterics, she kindled a bright fire, brought pen, ink, and paper, and then, lovingly laying her hand on his shoulder, exclaimed, as she gazed cheerfully in his face, "Now you can write your book." The words worked like a magic spell. He set to work, forgot his loss, wrote his book, made his reputation, and amassed a fortune.

CEO – Gas Station Attendant

There's a charming story that Thomas Wheeler, CEO of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, tells on himself. He and his wife were driving along an interstate highway when he noticed that their car was low on gas. Wheeler got off the highway at the next exit and soon found a rundown gas station with just one gas pump. He asked the lone attendant to fill the tank and check the oil, then went for a little walk around the station to stretch his legs. As he was returning to the car, he noticed that the attendant and his wife were engaged in an animated conversation. The conversation stopped as he paid the attendant. But as he was getting back into the car, he saw the attendant wave and heard him say, "It was great talking to you." As they drove out of the station, Wheeler asked his wife if she knew the man. She readily admitted she did. They had gone to high school together and had dated steadily for about a year. "Boy, were you lucky that I came along," bragged Wheeler. "If you had married him, you'd be the wife of a gas station attendant instead of the wife of a chief executive officer." "My dear," replied his wife, "if I had married him, he'd be the chief executive officer and you'd be the gas station attendant."

(Genesis 2:21 NKJV) And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.

(Genesis 2:22 NKJV) Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

God puts Adam to sleep / Desire / Wait on the Lord (Ps 37:7)

God puts man to sleep, to bring him to rest. God was saying Adam, just rest, you see your need, you have this desire, now rest and I will bring you your desire. You singles, God says that to you, you have this desire because I have shown it to you, now just rest, and I will bring your desire to you, in my perfect timing. You may say but I am ready, I'm all formed and fashioned, you have breathed your breath upon

me Lord, but God may still be preparing your mate, He may not have even breathed His breath of eternal life into your mate yet. What your Heavenly Father says to you today is, just rest, I'll take care of everything, in my perfect timing.

(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.

Not resting / shaking bushes / mate might not be ready

You see if Adam wasn't resting, then he would have been out there shaking the bushes and the trees, and he would have ended up with an animal. You singles, that is exactly what will happen to you, you go out and start shaking the trees and bushes, turning over every rock, you will get what ever crawls out from underneath that rock, or falls out of the tree, and you will be greatly disappointed. Rest in the Lord, wait on His perfect timing, you may be ready, but the mate God has for you, isn't prepared yet.

Verse 21 - Taken from the side / close to your heart

Verse 21 - and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place - The bone was taken from the side. Not the head that she should rule over him, not the feet that she should be his stepping stone, but from his side, a rib, which is close to the heart. The bride needs to be close to your heart, brides the ribs protect the heart, you need to protect his heart. Wives you are to be at your husband's side, stand by him and with him.

Story of Wife giving Kidney

I am reminded of the story of a couple: After years of marriage, Cindy and Chip Altemos were in the long process of getting a divorce. The proverbial baggage they brought from previous marriages seemed too great to overcome, so they separated and even agreed to date other people. Years into the painful separation, Chip was in the hospital with kidney failure. With his health deteriorating rapidly, his soon-to-be ex-wife came to his aid—"He was still my husband. There was no way I could walk around with two kidneys, and he had none," Cindy told the press. "It was the right thing to do." She agreed to donate a kidney, telling Chip there were no strings attached—no written agreement concerning a better share in divorce court. The transplant took place on February 21, 2007, and a funny thing happened as they both recovered in the hospital: they fell back in love. Chip thought to himself, Why would I want to date someone else, when I have a woman who would give part of herself so I can keep living? He put an end to all thoughts of other relationships and asked Cindy to come back home with him. The two will be married 17 years in October. A wonderful picture of marriage, the giving of a piece of ourselves to that person we have married; they are in us and we are in them.

Something missing in Man / only found in woman

Verse 21 - God had taken from man - God took a piece from man, something was missing in man, and that piece that was missing could only be found in woman. I should also say that woman was never alone, for Eve Adam always was, but for Adam he knew what it was to be alone, and I think we see that difference in men and woman today, so men remember that and realize that, woman was never alone.

Man never able to fully satisfy / Last Adam

But back to Adam, man, is missing something. Man is not all there. Therefore man will never be able to satisfy you fully woman. You can never expect that (and one reason why divorce is so common – next weeks study); woman you have to look to the one that can meet your every need, who you can talk to and go to at anytime - Jesus, the last Adam.

(1 Corinthians 15:45 KJV) And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Men wife reflection of You / Die to self / let this cup pass

Men, if your wife isn't all that you want her to be, you have to look at yourself, because she is made from you. You are to love her as Christ loves the Church, and gave Himself for her. Husband you are to die to yourself. Jesus gave up His desire, "let this cup pass", but not my will, but thy will be done. The only way to die to yourself is to go to the last Adam, and seek Him to help you.

Find in the last Adam is freedom to enjoy

What you will both find as you go to the last Adam is that as you look to Jesus to meet and fulfill your needs, then you lift the burden of having to be perfect and meet every need. You then will be free to enjoy each other.

(Genesis 2:23 NKJV) And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

(Genesis 2:24 NKJV) Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

(Genesis 2:25 NKJV) And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Hope for Unity / Debaq

Is there hope for unity, absolutely, verse 24 says the two shall become one. The word used here for cleave/joined, is the Hebrew word "debaq". It is a gluing, a permanent glue.

2 Requirements for Unity

There are two requirements for unity: leaving and cleaving.

Leave Every Other Relationship / Serve Spouse not Parents / Cut-off / Burn Photos

Leave: Leave every other relationship, burn the bridges, cut loose the life rafts, wave bye-bye to mother and father and all others. You can't be living for your parent's consent and approval. You have to serve your spouse not your parents. Parents you have to let them go; give counsel and then let them live it out. Couples you have to cut-off the relationship with that guy or gal at work, the old friends from church or high school. No more lunch dates with the opposite sex, no more coffee breaks together. Burn the photos of the old flames, shred their cards and letters, and remove them from your Rolodex. When there is Leaving it means there is no comparing your spouse to anyone. Men your wife has to be secure in this, that there is no other that you are comparing her to.

Woman Seek Spiritual Leadership from Husband

Woman you are to seek your spiritual leadership from you husband. If you have a question ask your husband, if he doesn't have the answer than let him go find out the answer. When he comes the leadership in the church, than we get to disciple him, and he grows in his leadership in the home. He has to know that you look to him for leadership and there is no one else that can lead you.

Cleave – More than 2 Bodies – 2 Souls / You must Cleave to get those Feeling

Then secondly, *Cleave:* Cleaving is that romance and intimacy. The bible says that sex is more than two bodies coming together, it is two souls coming together, it is giving a piece of yourself away. You may say well I don't have those feeling anymore, I don't want to cleave. Let me tell you, you have to cleave to get those feeling. You don't wait for the feeling to cleave, you cleave and those feeling then come.

Both Naked – No Comparison – No Competition

And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed. - there was no competition, there was no comparison, so then there was no embarrassment or fear of rejection. As Adam would say, WOW, this is now mine, all mine, she is my completer, she is a gift from my Father.

Conclusion

(Genesis 2:23 NKJV) And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

This is Now

When Adam saw woman for the first time, notice what he says? This is now.....

This is now bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. This is now, she is now my life, my breath, my heart beat.

The past is past, it is now, I am no longer alone, I am no longer singular. She is a gift from the Father.

This is Now.....

Marriage promise is only here and now / Live like it / Work / News / Game

Married couples, all you are ever promised in your marriage, is now. As you look at your spouse, remember these words, "this is now". Live your marriage for the now,

- let work wait instead of your wife,
- let her news be more important than the evening new,
- let her always be the game of the week.
- Wives don't give your husband whatever, if there is any, leftovers from the kids, your career ladder, and the sorts.

This is Now.....

Heal the wound / fix the problem / share the joys and sorrows

For you married couples, "this is now", to heal the wound now, to fix the problem now, to listen to the other now, to enjoy each other now. When you said I do, this is now your family, you now share the ups and the downs, the joys and the sorrows, because you are now one, the two have now become bone of bone, and flesh of flesh, the two have now become one. This is Now.....

No longer singular / Family respect that

When Adam saw Eve, he said I am no longer Adam single, I am now Adam plural. When you see me, you see me and my complete counterpart.

The Breaking of Marriage (19:7-12)

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."

March towards the Cross / Greatest in the Kingdom / No Coincidence / Ruth Graham - Parole

We are on the march towards the cross now in this section, and we will be studying over the weeks to come, Jesus equipping the disciples to carry the gospel forward, and then we will get to the death and resurrection of the King. In chapter 18 Jesus taught us how to be great in His Kingdom, and we ended that chapter with how we are to handle a situation when a brother offends us, and how we are to be a people who forgive those who seek forgiveness. It is no coincidence that immediately following that study we come into this study on marriage and divorce. If you want to have a great marriage, apply the 3 studies we did on how to be great in God's Kingdom, for if we can apply the lessons from chapter 18 into our marriages, I will guarantee that our marriages will be great (see outline below). But when chapter 18 isn't applied, we have relational problems with other people, especially marriage relations. Marriage is hard, that is the plain fact of the matter. They asked Ruth Graham if she had ever once considered divorcing Billy Graham for whatever reason, and she answered, "divorce, never! Murder, now that is a different story. A few years back I was having dinner with a couple who had been married for 50 years. The wife said something totally quirky and off the wall, the husband looked at me and said, "if I would have killed her 40 years ago like I wanted, I'd be out on parole right now and a free man." Marriage is hard, but it is one of the most wonderful blessings man will ever experience on this earth, and Jesus gives us practical application on how to have a great marriage.

Chapter 18 Recap

Outline for the "Greatest in the Kingdom"

The Greatest in the Kingdom has:

- The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4
- The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14
- The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

The Heart of a Child (simplicity) – Matthew 18:2-4

Become as Little Children:

- Kids are Sincere,
- Kids are Sensitive
- Kids are Simple

The Heart of the Father (holiness) – Matthew 18:5-14

Little Children and God's Children

- Receive Them As: As God Himself (18:5)
- Stumble Them Not: To Cause Offense (18:6-10)
- See Them For: God's Love for Them (18:11-14)

Outline: The Heart of a Brother (unity) – Matthew 18:15-35

- Loves Enough to call it Sin (18:15-20)
- Loves Enough to Forgive their Sin (18:21-35)

Last Look at Marriage / Today Divorce

So last study we looked at marriage as God intended it to be (The 2 Becoming One), but unfortunately there are times when the two won't or don't become one, and Jesus will talk on the grounds for divorce, when the two can go their separate ways. So in our study today we will take an in-depth look on divorce, what is and isn't acceptable according to God's Word.

Outline - God's Word on Marriage:

The Binding of Marriage (19:1-6)

The Breaking of Marriage (19:7-12)

Let's read all 12 verses for context and then we will take a look at verses 7-12 today:

(Matthew 19:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan.

(Matthew 19:2 NKJV) And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

(Matthew 19:3 NKJV) The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

(Matthew 19:4 NKJV) And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'

(Matthew 19:5 NKJV) "and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

(Matthew 19:6 NKJV) "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

(Matthew 19:7 NKJV) They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

(Matthew 19:8 NKJV) He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

(Matthew 19:9 NKJV) "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

(Matthew 19:10 NKJV) His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

(Matthew 19:11 NKJV) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

(Matthew 19:12 NKJV) "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

Verse 7

(Matthew 19:7 NKJV) They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

If 2 are 1 – Why Certificate of Divorce

In other words, the Pharisees are asking Jesus, "If the union of two who become one is to remain for as long as they live, why does the Old Testament offer the option of divorce at all?"

(Matthew 19:8 NKJV) He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.

Duet 24 - Uncleanness – Levitical Law / Leviticus 18 – Matt 1:19 / Not Frivolous Reasons

As we looked at last study the problem arose when the rabbi's interpreted Deuteronomy 24, some were very liberal and said you could divorce for any ole reason (like burnt toast or not keeping you looks up), while other rabbis who were conservative said only if it was in the bounds of some sexual uncleanness.

When we look at this word “uncleanness” we have to examine it within the bounds of the Levitical Law because it was written in the Levitical Law. The word uncleanness as it is used throughout the Levitical Law meant “nakedness” as to be exposed. What could be exposed after the marriage started? They could find out that she was a relative and per Leviticus 18 they were not to be married. Another was that the woman wasn’t a virgin as she said, thus the man could divorce her. Remember in Matthew 1:19 when Joseph found out that Mary was with child he wanted to put her away. It wasn’t because she burnt the toast, or the man had lost interest in her, and some of those things we discussed last week. The nakedness, the uncleanness, was in terms of sexual purity and faithfulness.

Deut 24:1 - 4 (NKJV) ¹⁴When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, ²when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man’s wife.....

Lev 18:6 (NKJV) ⁶None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I am the LORD.

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

Given because of Hardness of Heart / Hardness – Spiritual Destitution/ Protect the Woman

So Jesus address’ the intent of the divorce certificate as it was intended from the beginning in the bounds of the Levitical Law, and then covers ground two, the hardness of mans heart. Jesus answered by saying that the Law of Moses made provision for divorce not because God desired it, but because of the hardness of men’s hearts. Divorce was never God’s heart or God’s intention. But because the people had become so hardened, the Law of Moses allowed this heathen custom of divorce to take place. This word “hardness” in application means “Spiritual Destitution.” I believe God established the divorce certificate because He knows that man’s heart is wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). We have already established that divorce in Old Testament time could only be granted if it was contrary to the Levitical Law. God established the divorce certificate because He knew how cruel man’s heart could be. The divorce certificate was primarily written to protect the women. The law protected the wife by restraining the husband from impulsively divorcing her and abusing her like an unwanted piece of furniture, like a thing, instead of treating her like a human being.

OT Penalty Adultery – Death / What happened Spouse / Liberal Camp – Any Reason

According to Old Testament Law, the penalty for adultery was not divorce but death (Duet 22:22), so a person didn’t need a certificate of divorce really after adultery. When asked so what happened to your spouse, oh they died, I’m a widow now (the certificate would answer any questions if she was truly free to remarry). But the one camp of religious leaders were very liberal, and would grant divorce for just about any reason because they didn’t want to offend the person in fear that they might leave the church and quit giving their tithe.

Deut 22:22 (NKJV) ²²“If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.

Without Bill – Woman Outcast – Defenseless – Destitute / Remarry – Adultery / Not a Victim

Without a bill of divorcement a women could easily become a social outcast and treated like a harlot. No man would want to marry her, and she would be left defenseless and destitute. Without a certificate another man may think she was not actually divorced and if he married her he would be guilty of adultery and subjected to death by stoning. But with a certificate of divorce she could prove she was eligible for remarriage per the Levitical law. God put regulations around divorce so that the wives would not become victims of the husbands whims.

Israel Chosen – Not Perfect / Sad they Twisted / Church Pastors Afraid / Same Rate World

I am comforted in knowing even though Israel was God’s chosen people, and they were suppose to be the witness to the world, God knew they were not going to be perfect. How sad it was that children of Israel twisted the Scriptures to fit their selfish desires. But the church today does the very same thing. I believe it is primarily because Pastors in churches today are afraid to preach the truth because they afraid to offend people. These Pastors will have to stand before God and give an account on why they didn’t stand firm. The divorce rate among professing Christians is now at the same rate as the rest of the world, 50 percent. Tell me if a couple who are not believers in Christ are having marriage troubles, do you think

they will be drawn to the church for help? They will say, "Jesus didn't help their marriage, He surely can't help mine."

Church Divorce Greatest Anti-Witness

Divorce in the church is one of the greatest anti-witnesses the church has today.

Israel Just Left Slavery – Saw Glory – Short Time hard Hearts / Tabernacle Glory

Divorce in Israel was a major factor contributing to the beginning of the fall of Israel. They had just left the bondage of slavery in Israel, yet in just a short time men were divorcing their wives because of hard hearts. Their hearts were hard even after they saw all the glory of God. They saw the plagues upon Egypt, the Passover, the Red Sea part, and many other miracles. When the tabernacle was built they saw the "Glory of God" descend upon it. They saw the cloud in the day, and the fire at night yet they still had hard hearts. Amazing.

1450BC Law Given – 950 Kingdom Divided / America Settled in 1600

It was approximately 1450 BC when the law was given, and only 500 years later in 950BC was when the kingdom of Israel was divided. It is a guarantee that when a family is divided, the nation will divide. 500 years sounds like a lot, but consider this: America was settled in 1600 and it is almost the year 2000.

Skleros – Sclerosis / Wakeup and Have Heart Attack – History – Diet – Exercise – Blood Stops

The Greek word translated "hardness" is skleros—from which we get "sclerosis," a word most often used in conjunction with a hardening of the arteries. Whenever a divorce occurs, the reason is never what people say it is. The reason is always hardness of heart. You don't just wake up one day and have a heart attack, it begins slowly, a poor diet, maybe a family history, lack of exercise, the stresses of life, and slowly over time a hardening of the arteries begins and grows until the blood can't flow, and then the attack on the heart comes. That is what happens in divorce, maybe there was a family history and more was caught than taught and it is brought into the marriage and never dealt with, and then a poor diet begins as one or both is taking in the things of the world rather than God, and then the lack of exercise as one or both no longer do things together, get lazy in their relationship, and slowly over time, the flow of blood is blocked, and the heart that once beat so strong for each other just stops, and the marriage suffers a heart attack. Please go back to last study, cultivate and continue, never ceasing the two becoming one. Come to the church and we will help you, provide you material, do all that is necessary to open that flow of blood to the heart so that your marriage doesn't suffer hardening of the arteries and then a heart attack.

(Matthew 19:9 NKJV) "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

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. 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.

John 1:17 (NKJV) ¹⁷*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

Deut 22:22 (NKJV) ²²*"If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.*

Leadership at CCAAC Committed

The leadership here at Calvary Chapel of Anne Arundel County is committed to bringing people to maturity in Christ. In support of the mission, it is our desire to articulate our understanding of the marriage relationship as called out in the Scriptures. It is our goal to strengthen the family and to call people to faithfully carry out their marital commitment in a manner that is well pleasing to God and a testimony for

the world to emulate, hence why we put such an emphasis on our pre-marriage counseling (the church will not perform any marriage ceremonies unless the couple completes the pre-marriage counseling).

Church Recognizes / Not the Unpardonable – Or Unforgivable / Don't Live with Opinions

The church also recognizes that not all divorces violate the word of God. It also recognizes that divorce is not the unpardonable sin. Though God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). Divorce is not necessarily the "unforgivable" sin either; it can be restored if that is what both persons desire. I say that to make a very specific point church; let us keep our opinions out of the matter when adultery has hit a marriage. We can be almost as upset about the adultery as the offended is, and we may want to say, leave the jerk, go find better.....but you see, we don't have to live with out opinions. We will not be the one who is home alone, it won't be our kids affected, it may not have been "the love our life". We need to love and listen in these times, and keep our opinions to ourselves.

The Church and Remarriage / Rom 7 – 1 Tim 5

We can see that the Scriptures plainly teach that is not wrong to remarry (Romans 7:3) – "But if her husband dies, she is free from the law, and if she marries a different man she isn't an adulteress." In some cases remarriage is encouraged. 1 Timothy 5:14 says, "I want younger widows to marry, to have children, to run their own homes, and give the opportunity for insult" If sensual temptation is a problem, it would be more desirable to marry than to bring shame to the Lord's name by immoral conduct.

Rom 7:3 (NKJV) ³So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

1 Tim 5:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Jesus Speaking to Israel / Never Marry Outside

When Jesus was teaching here, He was speaking to the Nation of Israel, not us the Church. Israel was never to marry outside the nation, they were never to marry an "non-Jew". The only grounds for divorce is what we have discussed. However, now we live in the "Church period", and there are other grounds for divorce as called out in the New Testament, and they go beyond just sexual immorality. So we have made a worksheet to cover the various scenarios that have often been asked, "what does the Bible say in this situation", so lets take a look at some of them (although this is not exhaustive, it pretty in-depth).

Marital Status Worksheet

Status

Two believers; one commits adultery.

Options

The innocent party may sue for divorce, though is not commanded to so (Matt 19:9). The innocent party may remarry another believer. The violator is not free to pursue divorce because of their sin; they should come with attitude of repentance and ask for forgiveness and do all to restore the marriage.

Recommendation

Church discipline on the offending party (Matthew 18:15-35). If repentance follows, try to seek restoration of the relationship.

Matt 19:9 (NKJV) ⁹And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

Status

Mixed believer-unbeliever marriage, where the unbeliever wants to remain in the marriage.

Options

Do not divorce the unbelieving spouse (1 Cor 7:12)

Recommendation

Believer is to be a testimony to unbelieving mate (1 Cor 7:16 & 1 Peter 3).

1 Cor 7:12 (NKJV) ¹²But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

1 Cor 7:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

1 Pet 3:1 - 2 (NKJV) ¹Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, ²when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

Status

Non-believing spouse wants to leave.

Options

Believer is free from the marriage and free to remarry (1 Cor 7:15)

Recommendation

Church should go to counsel the non-believer. This Church recommends that the Believer should let the non-believer initiate the divorce papers since they are the one who wants to leave. Believer should try to reconcile the marriage if at all possible so the believer can be a testimony to unbelieving mate (1 Cor 7:16 & 1 Peter 3).

1 Cor 7:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

Status

Spouse (believer or unbeliever) deserts a believer

Options

If deserter is a professed unbeliever then believer is free from the marriage (1 Cor 7:15) If the deserting spouse professes to be a believer but has refused to submit to Matthew 18:15-20 disciple, then they are to be treated as it is said, a heathen and a tax collector (which are unbelievers). The believer is free from the marriage.

Recommendation

Since it is not possible for the believer to let the non-believer initiate the divorce papers due to their desertion, this church recommends the believer seek the Lord for what He wants them to do (to sue for divorce or not). This church will support whatever decision the believer makes. If the decision is to sue for divorce, this church will support the believer's remarriage when the time comes.

1 Cor 7:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

Status

Two non-believers obtain a divorce and then one of the former spouses becomes a believer (2 Cor 5:17, 1 Cor 7:8-9)

Options

2 Cor 6:14, the believer should not remarry and become unequally yoked.

Recommendation

Do not remarry.

2 Cor 6:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

Status

Death of a spouse.

Options

Remarriage is permissible (1 Cor 7:39-40, Rom 7:14)

Recommendation

Free to remarry. Encourage if chastity is now a problem (1 Cor 7:9). Particularly younger women (1 Tim 5:14)

Rom 7:3 (NKJV) ³So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

1 Tim 5:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.

1 Cor 7:8 - 9 (NKJV) ⁸But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am; ⁹but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Status

Two believers who divorce for a reason other than biblical reason of adultery.

Options

Be reconciled to one another (1 Cor 7:11) or remain unmarried.

Recommendation

This requirement of Scriptures is not meant to be a punishment for divorce, but rather an opportunity to restore one's relationship with God. When someone gets divorced for other than biblical reasons, the person not only transgresses against his former spouse, he also breaks his vow before God. The offending party is given an opportunity to demonstrate his restored relationship with God by returning to the wife God had given him for life. In doing so, he renews his commitment to live under God's gracious law of liberty.

1 Cor 7:10 - 11 (NKJV) ¹⁰Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. ¹¹But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

Status

Two believers "want" to marry where one or the other has had a non-biblical divorce

Options

Church is not to marry them (1 Cor 7:11)

Recommendation

Person is to cease from the current relationship and try for reconciliation with former spouse.

1 Cor 7:10 - 11 (NKJV) ¹⁰Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. ¹¹But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

Status

Two believers marry (outside the current church) where one or the other has had a non-biblical divorce

Options

Involvement in the church to be determined by the attitude of repentance towards their sin.

Recommendation

Work to strengthen the marriage even though their union started sinfully, it is not to say that after true repentance a fruitful marriage cannot blossom (see David and Bathsheba).

2 Cor 7:10 - 11 (NKJV) ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Status

Former believing spouse remarries, and you are the one who sued for an unbiblical divorce.

Options

If reconciliation was honestly attempted but made impossible by the marriage of the former spouse, then the repentant brother/sister is free to remarry.

Recommendation

Future/potential spouse of person who sued for an unbiblical divorce is to clearly made aware that the prior divorce was unbiblical by the person they are considering to marry.

2 Cor 7:10 - 11 (NKJV) ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Status

Person divorces a believer before they were saved, later they get saved, and their spouse remains single.

Options

Free to marry a believer; not bound to the past or by the past for all things have been made new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). The prior spouse is free to remarry based (1 Cor 7:15).

Recommendation

The new believer should seek to establish their new relationship with Christ first and foremost. The new believer should seek the Lord as to His will for them and if they should remarry. The prior spouse is free to remarry based (1 Cor 7:15), but should seek the Lord's will for them if he/she should wait on the spouse who just got saved.

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

1 Cor 7:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

Status

Person divorces a believer before they were saved, marries an unbeliever, later they get saved (but spouse remains an unbeliever).

Options

They are not to seek to go back to their first marriage. They are to remain in the state they were in when they got saved (1 Cor 7:17-24)

Recommendation

They should seek by their witness to lead their non-believing spouse to the Lord (1 Cor 7:16 & 1 Peter 3).

1 Cor 7:17 - 24 (NKJV) ¹⁷But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches. ¹⁸Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. ¹⁹Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters. ²⁰Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. ²¹Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. ²²For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave. ²³You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.

Status

Believing spouse wants to sue for divorce based on adultery (stating that their spouse is committing adultery because of their lust for pornography or immoral thoughts of having relationships with other people (Matt 5:27-30).

Options

Must stay married. The Sermon on the Mount was to show the condition of a man's heart and a need for a Savior. If lust is adultery, then anger would be murder. Lust should not end a marriage, and anger should not cause imprisonment, unless in either case they are carried out physically.

Recommendation

Counseling for both parties, seek to free the person from the bondage of their sin, and to bring comfort to the spouse who feels betrayed.

Statistic:

In a '06 study reported by *Morality in Media*, 73% of U.S. adults thought viewing porno Web sites and videos was morally unacceptable. Yet a *ChristaNet.com* survey finds 50% of Christian men and 20% of Christian women admit to being addicted to pornography. Also 60% of Christian women admit to having significant struggles with lust; 40% say they were involved in sexual sin in the past year; and 20% struggle with looking at it on an ongoing basis. More Christians are admitting to being addicted to porn. Bill Cooper, CEO of *ChristaNet.com*, points out the problem is, in part, because these types of issues are not addressed from the pulpit. Perhaps it's because earlier surveys indicate about 30% of pastors have problems with porn.

Matt 5:27 - 28 (NKJV) ²⁷*You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'* ²⁸*But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

Status

Persons not saved prior to marriage, marriage ceremony not held before the Lord, 1 or both get saved, now want to divorce based on their belief that they weren't married before God.

Options

Must stay married. 1 Corinthians 7:17-24 says to let each person remain in the state they are currently in upon becoming a believer. Romans 13:1-2 says that believers are to be subject to the governing authorities (who recognize them as being married); God recognizes the marriage contract before man, as a covenant before Him.

Recommendation

The couple should not be looking for a loophole (easy way out) to end the marriage, but be seeking God to mature them, and mature/restore their marriage. The moment they said, "I Do", it became God's will for their life, and they need to live as such.

1 Cor 7:17 - 24 (NKJV) ¹⁷*But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.* ¹⁸*Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.* ¹⁹*Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.* ²⁰**Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.** ²¹*Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.* ²²*For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.* ²³*You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.* ²⁴**Brethren, let each one remain with God in that state in which he was called.**

Rom 13:1 - 2 (NKJV) ¹*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.* ²*Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.*

Status

Believers before marriage, and married before God in the church; both believers want a divorce based on that they were having pre-marital sex, and that they shouldn't have been married to start with, and that it was not God's will for them to be married.

Options

Must stay married. Their vows and covenant before God are binding regardless of the sin they were in. Here we have a stern warning to keep our commitments made before the God. We are not to make decisions rashly or under coercion, for our words do matter to God. He expects us to live by them. Matthew 12:37 tells us, "for by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." If you made a verbal commitment before God, you are married and expected to live out its ramifications for life. For further study on vows read Genesis 14:21-24, Leviticus 27, Numbers 30:2, Deuteronomy 23:21, Psalm 15:4, and Matthew 5:37.

Recommendation

The couple should not be looking for a loophole (easy way out) to end the marriage, but be seeking God to mature them, and mature/restore their marriage. The moment they said, "I Do", it became God's will for their life, and they need to live as such.

Matt 12:36 - 37 (NKJV) ³⁶*But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.* ³⁷*For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

Deut 23:21 (NKJV) ²¹*When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.*

The Church as Mediator

In 1 Corinthians 6, the Scripture plainly teach that Christians are not to take Christians to court in front of non-believers (1 Cor 6:1-9). Rather we are to take disputes to the church (1 Cor 6:4) and allow the people of God to handle disputes amongst Christians. Note: On the basis of 1 Cor 6, whenever the church knows of a case where one believer has brought another to court, the person initiating the lawsuit should be told to cease the legal process and direct the grievance to the church. As the church takes its shepherding role seriously, it should know of such relational failures early on in the conflict and intervene by providing instruction and counsel to restore the relationship.

1 Cor 6:1 - 8 (NKJV) ¹Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? ²Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? ⁴If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? ⁵I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? ⁶But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! ⁷Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? ⁸No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!

Matthew 18 – Settling Disputes

When marriages have disputes, the method to settle disputes is found in Matthew 18:15-20. Here are the four-step process given to us in Matthew 18:

Step One: personally confront the individual who has offended you. If the person repents, forgive them and go on to restore the relationship.

Step Two: If the offending person will not listen to you in private, you are to take one or two persons with you in order to establish your concern (Duet 16:6). Once again your desire is reconciliation.

Step Three: If after the personal and public attempts to restore the relationship have failed, Christian people are called to bring the matter to the leadership of the church in order to effect change.

Step Four: If after several attempts to restore the relationship have been refused by the offending party, the church must recognize this spirit of unrepentance as inconsistent with the life of a believer and “functionally” treat this person as a non-Christian. Even this stern action has the greater purpose of restoring the offending party to the relationship with Christ. The scripture says to “hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord” (1 Cor 5:5)

1 Cor 5:4 - 5 (NKJV) ⁴In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁵deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

To summarize, when problems arise in the context of marriage, the believer is not to run to secular courts; rather they should look to the church for mediation. If in the long process of mediation a person “functionally” identifies himself as an unbeliever by refusing to heed the church, the believer may have to go along with the legal proceedings initiated by the “unbelieving” partner. Such an action would, at this point, not be contrary to the teaching of 1 Corinthians 6.

What About Separation?

“In the Bible, the modern idea of separation as something less than divorce was totally unknown as a viable alternative to divorce. Whenever the word separation (chorizo) appears in the New Testament, it is in connection with divorce, therefore it always refers to separation by divorce.

When confronted with problems, Christians are called to confront those issues head on. Separation by its nature avoids the problems; it may bring temporary relief from the intense situation, but does nothing to bring resolution to the relationship one way or another.

1 Corinthians 7:15 tells us that God has called “us to peace”. Separation does not lead to peace, but uncertainty and confusion. Scripture gives us two options during marital crisis, reconciliation or by reason of the two aforementioned issues, divorce. In either situation, we can come to resolution and thereby

gain peace. Denying separation also takes away the excuse that some Christians give, "well at least we aren't divorced."

1 Cor 7:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

Temporary separation (with defined purposes and strategies for reconciliation) may be desirable at times (Domestic violence, confusion, rage, or addictive behavior, for a few examples). The here is to still make reconciliation possible. Extended separation complicates matters (I feel so good now that I don't want to go back). The extended separation strains the communications and makes problems solving almost impossible. Such actions should be taken in consultations with leadership in the church. Separation should not come until/unless the divorce proceedings begin, and the marriage is all but over except for the paperwork.

(Matthew 19:10 NKJV) His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

(Matthew 19:11 NKJV) But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given:

(Matthew 19:12 NKJV) "For there are eunuchs who were born thus from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept it, let him accept it."

Disciples – WOW – Better to Stay Single

The disciples said, "If what You say is true, Master, it's better not to get married at all. It's too tricky, too dangerous, and too troublesome."

Wisconsin Newspaper Ad

Also reminded of the Wisconsin newspaper ad:

For Sale: Wedding dress with train and chapel length veil, size nine, never worn, 250 dollars. The same ad also offers - Smith and Wesson 9mm pistol - used once, 1000 dollars.

Eunuchs

Jesus answered that there are some who are born eunuchs. That is, they remain single because they were born without any desire for the opposite sex. Others were made eunuchs. That is, they were made eunuchs through castration, which was a common practice of conquering nations upon men placed in certain positions; for example, those in charge of the king's harem. Still others made themselves eunuchs by choosing to live a single lifestyle for the sake of the kingdom.

Apostle Paul – Good to be Single / Phillip – 4 Prophetess

The apostle Paul would later write that the single state was a superior state (1 Corinthians 7:25, 26) because one could devote himself fully and completely to the work of the kingdom. On the other hand, Phillip, the great evangelist who preached to the city of Samaria in Acts 8 and saw virtually the entire city get saved, had a wife and four daughters who grew up to be prophetesses.

1 Cor 7:25 - 28 (NKJV) ²⁵Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy. ²⁶I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—that it is good for a man to remain as he is: ²⁷Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. ²⁸But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

Stay Single – Great / Married – godly Kids

So, if you're given the grace and the calling to remain single, rejoice in that and in the freedom it affords you to serve God with abandon. If you're not single, be like Phillip and raise godly kids. And if there has been a failure in your past, know there is a redemptive plan for your future as you seek the Lord with sincerity.

Conclusion

Think Divorce is Answer / My Little World – Not one has Done Better

Let me wrap this study up by saying so many people today think divorce will answer all their problems, but they find out that divorce can be a very lonely place. Just from my little world, so far all the Christians I know who have gotten (unbiblical) divorces, not one of them is as happy when I knew them as married. Also, all the ones who initiated and proceeded with the divorce knowing that it was wrong - guess what? Not one of them is walking with the Lord today. They have all left the church and are living a life like they never knew the Lord.

Not Unpardonable – Great Consequences / Unfound will Rob You / Count Cost before Go Against

Divorce is not an unpardonable sin. But there is a great consequence to pay here on earth. Unfounded divorces will rob you of your walk with God. Count the cost before you decide to go against the word of God.

If thinking – Not your Spouse – Your Relationship with God / Don't Force Self

If you are thinking about divorce today I would suggest to you that it is not so much something has happened in your relationship with your spouse, but more so something has happened in your relationship with your Lord. Don't try to force yourself to love your spouse, instead seek the Lord as you once did. You will find as you fall deeper in love with Him, it will naturally lead you to fall in love with your spouse. "What God has joined together" God is the "Glue" that holds a marriage together - Seek Him.

Study in Chapter 5

I encourage you to go back to chapter 5 and study again our study on 3 marriage killers, anger, lust, and divorce. Here is how they break down and destroy a marriage.

- 1.) A Heart that that won't Let Go (Anger in the Heart)
- 2.) A Heart that thinks there is Something Better (Lust)
- 3.) A Heart that thinks there is Another Option (Divorce)

Jesus said – Let no Man Separate / No Human Decree can Nullify God's Word

Jesus said, "What God has joined together, let no man separate." Men may make laws that violate this divine order, but no human decree can nullify God's Word. Marriage is supposed to be a life partnership. Christian, the law of this land may allow it for just about any reason, but not God.

Matt 19:4 - 6 (NKJV)⁴And He answered and said to them, *"Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*

Jesus said – That Settles It

Jesus said it and that settles it. There is a saying, "Jesus said it, I believe it, that settles it." Not so! It doesn't matter what you believe, it only matters what Jesus said, because that settles it.

Don't Do Today – Not Do Tomorrow / Flowers – Breakfast / Come Home Drunk / Keep Fresh

Couples keep dating one another; keep your relationship fresh, guard yourself from getting into a grind or a slump. Continually make time for one another; take walks together, have coffee together, hold hands, keep kissing one another, make time to cleave. And as I have said often, don't do today what you are not willing or planning on doing 10 years from now; for if you do that, the other will think that you have lost your love for them, oh I remember when he use to send me flowers every month, now I haven't seen a flower in 5 years. She use to cook me breakfast every Saturday, now she tells me the Eggo's are in the freezer. I am reminded of the story of a man at work decided to show his wife how much he loved her, and before going home, showered, shaved, put on some choice cologne, bought her a bouquet of flowers. He went to the front door and knocked. His wife answered the door and exclaimed, "Oh no! This has been a terrible day! First I had to take Billy to the emergency room and get stitches in his leg, then your mother called and said she's coming for 2 weeks, then the washing machine broke, and now this! You come home drunk! Keep your marriage fresh, invest time together, invest time in prayer for your marriage, and we as a church won't need to call up this worksheet on divorce.

Matt 19:4 - 6 (NKJV)⁴And He answered and said to them, *"Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,'⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*

Do you want to be Complete?

Matthew 19:13-22

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Chp 18 Great in Kingdom / Chp 19 – Marriage and Divorce

So in the past few studies we have seen how to be great in the kingdom of God (as prescribed by Jesus in chapter 18); and then in this chapter 19 we have studied God's heart and desire for marriages, and His few exceptions for divorce. So we pick up here in verse 13 of chapter 19, and today we will look at the power of the laying on of hands as Jesus blesses the little children, and we will study the passage of the rich young ruler that came to Jesus, who lacked one thing. Are you lacking today? Do you want to made perfect (as the passage says)? Then God has a word for you today through the power of His word:

Matt 19:20 - 21 (NKJV) ²⁰The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

2 Tim 3:16 - 17 (NKJV) ¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(Matthew 19:13 NKJV) Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

(Matthew 19:14 NKJV) But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

(Matthew 19:15 NKJV) And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.

Marks Gospel / Woe to you Parents / It is Just in Them / Woe – Sleep In - Ravens

In Mark's gospel it says that Jesus was displeased with His disciples, and it is the only time we read of Him being angry with them, and it is in the context of keeping the little ones from coming unto Him. Woe to the parents, woe to you parents that do that to your children; as we have talked about before, there is just something in a child, they know God exists, they don't wrestle with creation versus evolution, they don't wonder if they are "good enough" to come before Him, it is just in them and they want to come to Him. I don't believe man teaches children God exists, but the opposite, that man through their actions and philosophies teach that He doesn't exist, and that is done by keeping them from Him. Wow to the parent that doesn't have time for church, or spiritual conversations about Jesus, wow to the parent that keeps their children from Him because it is their only day to sleep in, or the Ravens are at home, or whatever the reason. The only time we see Jesus angry at His disciples (His followers, and it means "learners"), and that was when they kept the little ones from Him.

Mark 10:13 - 16 (KJV) ¹³And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw it, **he was much displeased**, and said unto them, **Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.** ¹⁵Verily I say unto you, **Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.** ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Recent Traveler to China

How Jesus loves the little ones; a recent traveler in China remarks on the fact that all the time he was there, some two and a half years, he never saw a single monument or tombstone marking the grave of a

child. This is very remarkable, remembering the people's ancestor and grave worship. The whole countryside is a densely populated cemetery, and yet no tokens of the burial of children. Buddhism and Confucianism ignore the child; only Jesus took them in His arms and said, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven"

Not Coincidental Right after Divorce / Children left confused and Hurt

I don't think it's coincidental that right after dealing with the issue of divorce, Jesus turns His attention toward the children, for children are always directly affected by the divorce of their parents. There is always that thought that things will be better if I can just get out of this relationship, even if it would be an unbiblical divorce (my situation is an exception, or I just don't care what the Bible says), if I can just get out things will be better. Lots of children are confused and hurting today because of divorce; the parents may feel free, but they just imprisoned their children. Better think and seek the Lord to hear His voice on how that divorce will affect the little ones.

Luke's Account – Masculine / Prayer – I Need Help / Touch my Love – Best for Them

But here is a nugget of this story I love, of this same event, Luke writes: "And they brought unto him infants..." (18:15). The Greek pronoun he uses for "they" is masculine. In other words, it was the men who brought their kids to Jesus. I like that! I think we all picture the mothers bringing the kids, but the Greek indicates that it was the men. It is easy to picture the loving mother getting her child to Jesus, but I like the visual picture of grown men, coming to Jesus so that He might pray for them. Prayer is humility, prayer is saying I can't do this on my own, or I can do it well by myself, I come to you Lord for help. Prayer is the act of submission, the releasing of that thing to the Father. These men come, oh that Jesus might touch my child, the one that I love, the child that moves my heart, I want the best for them, therefore I'm not out making extra money to buy them the best clothing, or take them on vacation, to pay for their education (all great things), but I know the best I can give them is Jesus, bringing them to Him, so that He may touch them and pray for them. Men, may we humble ourselves, may we be broken men that saw I must get my child to Jesus. Pray for them daily, get them to the Sunday School, bring Jesus to them by godly discussions about Jesus in our every day life. Say, Heavenly Father please, touch my child.....

Luke 18:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

Disciples Rebuked – Slow Learners / Protecting Jesus – Release of Power / Never Tired

Verse 13 -but the disciples rebuked them - The disciples are slow learners in a lot of cases, and this is one of them. Jesus just taught on the "greatest in the kingdom", and that was becoming as a child, yet these guys are trying to keep the children from coming. But maybe it is because in their minds they were protecting Jesus. You see whenever Jesus ministered, there was a release of His virtue so noticeable to Him that even in the midst of a crowd He was aware of it (Luke 8:46). No doubt, ministry exacted a toll on Jesus, which may explain why His disciples were trying to protect Him. What we see here is that Jesus is never too tired for anyone. What is your need today? Come to Him, and hear His voice saying, "come unto Me".

Luke 8:46 (NKJV) ⁴⁶But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."

The Laying of Hands / Transfer Guilt & Shame – Now Dynamic of God Xfr Blessings of God

Verse 15 - And He laid His hands on them - So they come, and Jesus lays hands upon them. Jesus imparts a blessing upon them (Mark 10:16). What a blessing for the children and families, how the fathers must have walked away in comfort and peace saying to themselves, Jesus just bestowed a blessing upon my child, I can rest in that. What a blessing, and what an example I believe for us today, the laying on of hands and the pronouncing of a blessing upon a persons life. In the Old Testament man transferred their guilt and shame unto the innocent sacrificial lamb by the laying on of hands (Leviticus 1); we did that for our salvation by laying our hands unto Jesus Christ the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, we transferred our guilt and shame unto Him. Now, and through the dynamic power of God, we can now transfer and bestow blessings upon people by the laying on of hands. It was the role of the priests in the Old Testament to pronounce a blessing on to the people or a person, they did that often by the literal laying on of hands to that person. Jesus is the High Priest, and we see Him doing so here (Hebrews 3:1). We are the "royal priesthood", have the same calling, power, and authority (2 Peter 2:9). The greatest reason and example for the laying on of hands is the simple fact that Jesus did it.

Lev 1:3 - 4 (NKJV) ³If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. ⁴Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

Lev 9:22 (NKJV) ²²Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings.

Heb 3:1 (NKJV) ¹Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus,

1 Pet 2:9 - 10 (NKJV) ⁹But 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; ¹⁰who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Empowered for Service

In the Scriptures we also see the laying on of hands was also for the empowering for service upon a person, the receiving of spiritual gifts, and the healing of the sick.

Num 27:18 - 20 (NKJV) ¹⁸And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; ¹⁹set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. ²⁰And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

1 Tim 4:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.

2 Tim 1:6 (KJV) ⁶Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

Mark 16:18 (KJV) ¹⁸They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Hebrews 6 – Foundation of Believer

In Hebrews the laying on of hands is one of the author's lists of six basic foundational principles every believer should understand. If you're a teacher, these are six areas you should be teaching new believers. And if you are a new believer, I encourage you to explore these very important principles of our faith. The Scriptures declare that these things should be part of our everyday Christianity.

- Repentance—both from sin and from trying to earn salvation through works
- Faith
- Baptism—both water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- Laying on of hands—for blessings, finding your spiritual gift and being empowered for service
- Resurrection—including end-times teaching, the Rapture of the Church, and the millennium
- Eternal judgment

Heb 6:1 - 2 (NKJV) ¹Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Lay Hands – Put Flesh on God / Take Example of Jesus / To Touch – To Care / Feeding Center

When we lay hands upon people and pray for them, bestow a blessings from God upon them, we put human flesh on God again, Immanuel God with us (Matt 1:23); Jesus becomes more than words but a touch. I have no doubt in my belief that when we lay hands on people, there is a releasing of the Spirit upon he that lays, and he that receives, just as it happened in Luke 8:46. As the Spirit of God touches, the Spirit of God is moving. Oh that we would take this example of Jesus, that we would more often lay hands and touch one another, pray and bestow blessings upon each other. When we touch, even one another and how long we have been with each other, we can still feel uncomfortable doing so; but let us not feel uncomfortable, let us follow the example of Jesus, for when we do a whole new dynamic of fellowship occurs, a person says wow, you love and care for me enough to touch me. How I love to lay hands upon people at the Feeding Center, how many times I say let me pray for you, they say ok, put their heads down to pray, and then I put my hand upon their shoulder, and how many times their head pops up, eyes open, and they look at me as if to say, I can't believe you are touching me, nobody touches me, everyone is afraid to touch me. Beloved, start laying hands upon people (your kids, your brethren in the church, those you meet along the way) and watch what God does as you do.

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

(Matthew 19:16 NKJV) Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

(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."

(Matthew 19:18 NKJV) He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'

(Matthew 19:19 NKJV) 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

(Matthew 19:20 NKJV) The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

(Matthew 19:21 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

(Matthew 19:22 NKJV) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Running – Rich – Ruler – Religious / Risks it All – Excommunicated from Synagogue and Temple

Mark says this man came running to Jesus and falls at Jesus' feet, Luke says he was rich, all show he was religious, and all show that he was rich. At this point in Jesus' ministry the word had gone forth from the religious leaders that any Jew associating with Jesus would be excommunicated from the temple and the community. Here comes this man, risking it all! He has a position (a ruler – maybe in the courts or something), he has money, and he has youth, yet he is willing to risk it all to come to Jesus.

(Mark 10:17 NKJV) Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Luke 18:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Youth – School Year Again / What will you Risk to Identify / You were Bought / Swim Upstream

Hey you youth, here we go again, another school year, what will your witness be this year. Will you risk it, will you risk reputation, your position amongst your peers, to identify yourself with Jesus? This man in our story today wasn't even a believer and he risks it all, how about you who have been bought with a price, redeemed by the divine blood of the Lamb, what will you do this year. Let me tell you this, you friends want the same thing you want, they want to be loved, accepted, and secure. They may not talk it, show it, but deep in their heart they have that same God-shaped void in their heart as you once did. Live it out this school year, any dead fish can float down stream, but I pray you swim against the flow. The salmon swim upstream because that is where they spawn, that is where they reproduce, not floating downstream but working it out through the current against them. Live out what you have been saved for.

Back to Story

So back to this story, this rich young wealthy ruler.

(Matthew 19:16 NKJV) Now behold, one came and said to Him, "Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

(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."

Scriptures Declare – None Good

Scripture records that there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). Only God is good. Thus, Jesus asks, "Since God alone is good, are you saying I am God?" The OT clearly declared that there was none that were good; for this man to call Jesus good is to declare Him God.

Rom 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

Psa 53:1 (NKJV) ¹ The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity; There is none who does good.

Isa 53:6 (NKJV) ⁶ 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.

Isa 64:6 (NKJV) ⁶ But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Jer 17:9 (NKJV)⁹ *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"*

1 Sam 2:2 (KJV)² *There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*

Psa 136:1 (NKJV)¹ *Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.*

Psa 34:8 (KJV)⁸ *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

Willing – Pay it All / One Shot Deal / Many Today Want 1-Shot / Say Prayer – Eternity Secure

So he comes, willing to risk it all, until he found out he would have to pay it all. He asks, what good thing (singular), not things (plural) shall I do that I may have eternal life. He is looking for a one-shot deal, maybe like a business deal he brokered to gain his wealth, Ok, what one-shot thing can I do to secure this eternal life. We see it today, many people think that because they prayed a prayer at a crusade, raise a hand at church, or pray with another person they are set for eternity, that that one "good thing" was all that it took for their eternal security. It is why I personally don't have altar calls, because I don't want anyone thinking that it is the prayer that saves them. I want them to live it, and their life will confirm their heart's belief.

That is Not Christianity / Jesus says Keep Commands / Which Ones – Short List

This man wants a one-shot answer, but that isn't Christianity. Jesus says you want to enter into life, keep the commandments. Verse 18 the man asks, which ones; I find that humorous that He says which ones, for if I was Jesus I would have said what do you mean which ones, all of them! So this man couldn't get a one-shot answer for eternal life, so now he is asking for a "short list" that he can work off of.

Jesus Dialogues – Draws out true Heart / Stay in Discussion when Jesus starts Dialogue

But I like this dialogue that we read here as Jesus draws out of this man his true heart, as Jesus exposes what it is that is keeping this man from a commitment to Him, and it was that his possessions posed him. When Jesus starts a dialogue, believers too, stay in the discussion so that He might draw out of you what you are lacking and in need of; many times we want to change the subject because we know a change request is coming, and that can make us uncomfortable.

(Matthew 19:18 NKJV) He said to Him, "Which ones?" Jesus said, " 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,'

(Matthew 19:19 NKJV) 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

(Matthew 19:20 NKJV) The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?"

Jesus Continues / Man Recognizes he still Lacks / Jesus says Lack 1 Thing – Mark's Gospel

Jesus continues to draw out of this man his true heart, that something was still missing, the man acknowledges that by saying I done all these things, what do I still lack. Jesus didn't say he lacked, the man's heart knew that he still lacked. In Mark's gospel Jesus says you lack one thing, which is an amazing statement.

(Mark 10:21 NKJV) Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Jesus gives 2nd Table of Law – Relationship / His Problem 1st Table / god Earth – Grtr God

What we see here is that Jesus gave him the second table of the Law, and that was his relationship with his fellow man. That wasn't this man's problem (even though we know from the Sermon on the Mount that the Law was spiritual not just physical). But this man's problem wasn't with the second table of the Law (relationship with fellow man), but the first table of the Law (man's relationship to God). His problem was that he had a god greater than the God of the universe. The god of the earth was greater to him than the God of the Universe. You shall have no other gods before Me, the 2nd Commandment.

The 10 Commandments:

Table 1 – Relationship with God:

1.) *Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:3)*

2.) *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing (Exodus 20:4-6)*

3.) *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; (Exodus 20:7)*

4.) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (Exodus 20:8-11)

Table 2 – Relationship with Fellow Man:

- 5.) Honour thy father and thy mother: (Exodus 20:12)
- 6.) Thou shalt not kill. (Exodus 20:13)
- 7.) Thou shalt not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14)
- 8.) Thou shalt not steal. (Exodus 20:15)
- 9.) Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. (Exodus 20:16)
- 10.) Thou shalt not covet (Exodus 20:17)

Last 2 Points / Believe Jesus is God – A Nice Person – Good Kid / Maybe you Today

In these last 2 points we see the deception of many people today. They believe Jesus is God, they acknowledge that with absolute certainty, but we see that doesn't necessarily mean they know Him personally. They know He is God, and then secondly, they are just generally nice people. They don't have relational problems with other people, they were a good kid growing up, and are well liked and received by men and woman as adults. But Jesus continues to draw the dialogue with the man, and maybe you today – maybe this dialogue has become personal to you today. I know He is God, I am a nice person, a good kid, but does that mean that I have eternal life. For this man, and maybe you today, Jesus says – No, you still lack one thing.

(Matthew 19:21 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

(Matthew 19:22 NKJV) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Wealth – Youth – Position (but NO Peace / Why still no Peace – What is It – 1 Thing

This man has wealth, he has position, he has youth, he has religion, but he had no peace (why do I still lack). How many a people I have met, and maybe it is you here today. People that know Jesus is God, that do not dispute that; they look at things in their lives and say to themselves I do the things that God says to do. I go to church, I give to the poor, I am faithful to my spouse, I work hard to earn an honest living, I treat people with respect and dignity, but why isn't my relationship with Jesus like some of the other people I know. They seem to know Him as a friend, they seem to hear Him as a man talks to a man, they seem to have a peace about them that I just don't have, what is it, why is it? What it is, is that one thing? For some they have all these things but can't let go of that one thing, this man's riches were first in his life; I have met plenty of those, for others it has been the party life (my drugs or alcohol are my priority), for others it is fornication (I just don't want to quit), for others it is the humility of bowing their knee and saying, you are the Lord (and for many they just can't admit that their sin is offensive).

Mark 10 – Jesus Loved him

Mark 10 says Jesus looked at him and loved him. I can picture the eyes of Jesus looking upon this man, a heart breaking for him, oh let your "one thing" not keep you from Me. I love you, I want to draw you into My arms, but I will not force you against your will. Jesus looked at him and loved him.

(Mark 10:21 NKJV) Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Lord says – Come on or Go In / 1 Thing Lack / Called but you Haven't come

The Lord said to him you either need to come on with Me, or go on with this. There is one thing you lack, and if you want to be complete, I want you to leave that and come on with me. I called you but you haven't come.

Possessions Possessing / Poverty not Produce Spirituality / Abe – David – Nic / Dictate

Knowing his possessions were possessing him, Jesus' desire was to free this rich young ruler. "Simplify your life," He said, "and follow Me." Please understand that poverty does not produce automatic spirituality. That's not what Jesus is saying. Many of the greatest men in Scripture were exceedingly wealthy. Abraham, David, and Solomon; Nicodemus, Zacchaeus, and Joseph of Arimathea were all men of great possessions. Possessions are not inherently wrong. But when they begin to dictate how you spend your time and how you make decisions, you're in trouble. Jesus was dealing with the particular issue in this man's life that was holding him back. In your life, in my life, there might be another issue

entirely. The man says what do I lack, and Jesus says this is what is holding you back. Obviously selling all you all will not give you eternal life, but the following of Jesus will.

Marks Gospel – Speaks of Cross – Death / 1 Shot – Short List – One Bullet

In Mark's gospel Jesus tells this man to take up his cross. The man couldn't put it all together that Jesus lead by example in only a few short months, but the man (and everyone under Roman Occupation) was well aware what the cross meant, it meant death. Jesus is saying to the man, only death to self will give you eternal life. The man wanted a one-shot deal (like so many today), not the way. He wanted a short list, he got one, but not what he was expected. The short list is very short, it is one bullet, one line, one event, it is the cross.

Mark 10:21 (NKJV) ²¹Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, *“One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”*

Matt 10:38 - 39 (NKJV) ³⁸And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. ³⁹He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

1 Thing – Cross / People ask if Saved – Life will Follow / Is he Saved – I Don't Know

Jesus brings it all to one thing, the cross. People ask me often how do I know if I truly have received Him. The answer is given right here, you will know because your life will follow. Jesus says follow Me, but the man went the other way. He recognized Jesus as God, was religious, but he couldn't, wouldn't follow. If a person has made that commitment to Jesus, they will be where Jesus is. What if I professed Him, but I haven't followed, I really am not into the whole church thing, or drawing near to Him, ministering to others as He did, am I saved you may ask. Many of commentaries I have read have made determinations of this man's eternal state (some say we will see him in heaven, others say his reaches lead him to destruction), what do I think – I really don't know. The Bible doesn't tell us what this man did, and I know that is by Devine design. As a person considers this man, at some point God will put His finger on them and say, how about you. You have said I am God, you are somewhat religious, but am I the God of your life, have you turned from all others to follow Me? We can't rest in a profession, or being a nice person, reading the Bible,.....How do I know if I know Him, you will know because your life will follow!

As Believers – We can Lose our Peace / 2000 yrs Ago / Nice to have – Long as don't Lose

As believers we can slide into the place of this man, that we can lose our peace because we think if we had this, or do that, achieve that, then I can rest. Let me tell you this, your peace was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago on the cross. Your well-being and future is paid for; it is nice to have the things money can buy, as long as we don't lose the things money can't buy, and Jesus has purchased for us the things that money can't buy. We as believers can slide into this rut real easy once we are content and secure in our salvation, we have been saved so long we forget or lose focus of heavenly destination, and start getting sucked back into the world, the very thing we celebrated deliverance from when we first gave our lives to the Lord.

The Word Perfect / Woman – Wood – Lampstand / Maturity – Soundness – Completeness

This word for “perfect” is *Telaios* the adjective, and *teleioō* the verb. The adjective is used in the papyri, of heirs being of age, of women who have attained maturity, of full-grown cocks, of acacia trees in good condition (ready to be made into something), of a complete lampstand (ready to hold oil and create Light), of something in good working order or condition. To summarize; the meaning of the adjective includes the ideas of full-growth, maturity, workability, soundness, and completeness. The verb refers to the act of bringing the person or thing to any one of the aforementioned conditions. When applied to a Christian, the word refers to one that is spiritually mature, complete, well-rounded in his Christian character.

How about You – Complete / Lord will tell if you Dare to Ask

Well for you maybe the salvation issue is complete, but are you complete? Is there something between you and the Lord. Is there anything that is keeping you from “telaios”, from the full-growth, maturity, workability, soundness, completeness the Lord is calling you too. The Lord knows what it is and will tell you if you dare to ask, but for many they are afraid to ask because they know they will have to change. Is it

- pride, I just don't want people to think I am one of those Jesus fanatics.
- Status in society.

- Career, I just don't have time to spend with the Lord.
- jealousy, greed, hatred,
- un-forgiveness and anger, I have a right to feel that way I do for what they did to me.
- hobbies, are hobbies wrong – no, unless they keep you from being complete
- stubbornness, I just don't want to change, change is too hard and I prefer to stay in my comfort.
- Guilt, the things I did were horrible, how can I walk with abandonment to Him after all I have done

Let them Go / Seek Lord – Lets Move Deeper

Let them go for they are keeping you from being close to the Lord, there is something lacking that is keeping you from being complete and full on. What is keeping you, seek the Lord today, and let's move on and deeper into maturity.

Matt 19:20 - 21 (NKJV) ²⁰The young man said to Him, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

2 Tim 3:16 - 17 (NKJV) ¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The First shall be Last and the Last shall be First (part 1)

Matthew 19:23 – Matthew 20:16

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Understand the Context

To truly understand the meaning of Scripture it is necessary for us to stay within the context of what surrounds the passage of Scripture you are studying. Many of well meaning Christians have gone off on some errant doctrines because they fail to study a passage/verse within the context it is written. Well just about everyone knows the verse, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first; however to fully understand it we need to study it within the context it is written. The context of this passage spans from verse 16 of chapter 19, all the way through the end of chapter 20, which is verse 34, and contains the following teachings:

The First shall be Last – the Last shall be First

- A1) The Rich Young Ruler (19:16-22)
 - The Eye of the Needle – Impossible for the Rich (19:23-26)
- B1) Disciples say "We have Left All" (19:27-30)
 - *The 1st shall be Last – The Last 1st (19:30)*
 - The Workers in the Vineyard (20:1-15)
 - *Last shall be 1st – the 1st shall be Last (20:16)*
- **Son of Man is to be Crucified (20:17-19)**
- B2) James and John want a Position of Greatness (20:20-23)
 - Whoever desires Greatness – Become a Servant (20:24-28)
- A2) Two Blind men Healed & Follow Jesus (20:29-34)

See Stuff – See Savior

We start with the rich young ruler walking away from Jesus sorrowfully because Jesus said sell all you have and follow Me, but his possessions were posing him we saw. We will end this study next week as we will study the two blind men who had nothing crying out to Jesus and being healed, and then it says that they followed Him. The comparison of the two stories are that some will see their stuff, others will see their Savior. The first shall be last and the last shall be first.

(Matthew 19:22 NKJV) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

(Matthew 20:34 NKJV) So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

What Get – What Be / Who Are – What should be Doing

Today we will see the disciples say in response to the rich man, well he didn't leave all and follow You, but we have, so what shall we get. The parallel story on the backside of chapter 20 is James and John saying what positions will we have in the kingdom and the other disciples were all angry because they feel they might get short-changed in the deal. They say what shall we have and what shall we be for

following you Jesus, which when asked by all men (us included) we will see always leaves us confused of who we are, and what we should be doing. The first shall be last and the last shall be first.

Middle is the Cross – Central Issue / First –Last / Alpha - Omega

But in the middle of these 4 stories/teaching is the cross. Jesus takes His disciples aside and describes the upcoming events that will change all of humanity, it will be the dividing time of mankind, it will be the point that divides a man or a woman from this world, and the world to come. It will determine who will be first, and who shall be last, and it is the central issue for every man here today. For some the issue at hand today is if you have chosen to follow Him or not; to others who have made a decision to follow, the issue at hand is just how close or far away are you following Him, and also the motives for our serving Him. Jesus encompasses all these issues by bringing us back to the cross, and that He (the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last) is the context we are to study all these things in. Man's vision on all things, from marriage to ministry, from child rearing to employment, how we are living our daily life, for all things, regardless the subject, our vision will never be sharper, never clearer, than it will be as we look at these things from vantage point of the cross. The further we get away from the cross, the more myopic, nearsighted our vision will be about these things. From the cross we can see all things more clearly, and all things will be put in their proper perspective.

Rev 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End," says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

So we pick up here in verse 23:

(Matthew 19:23 NKJV) Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Rabbis Taught – Deut 26-28

The disciples were amazed (verse 25) because in those days, the rabbis taught that the closer one was to God, the richer he would be. Prosperity theology was around even back then. Here, however, Jesus totally shoots that theory down by saying, "Contrary to Jewish theology, riches can actually hinder one entering the kingdom." The rabbis based their belief on God's promises in Deuteronomy 26-28 where God promises to bless those who were obedient to His word materially, and to bring poverty to those who disregarded His word. What God simply was saying in those chapters was that God would provide for those who were obedient, and man's disobedience will often time cause him to make serious errors in judgments, which often can bring hardship upon a persons life.

Deut 28:1 - 2 (NKJV) ¹"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. ²And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

Deut 28:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:

Riches make Independent – Consult Stockbroker

It's hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom because riches can make one independent of God and intolerant of others. Riches can cause us to say, "Why should I pray or seek God when I can consult my banker or stockbroker?" Why pray to the Lord when I can just work some overtime. Riches can cause us to ask, "Why is everyone so poor? Why don't they have the initiative, the industry, or the energy I do? What's wrong with them?" When you become independent of God and intolerant of others, you forfeit the kingdom. Riches can be dangerous indeed if they make us stiff of knee and hard of heart.

Rebuttal to Name it Claim-it

This is by the way a rebuttal to the name-it-claim-it, blab-it-and-grab-it theology that is being preached on the television and various churches. Jesus is no doubt warning about the deceitfulness of riches. It is amazing when I have traveled and ministered in 3rd world countries, no one was there preaching their prosperity doctrine, no one was telling that person in Nicaragua to put their seed of faith in the offering, your whole days wage of 3 dollars, and God will give you twenty-fold. I never saw them there interestingly enough. Jesus has already spoken to us about the deceitfulness of riches in Matthew 13:

Matt 13:22 (NKJV) ²²Now 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.

(Matthew 19:24 NKJV) "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

(Matthew 19:25 NKJV) When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

(Matthew 19:26 NKJV) But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Sewing Needle

The Greek word here for needle is the word that is used for a sewing needle literally.

No Needle Gate / Great Sermon Material

For the last two centuries it has been common teaching in Sunday School that there is a gate in Jerusalem called the eye of the needle through which a camel could not pass unless it stooped and first had all its baggage first removed. After dark, when the main gates were shut, travelers or merchants would have to use this smaller gate, through which the camel could only enter unencumbered and crawling on its knees! Great sermon material, with the parallels of coming to God on our knees without all our baggage. A lovely story and an excellent parable for preaching but unfortunately unfounded! From at least the 15th century, and possibly as early as the 9th but not earlier, this story has been put forth, however....., there is no evidence for such a gate, nor record of reprimand of the architect who may have forgotten to make a gate big enough for the camel and rider to pass through unhindered.

Even Sure Thing is Impossible / Salvation only Possible through Jesus

Jesus is making the statement that no man, even the rich (who people thought were a sure thing) can enter into heaven. The disciples are saying then if they can't get saved, then who can, it is impossible. Even today, many people think they must be right with God because they are doing so well financially, it is evidence that God is pleased with them, and their being well off is God rewarding them for being such good people. I speak this from personal experience, before I got saved, when good things happened to me I thought it was because I was a good Catholic boy, and God was rewarding me for being one. Jesus uses the disciples reasoning and says it is impossible for man to save himself (even the good people), but with God, all things are possible, and therefore salvation can only come through the work of God, not the works of man. See Titus 3:5-6, Ephesians 2:9-10. It is not even possible for man to seek God (Romans 3:10), unless God draws Him (John 6:44). But there is a work that God says man must do to receive eternal life, there are two sides of the coin for eternal life, God's drawing, and man's responding, and man's work (action) for eternal life is this, John 6:26-29, that we believe in Him who He (God) sent. Bible teacher Henry Ironside puts it well, the gate leading to heaven on the front side says "whomsoever will", then after a man enters in, they turn and the backside of the gate says, "chosen before the foundation of the world".

Titus 3:5 - 7 (NKJV) ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Eph 2:8 - 10 (NKJV) ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. ¹⁰For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Rom 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

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

John 6:26 - 29 (NKJV) ²⁶Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." ²⁸Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Dangerous Teaching / Glad it is Impossible – Mecca – Doors / Always Worry – Living in Fear

To say that if we unload or burdens, humble ourselves, then we can get into heaven is dangerous teaching because people can take that to mean that there is something they can do, their works, their efforts can gain them eternal life. Jesus says it is impossible, and I am so glad it is impossible. I am glad

that I don't have to pray 5 times a day facing Mecca (I mean Jerusalem), for I would forever wonder if that one day I missed would negate me from heaven. I am glad it isn't how many doors I knocked on, how many magazines I handed out. I am glad the guarantee would not be based on me selling everything and giving it to the poor, or any other good work that I must do, because every time I had a dollar in my pocket I would have to worry about giving it away for keep my eternal life. I am forever thankful that the Law of God condemned me to death, and I am glad that my works could not save me, for I would forever be living in fear that I was one "work" short, I would never have the peace of knowing that "it is done", I am glad it is impossible, for now I can just rest in the "all things are possible God".

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

Rev 21:5 - 7 (NKJV) ⁵Then 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." ⁶And 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. ⁷He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

Look at Testimonies of This Room / Praise Him it Impossible – throw Self at Feet of Possible God

Boy I can look around this room and see so many testimonies of "all things are possible with God". How many people told me at my last high school reunion, you were the last person I ever thought God would save. How about our worship team here, ever hear their stories? Just think of your story. I love the story of Raul Ries, a man totally out of his mind, filled with anger and rage. He was sent home from the war in Vietnam for being crazy, you would think that is where they would send the crazy people. He comes home and to make a long story short, one night he finds out his wife has had enough and is going to leave him, she thinks he was out of town for the weekend so she first goes to church and then was going to drive back home to her parents, but Raul comes home in the interim. In a rage he loads his shotgun, lies in wait, decides he will kill her first and then have a shootout with the police, and let them take his life or just kill himself. While he waits, in his rage he slams his shotgun on the television and guess what, the television turns on, and the station was a Christian station with Pastor Chuck preaching the gospel, and right there he hears the gospel falls to the ground and receive Jesus Christ. He now pastors a church of some 10-15 thousand. I am glad that it is impossible for man, and it is up to the "all things are possible God". How about Mike Macintosh, he spent 6 months of his life thinking half his face had a hole in it from a shotgun blast, he imagined these things because his brain was so fried from all the LSD he did. Today he now pastors a church of 10-15 thousands. I praise God that it is impossible, and that I can throw myself at the feet of the "All things are Possible God."

Remember this Next Time

I pray we remember this verse and this teaching next time we are in front of the person that we say to ourselves, there is just no way this person will get saved, there is no way this person will ever change.

How about You Today

But how about you, have you done that yet in your life?

(Matthew 19:27 NKJV) Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

(Matthew 19:28 NKJV) So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Matthew 19:29 NKJV) "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

(Matthew 19:30 NKJV) "But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Disciples response to Rich Man / What Get – What Be / Who Are – What should be Doing

We see the disciples say in response to the rich man, well he didn't leave all and follow You, but we have, so what shall we get. The parallel story on the backside of chapter 20 is James and John saying what positions will we have in the kingdom and the other disciples were all angry because they feel they might get short-changed in the deal. They say what shall we have and what shall we be for following you

Jesus, which when asked by all men (us included) we will see always leaves us confused of who we are, and what we should be doing. The first shall be last and the last shall be first.

What Get – Lets Start what don't Get / Opposite Side We Get – Sins Washed – Heaven - Love

What shall we get Peter asks; well lets start with what we won't get, we won't get a list of our sins we committed, we won't get hell, we won't get wrath, those are the things we won't get. On the opposite of that our sins will be cast as far as the east from the west, we will get a dwelling place in heaven, and instead of wrath we will get love and acceptance. But that really isn't what Peter is asking, he wants to talk rewards, so Jesus answers as such.

Jesus Answers – Get rewards in Heaven / Saints will reign in Millennial Kingdom

Jesus answers Peter by saying, "Any who forsake land, wealth, or family to follow Me will be ushered into the kingdom with great rewards." The Disciples and the saints will rule and reign with Jesus in the Millennial Kingdom; we studied that in our Revelation study:

Rev 20:4 (NKJV) *And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

1 Cor 6:2 - 3 (NKJV) ²Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? ³Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?

2 Tim 2:11 - 12 (NKJV) ¹¹This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. ¹² If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

Bid Deal – Here estb Eternal / MAJOR – What Believe

Big deal, you might be thinking. Heaven's too far away to think about. I don't care about rewards there. But you will definitely care then. Only what you do for the Lord will bring you eternal reward. Jesus will reward you greatly for whatever you're giving up for Him now. But here is a major point for you today, focus in and here this, what you believe about eternal rewards, will determine how you will live presently here. If you believe that oh well, I'll be happy just getting into heaven, I am not worried about how many crowns I cast at Jesus' feet, I am not worried about ruling with Jesus, if that is what you believe, then it will effect your life today.

Mark Adds – 100fold / Not Plant my Seed / Rewards Heaven – Benefits on Earth

Mark adds this promise to his account of the same story (10:28-29) that we will be reward 100 fold in this life too, Jesus says in other words, what you give up for the Lord and for His kingdom will not only be rewarded eternally but will be returned to you a hundred times over presently. What does this mean? Does it mean, as some suggest, that if I make a vow or "plant my seed," I'll get a whole bunch of money in the mail next month. Those who are radically following Jesus will find not only rewards in Heaven, but benefits on earth. Our needs will be met a hundred times over because.....we who are radically following Jesus Christ. We are not letting the thinks of the world distract us from following Him.

Mark 10:28 - 31 (NKJV) ²⁸Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You." ²⁹So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, ³⁰who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

I am Convinced / Those in Thick – Peace and Contentment / Those at Distance – Churning & Burn

I am convinced by the study of the Scriptures, and watching life around me, that those who serve Jesus Christ in a sold-out way, reap a 100 fold reward in comparison to those that approach serving Jesus in a casual way, those who follow Him casually and/or a distance. Those that are right in the thick of what Jesus is doing, those who are active in what Jesus is doing, I have found have better marriages, better relationships with other people, are more compassionate, more generous, more gracious, more loving. Their children reflect the same. Those type of people just seem to have more peace and contentment in their lives. That is 100 fold over what the world has, and sadly what many fellow believers have. How many believers who follow at a distance, at store eternal rewards at their convenience, how many of them constantly seem to have some type of drama in their lives, some continual state of unrest, distress, a constant churning and burning in their lives, they miss out on the 100 fold blessing available today. Jesus said:

Matt 6:33 - 34 (NKJV) ³³*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*
³⁴*Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

Do they Suffer – Absolutely / But 100 fold Gives Peace in the Storm

Do those seeking after, giving all, for the Lord, do they still get cancer, yes. Have some experienced financial hardship, yes. Have some known what it is to lose a loved one, absolutely; but here again is part of the 100 fold blessing now, it is all the things we described above is what allows them to come through those things in might and power, peace and confidence. What you believe about eternal rewards, will absolutely determine how you will presently live today.

Going On / Some Worry too Much what Other Guy gets / Miss Blessing of being in the Vineyard

Going on in our story, some people don't care what they get and who they will be, and they get confused on who they are and what they should be doing. But then there is that danger of pride, and people go overboard, and they get wrapped up in looking around at others to make sure they get their share, and they lose focus on the blessings of the calling of working in the Lord's field, His vineyard.

No Chapter Breaks / Parable of How Heart should Be / Clarify – No Ranking – Each One Precious

No chapter breaks in the original writing, and Jesus ties this parable in with how our heart should be in serving Him. Jesus will clarify for all of time, although you serve Me, do not confuse service with preference. Don't think because you serve Me, that I will favor you over another. And for you here today, maybe you chose not to serve, have felt that you really don't care about the eternal rewards, and then have heard this message and wonder if God loves you less, and that person over there more, Jesus is going to make it clear, that His love is equal, and that each child is equally as precious in His eyes.

Matthew 20

(Matthew 20:1 NKJV) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

(Matthew 20:2 NKJV) "Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

6am / 1 Day – 10/hr

Probably about 6am (based on the next verse is 9am – the 3rd hour). The wages would be 1 denarius, which was the average day's wages at that time. So for our sake lets just call it 10 dollars an hour, which is about the average day's wage for a manual laborer today (give and take a dollar or two).

(Matthew 20:3 NKJV) "And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

(Matthew 20:4 NKJV) "and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went.

9am – Marketplace / Probably thinking Prorated

The owner goes back out to find laborers at 9am. He goes to the marketplace because that is where those wanting work would go stand waiting to be found. If you had tools you would stand with your tools ready to work. Just note, these workers may have been there at 6am and had not been picked, or for some they may not have made the effort to get up early to get there and get picked first, but whatever the case, at 9am they are ready to work. The owner says come on and work, and I'll pay you whatever is right (which sounds to be no more than the daily wage, and more likely a prorated rate of the daily wage based on the 3 hours they had already missed of work).

(Matthew 20:5 NKJV) "Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.

Noon & 3pm / They worked Daylight to Daylight / No Cruising the Net – Pure Work

The owner does it again at noon and 3pm. So they pretty much worked daylight to daylight in that time (none of this 8 hours shift, where 2 hours was spent cruising the internet and talking about the Jerusalem

Ravens football team – well they wouldn't be called the Ravens because that was an unclean bird – but anyways). Daylight to daylight we will say is 12-14 hours, from 6am to 6-8pm.

(Matthew 20:6 NKJV) "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?'"

(Matthew 20:7 NKJV) "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.'

5pm – Still Looking / Limited Window to Harvest before Rot / Get to Market

Here it is 5pm and the owner is still looking for laborers. You see this is a vineyard, and you only had a limited window to harvest a vineyard and get it to market before the fruit would spoil and rot. If an owner say that on this certain day that he wasn't going to get all the ripe fruit picked, he knew 1 more night, 1 more day on the ground could cause spoilage, he knew a bruised or rotted fruit would get little or no money. That is me, when I buy an apple or peach, they have to be perfect, or I won't buy it. Mentally, I can't eat an apple with a brown spot on it. So this owner is willing to spend the money to get a laborer for even an hour, two or three at the most, for after a cool or moist night, the fruit may not be of market value. The people listening to this account from Jesus would clearly understand why the owner would be doing what he is doing.

5pm – Still Waiting - Desperate

Important to note that here it is, 5pm and these workers are still waiting at the marketplace in hopes of being hired, even if they wouldn't get a days wage which was minimum needed to meet that days needs, but at least they might have some money to buy a piece of bread to sustain them, even though they wouldn't be able to buy a whole days meal. These workers are desperate at this point, maybe hoping to at least buy food for their kids to eat.

(Matthew 20:8 NKJV) "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.'

(Matthew 20:9 NKJV) "And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius.

(Matthew 20:10 NKJV) "But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius.

(Matthew 20:11 NKJV) "And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner,

(Matthew 20:12 NKJV) "saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.'

12 – 9 – 6 -3 - 1

So the first group (6am) worked 12 hours, the second (3rd hour – 9am) worked 9 hours, the third (6th hour - noon) worked 6, the fourth (9th hour – 3pm) worked 3 hours, and the last group (11th hour – 5pm) worked 1 hour.

1hr – 120\$ / 12hr – 1440\$

Payout comes and the last group got a whole days wage (1 denarius), which we will say at 10/hr, and a 12 hour day is \$120.00, cha-ching, what an hourly rate. Not that I would do this, but the other guys are using fingers and toes to figure out what they are going to get paid; oh yes steak and lobster tonight. Lets see the first group would say, 12 times 120 equals 1,440.00 dollars, wait until I walk in to the house tonight. But they in turn get 120 dollars, and are pretty upset about it. Hey man, we woke up early, we worked out in this heat all day, we made you a tremendous profit today, and you paid us the same as these guys who only worked 1 hour.

Owner paid what Agreed

The owner replies, no, I paid you what we agreed on this morning, you could have said no at 6am if that wasn't enough, but you didn't. In fact it looked to me you were glad to get the work.

(Matthew 20:13 NKJV) "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?'"

(Matthew 20:14 NKJV) 'Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.

(Matthew 20:15 NKJV) 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?'

(Matthew 20:16 NKJV) "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."

Back to Context / Every Soul Precious & Equal

So back to our context and that is Peter saying hey we have left all to follow you, what shall we get? The Lord is making this point very plainly, each soul is precious and equal to Me, each are of the same value to Me. The price I will pay for each soul will cost Me the same, My life. In verse 17 Jesus is going to start an increased talk of the cross to come, and the price that it will cost to redeem man, the life of the First and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, and that blood was gladly poured out for those who came early, and those who came late.

(Matthew 20:17 NKJV) Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them,

(Matthew 20:18 NKJV) "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death,

(Matthew 20:19 NKJV) "and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

Some Saved at 5yrs, 18, 50 or 80 – All receive Same Eternal Life

The application that Jesus is making here in this story is obvious, and that is that there will be some people that give their life to Him at an early age, and walk their whole life with Him. Others may get saved at 21, 27 (such as myself), some at 40, 60, 80. For some regardless of their age they may get saved in the 11th hour of their life, on their deathbed, the final hour of life (the thief on the cross). Jesus is saying the wages to purchase them is the same, regardless of the hour, and value they are to Me is the same of those saved at 18, and those saved at 80.

Man in Coma / I've been at Deathbeds – Doctors Mock / Remember this Story

Speaking of the final hour by the way, I know of man who was in a coma (but could hear everything going on in the room around him even though he couldn't move), he heard the doctor say to his wife I don't think he is going to make; he said when he heard that he was gripped with fear and then the gospel that he had heard and never took serious came flooding back to him, and he cried out to Jesus for salvation, and in a moment he felt the peace of God flood over him and he was born again. Later God pulled him out of the coma. I have gone to many comatose people, on their deathbed, and have shared the gospel, because I believe if god so chooses He can give them ears to hear. I have had doctors and nurses mock me, roll their eyes, eye give me the look of hatred for bothering them in their final hours, but I really don't care what they think, and I hope if you have the opportunity some day, you will remember this story.

What Advantage – Security in the Vineyard

Many may say, well what is the advantage of coming early if I can come late and still get in. I'll tell you the advantage, there is security in coming early, there is a peace of knowing that I am in the Vineyard of my Lord, I can rest in His provision for me. He will take care of my needs, all my provisions, and I know that tomorrow when I wake I am still in His vineyard. There is always fruit in His vineyard, and there is never a drought but always a refreshing dousing of living waters, where better could anyone ask to be:

Gal 5:22 - 23 (NKJV)²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

Isa 55:8 - 13 (NKJV)⁸ *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.*⁹ *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts."*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."*¹³ *Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress tree, And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; And it shall be to the LORD for a name, For an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."*

John 4:13 - 14 (NKJV)¹³ *Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*

Don't Look around at Work

A couple of practical applications for us in our everyday life; first, don't be looking around worried about what your co-worker is making. How many a people I have met who loved their job, work wasn't a drag or burden, until..... they found out ole Joe was making more money than they were. Then it became, well why does he get more than me, I do more work, I am a better worker, how many times I have to clean-up ole Joe's mistakes. It then becomes, well I'm not going to work as hard anymore, I am surely not going to help Joe. Listen, you made an agreement with your employer to work for this much money, it doesn't matter what the other people are making, it is what you agree to. As for Joe, don't take it personally that he makes more money than you, Joe just wants to pay his mortgage and get his kids through college like the rest of us. If you think you can make more money elsewhere, then seek the Lord and see what He will have you to do about finding new employment, but I can tell you this, as long as you are there, then be sure the Lord wants you to give your employer the best, and to work as if you work unto the Lord (Col 3:24):

Col 3:23 - 24 (NKJV) ²³And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Don't Look Around in Ministry

Secondly, beware of that mentality in the ministry. People who have been faithful in the ministry for years can get jealous, or discouraged, or just plain quit when they see someone else come on the scene and get used by God in a special, they get blessed and used by God in a mighty way. The flesh can have the tendency to say this isn't fair, I've been faithful to the Lord, I pray more than they do, I know the Scriptures better than they do, why God they get the blessings. Hey, remember, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. I was listening to a bible study by pastor Bob Coy of Calvary Chapel Fort Lauderdale, the church is huge (20,000), he speaks at conferences, is on the radio, guest speaker on Focus on the Family, but he really is just a regular guy, he doesn't walk around like he is the grand master of teaching. But he said you know I wonder sometimes if my faith was really so weak that God said well I better send more people over to Bob's church, because if it doesn't grow you know he will get discouraged and quit, and I really love the people of Fort Lauderdale and want to assure they are taught the Word. We just need to be faithful with what God has given us to do in the ministry. I am so thankful that the Scripture says well done they good and faithful servant, and not good and successful. A mother raising her child in Christ faithfully is as equal to a Billy Graham leading millions to Christ, for both were faithful to what God called them to do:

Matt 25:23 (NKJV) 23His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Never Too Late

A third principle this story teaches me is that it's never too late to start. You might be saying, "I'm old. I'm thirty." Listen, gang—even though sportscasters talk about thirty-year-olds as if they're dinosaurs, such is not the case with ministry. You might be at five o'clock in your lifespan. You might be fifty, sixty, seventy, or eighty years old. You might be saying, "I've walked with the Lord for ten years and haven't done a thing for Him." Take heart! It's never too late. Those who show up at five o'clock saying, "I'm ready—just point me in the right direction," have a definite job to fulfill in the vineyard.

Amen!

The First shall be Last and the Last shall be First (part 2)

Matthew 20:17-34

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Understand the Context

To truly understand the meaning of Scripture it is necessary for us to stay within the context of what surrounds the passage of Scripture you are studying. Many of well meaning Christians have gone off on some errant doctrines because they fail to study a passage/verse within the context it is written. Well just about everyone knows the verse, the first shall be last, and the last shall be first; however to fully understand it we need to study it within the context it is written. The context of this passage spans from verse 16 of chapter 19, all the way through the end of chapter 20, which is verse 34, and contains the following teachings:

The First shall be Last – the Last shall be First

- A1) The Rich Young Ruler (19:16-22)
 - The Eye of the Needle – Impossible for the Rich (19:23-26)
- B1) Disciples say "We have Left All" (19:27-30)
 - *The 1st shall be Last – The Last 1st (19:30)*
 - The Workers in the Vineyard (20:1-15)
 - *Last shall be 1st – the 1st shall be Last (20:16)*
- **Son of Man is to be Crucified (20:17-19)**
- B2) James and John want a Position of Greatness (20:20-23)
 - Whoever desires Greatness – Become a Servant (20:24-28)
- A2) Two Blind men Healed & Follow Jesus (20:29-34)

See Stuff – See Savior

We start with the rich young ruler walking away from Jesus sorrowfully because Jesus said sell all you have and follow Me, but his possessions were posing him we saw. We will end this study this week as we will study the two blind men who had nothing crying out to Jesus and being healed, and then it says that they followed Him. The comparison of the two stories are that some will see their stuff, others will see their Savior. The first shall be last and the last shall be first.

(Matthew 19:22 NKJV) But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

(Matthew 20:34 NKJV) So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

What Get – What Be / Who Are – What should be Doing

We then saw the disciples say in response to the rich man, well he didn't leave all and follow You, but we have, so what shall we get. The parallel story on the backside of chapter 20 is James and John saying what positions will we have in the kingdom and the other disciples were all angry because they feel they might get short-changed in the deal. They say what shall we have and what shall we be for following you

Jesus, which when asked by all men (us included) we will see always leaves us confused of who we are, and what we should be doing. The first shall be last and the last shall be first.

Middle is the Cross – Central Issue / First –Last / Alpha - Omega

But in the middle of these 4 stories/teaching is the cross. Jesus takes His disciples aside and describes the upcoming events that will change all of humanity, it will be the dividing time of mankind, it will be the point that divides a man or a woman from this world, and the world to come. It will determine who will be first, and who shall be last, and it is the central issue for every man here today. For some the issue at hand today is if you have chosen to follow Him or not; to others who have made a decision to follow, the issue at hand is just how close or far away are you following Him, and also the motives for our serving Him. Jesus encompasses all these issues by bringing us back to the cross, and that He (the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last) is the context we are to study all these things in. Man's vision on all things, from marriage to ministry, from child rearing to employment, how we are living our daily life, for all things, regardless the subject, our vision will never be sharper, never clearer, than it will be as we look at these things from vantage point of the cross. The further we get away from the cross, the more myopic, nearsighted our vision will be about these things. From the cross we can see all things more clearly, and all things will be put in their proper perspective.

Rev 1:8 (NKJV) ⁸*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,* says the Lord, *“who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”*

So we pick up here in verse 17:

(Matthew 20:17 NKJV) Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them,

(Matthew 20:18 NKJV) "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death,

(Matthew 20:19 NKJV) "and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."

Matt 16 / I am Bearing this Burden/Cross / Example of Jesus – Cross & Resurrection

Since Matthew 16, we have seen Jesus underscoring and repeating that He was going to die. Yet I call your attention to the fact that Jesus never spoke of the Cross without speaking of the Resurrection. I point this out because I often hear brothers and sisters talking about the Cross, saying, "I'm going through this trial," or "I'm dealing with this struggle," or "I'm paying this price," but I don't hear them talking about the Resurrection. If you talk about the Cross, follow the example of Jesus and talk about the Resurrection as well.

Matt 16:21 (NKJV) ²¹*From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

Mark 17:22 - 23 (NKJV) ²²*Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, ²³and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up."* And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

100-fold Blessing / Age to Come / Apostle Paul

Our 100-fold blessing in the age to come is a guarantee because of the cross, and the resurrection; Paul the Apostle said he considered the sufferings of this present time to be light-weight stuff compared to the glory that should be revealed in us. We also spoke last week of the 100-fold blessing we shall receive now; and that is the Lord's hand upon us right now, regardless of what we may be going through.

Mark 10:28 - 31 (NKJV) ²⁸*Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."* ²⁹*So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, ³⁰who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. ³¹But many who are first will be last, and the last first."*

Rom 8:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸*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.*

Think it is Tough Following Jesus – Try Not Following

Precious people, if you think it's tough following Jesus, try not following Him. That's what's tough. Going through disease, death, divorce, bankruptcy, being fired from your job, or being prosperous on Wall Street but empty internally—that's what's tough! If you who are struggling and suffering weren't a Christian, you

would still go through difficult times. The difference is, you would go through them with no solution, no promise, and no hope. That is why every time Jesus talked about the Cross, He never failed to speak of Resurrection.

Cross is a Bridge / Jesus turned Instrument of Death into Pinnacle of Power

And Christian don't forget that cross is a bridge, and it will cover any gulf that is before you, it will take you to the other side of your problem, for the same power that rose Jesus from the dead (the resurrection power) is available for you today. When Jesus went to the Cross, He did something great, He turned an instrument of death into the pinnacle of power as He transformed shame into salvation, rejection into redemption, and grief into glory. Christian quit talking about the weight of your cross, without the power of the resurrection. Jesus will take the cross that you are bearing to give you power in your life for what is yet ahead of you, so that you may have the bridge to overcome them; try to lighten your cross by quitting, or circumnavigating what the Lord is trying to do, you will find that when you get to that obstacle in your life, you won't have the power to overcome because your cross was too small, if lacked the resurrection power:

Eph 1:19 - 20 (NKJV) 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,

(Matthew 20:20 NKJV) Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

(Matthew 20:21 NKJV) And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

(Matthew 20:22 NKJV) But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able."

(Matthew 20:23 NKJV) So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."

Mark's Gospel / James – John get Mommy to Help

Mark's Gospel tells us James and John persuaded their mother to talk to Jesus on their behalf (10:35). So she went to Jesus and began to worship Him because she wanted something from Him.

Mark 10:35 (NKJV) ³⁵Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

Cross Reference / Cousins

Cross-referencing other passages we see that James and John's mother's name is Salome, and that she was the sister of Mary. So James and John are cousins to Jesus. Maybe they are saying hey lets keep this in the family. Maybe she is saying hey my boys have given up all to follow you, they left their dad to do all the work in the family fishing business to follow you, will you reward them when you come into your kingdom for doing so.

Matt 27:55 - 56 (NKJV) ⁵⁵And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, ⁵⁶among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, **and the mother of Zebedee's sons.**

Mark 15:40 - 41 (NKJV) ⁴⁰There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, **and Salome,** ⁴¹who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

John 19:25 - 27 (NKJV) ²⁵Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, **and His mother's sister,** Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "**Woman, behold your son!**" ²⁷Then He said to the disciple, "**Behold your mother!**" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

Salome watching the 2 Thieves / No Idea what we Ask / Should PTL for the No's

The Scriptures tell us that Salome was there at the cross when Jesus was crucified and how her words must have resonated through her mind, oh Lord that my sons may be on your left hand and your right hand, as she looked at the two thieves, one on His left, and one on His right. How often we ask the Lord

of things we have no idea of, and then get upset with Him that He didn't answer our request. We should praise Him for the prayers He says no to.

Cup Reference to Jesus – The Garden

Verse 22 - *Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink,* - Jesus is referring to the cup of death, the cup of God's wrath for sin. In the garden He said if it be possible let this cup pass:

Matt 26:42 (NKJV)⁴² *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."*

Cup for Them – not Propitiation / James 1st / John – Patmos

Verse 23 - *So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with* - What is the cup as it refers to them? It is not the propitiation for sin, for only the perfect Lamb of God could take away the sins of the world. James will be the first martyr in the book of Acts, and John will be the apostle that lived the longest, but his life had its share of suffering; he was dipped in hot oil (according church history), and we know from Revelation that at an old age he was banished to the Island of Patmos for his testimony of the gospel. So here this old man is out in the blazing heat of Patmos, doing manual labor with convicted criminals, barely getting by with small rations of food and water. He would later be freed and share the vision of the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the Last.

Acts 12:2 (NKJV)² *Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*

Rev 1:9 - 11 (NKJV)⁹ *John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. ¹⁰I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, ¹¹saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."*

For Us Today / Mocked – Martyred / Rachael Scott

For us today, this passage still applies. So drinking the baptism is not just martyrdom, as we would immediately think (as we see James, but to partake in His suffering (as we see John). God may call you to lay down your life year after year, being mocked and rejected by your family, years of thankless service unto Him and dying at an old age as John did. Or it could be the laying of your life down for the gospel sake as James did. We don't have to be Christians in China to do that, I am reminded of a high school only 2000 miles from here. I am reminded of that young girl at Columbine named Rachael Scott giving both comfort and her life at such a young age because of her witness for Christ. She would be one of the first shot and killed there on April 20th, 1999. It is one of the untold stories of Columbine, but this young high school kept a very detailed diary and her father has been sharing it with the world. Did you know that one year to the date of the tragedy she wrote that she doesn't have any friends because of her belief? She wrote in her journal that she felt that she had no friends because of her witness for Christ, she wrote that many of her classmates mocked and rejected her because of her beliefs Two weeks after (May 2, 1998) she wrote that she didn't think that she will live more than another year. She felt a burden upon her heart that she would die and early death. Just three weeks before the shooting, she witnessed to the 2 shooters (and pleaded with them of the dangers of the violent videos they were watching and making). On the day of the shooting she was shot in the leg, and when she got up to run they shot her in the chest. As she laid there, they went over and shot another young boy, who had been holding the door so other students could run to safety, after the shot him they came back across Rachael laying there bleeding, they lifted her head up by her ponytail and said do you still believe in God now, and an eyewitness account records that she said "yes, you know I do", and then they shot her in the head. Here is a quote from her from her journal

"Go after God. Whatever it takes, do it. And don't give the excuse, I am just a teenager or I'll do that when I grow up, because it doesn't work that way. God wants to know you NOW." – Rachel Scott

Her commitment to Christ cost her dearly. She was forced to break up with the boy she loved and five of her closest friends turned away from her because she talked so openly about her faith in God. These were the very people to whom she wanted with all her heart to show Christ's love. A year to the day before she died, Rachel wrote these words in her journal: "I lost all my friends at school. I have no more personal friends. Now that I've begun to 'walk the talk,' they make fun of me. But you know what? I'm not going to apologize for speaking the name of Jesus. I will take it, because it's all worth it to me. If my friends have to become my enemies, for me to be with my best friend, Jesus, then that's fine with me."

Rachel then wrote about her commitment: "I'm not going to hide the light that God has put into me. If I have to sacrifice everything, I will."

Whatever the Case – Means to Lay life Down / Your Heavy Cross is to Instill Power of Resurrection

In whatever case the Lord baptizes you, it's meaning is that you have laid down your life for Him, you have committed your life to Him, and say not thy will, but your will be done. That is the baptism that both James and John entered into, and that is the baptism that God is calling everyone in this room. It is the putting of our lives into His hands, and trusting Him to do with it as He thinks is best not just for those around us, but for us too. We so often think God wants us to go through this or to do that, to be witnesses for others, but I believe that is really just a natural outcome of His first purpose, and that is for the conforming of us into His image, and to instill in us the power of the resurrection.

Phil 3:7 - 11 (NKJV) *7But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

Richard Wurmbbrand / The Naval Officer

Whatever your baptism is, whatever your cup is filled with, whatever hard times may be upon you or ever come upon you, may you remember this that your life is in His hands, and nothing can come upon you unless He decides that it should, and if He should, may we embrace it full-on because with the cross, the baptism He chooses for us, comes the power of the resurrection (Jesus never spoke of the cross without the resurrection). I am reminded of the story Richard Wurmbbrand tells, Richard was a Romanian Jewish Believer and an amazing man of God, spent 14 years in communist prisons where he was tortured brutally for his faith and then lived to tell about it. In his book, *The Oracles of God*, he writes about acquiring inner peace and tells the following powerful story. During a tempest at sea when a ship was being tossed to and fro by the angry waves, the wife of a naval officer asked her husband, "How can you be so calm in such a storm?" The officer drew his sword, pointed it at his wife's breast, and asked, "Why are you calm and unafraid?" Surprised, she protested, "Why should I be afraid? The sword is in the hand of my husband who loves me too much to harm me." Her husband smiled and said, "This is the source of my calm, too. The wind and the waves are in the hands of my loving Father. Why should I be afraid?"

(Matthew 20:24 NKJV) And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.

Was the 12 – Now 10 & 2 / What get – Who be – Causes Division

The other 10 are worried that they may miss out on something so they get upset. I wonder if they said well I'm gonna call my mommy too. Just before this they were the 12, now they are the 10. Here is what always happens when people start looking around in the church for what they should get, and what position they should have, they lose focus of who they are, and what they should be doing, and it causes division; no longer the 12, now they are the 10 and the 2.

(Matthew 20:25 NKJV) But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them.

(Matthew 20:26 NKJV) "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

(Matthew 20:27 NKJV) "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave;

(Matthew 20:28 NKJV) "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Want great – Servant / Want First – Doulos / Clearest Definition / Bought with Price

Jesus says if you want to be great, then be a servant, but if you want to be greater than that, become a slave. So here Jesus gives us the clearest definition of what it means that "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. He had said it in verse 30 of chapter 19 in reference to Peter saying we have left all, what shall we get. He said it at the end of the parable of the workers in the vineyard, all getting paid the same whether they worked 12 hours or 1 hour (here in chapter 20). Each had a meaning that was woven in the story, but here verse 26, Jesus makes it real clear what it means. Do you want to be great, be a

servant, do you want to be first in the kingdom, then become a slave. The word used for slave in verse 27 here in Matthew is the same word used in Philippians 2:7, the word “doulos” which means slave. And Jesus gives the definition of what a slave is there in Philippians, and that is one who is obedient to His Master, even to the point of death. But for those that have, God exalts, as we see in Philippians, and the Lord sums the heart of this thought in 1 Corinthians 6, and that is that our life is not our own, for we have been bought with a price, and that price was the divine blood of God Himself. If you, when you, say you want your own life, you don't like being a slave, then I will suggest to you that your vision has become nearsighted, that you see your wants and desires, and you have lost sight of the cross, for again that is where our vision is most clear, where it is 20/20, it is where all things are put in perspective.

Matt 19:30 (NKJV) ³⁰*But many who are first will be last, and the last first.*

Matt 20:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶*So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.”*

Phil 2:7 - 11 (KJV) ⁷*But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1 Cor 6:19 - 20 (NKJV) ¹⁹*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

World Associates Greatness with Power / At my Work / Not that way in Kingdom / Wash Feet

Verse 25 - You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them - Jesus is saying, in this world (the Gentiles), greatest is associated with power, the ability to rule over people. I notice that very often at work. I notice that some managers treat me and talk to me a whole lot different than they do their boss. They will be short, rude, impatient with me; but then their boss comes into the room and they are like, hey how are you, thanks for coming down in the midst of your busy schedule. I see it so I purposely make it a point to not do that myself; but I am not over anyone myself so my only application I can apply at work is to say hello to the janitorial workers, and empty my own trash can when they come around, but no kidding I think that is a great witness for I think a lot of people think they are above touching the trash at work, and these people probably say, wow that's different. So the world's greatness comes with power, but Jesus says that is not the way it is in the Kingdom, the greatest in the kingdom is a servant. We are not to lord over others, but to serve them. Jesus gives the greatest example by washing their feet in the upper room:

John 13:2 - 5 (NKJV) ²*And supper being ended, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him, ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. ⁵After 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.*

Going to Write Book

I am going to write a Christian book, and something tells me that it won't make it to the best-seller list; it will be called, “You can be Great – Be a Slave”.

DL Moody

I came across this very powerful story about one of the most influential men of God in my life, D.L. Moody, in a book named A Call to Excellence by Gary Inrig. A large group of European pastors came to one of D. L. Moody's Northfield Bible Conferences in Massachusetts in the late 1800s. Following the European custom of the time, each guest put his shoes outside his room to be cleaned by the hall servants overnight. But of course this was America and there were no hall servants. Walking the dormitory halls that night, Moody saw the shoes and determined not to embarrass his brothers. He mentioned the need to some ministerial students who were there, but met with only silence or pious excuses. Moody returned to the dorm, gathered up the shoes, and, alone in his room, the world's only famous evangelist began to clean and polish the shoes. Only the unexpected arrival of a friend in the midst of the work revealed the secret. When the foreign visitors opened their doors the next morning, their shoes were shined. They never knew by whom. Moody told no one, but his friend told a few people, and during the rest of the conference, different men volunteered to shine the shoes in secret. Wow. I'm humbled, how about you? Many of us want to be great ministers for the Lord. We want our names and our works to be remembered.

But let's never forget the true ministry of the Lord. Not only would have Jesus shined those shoes in secret, He would have returned to wash their feet too!

(Matthew 20:29 NKJV) Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him.

(Matthew 20:30 NKJV) And behold, two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

(Matthew 20:31 NKJV) Then the multitude warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

(Matthew 20:32 NKJV) So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

(Matthew 20:33 NKJV) They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened."

(Matthew 20:34 NKJV) So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

March to Cross – Passover in Jerusalem / Another Chance – Stuff or Savior

We are now making the march to the cross. In the next chapter we will be reading of the Last Supper. The time of the year is the Passover, hundred's of thousands, historians have given accounts of close to 500,000 – 1,000,000 people would make the way to Jerusalem every year for the Passover. The roadways are crowded with people making their way to Jerusalem for the Passover. Jesus here is giving the multitudes and the religious leaders another chance to humble themselves and see their Savior, and He will use the least likely, these 2 blind men. Jesus will give the opportunity for people to see their stuff, their positions, or to see their Savior.

Call out Son of David / Set-up Chapter 21 - Hosanna

They call out to Him as the Son of David; the Son of David was term that was used in Israel among the Jewish people that referred to the Messiah. This is no doubt a set-up for chapter 21, as Jesus will tell the disciples to go prepare the "last supper". The multitudes are packing the roadways, the religious are there every step of the way, Jesus is now on the march to the cross, and Jesus sets the scene up so perfectly, even before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem where they will yell hosanna, hosanna (which means save now), blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord, even before that Jesus has 2 blind men scream out to the crowd, have mercy on us, Son of David, or literal translation, have mercy on us, Messiah.

(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.

Matt 21:6 - 10 (NKJV) ⁶So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. ⁷They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. ⁸And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" ¹⁰And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

Word Prophesied in OT – Sight to Blind / Keen Ears – Listen Intently /

The word was prophesied in the OT, the things the Messiah would do. These men may not have had eyes to see, but their ears were obviously keen, maybe remembering back on words they had heard spoken in the temple, or by others who were healed by Jesus. These men were afflicted, and when people like them heard of a man that could bring sight to the blind, and the lame will walk, and the dumb shall speak, they listen and they listened intently. Same today, that those who are afflicted, downcast, heartbroken, when they hear of a One that loves them and cares for them, their ears perk up and they ask where can I meet this man.

Isa 29:18 - 19 (NKJV) ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, And the poor among men shall rejoice In the Holy One of Israel.

Isa 35:5 - 6 (NKJV) ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. ⁶ 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.

Crowd doesn't Represent Jesus

Verse 31 – *the multitude tell them to be quiet* – The multitude doesn't represent Jesus, if you are investigating the things of Christ today, please know that the multitude doesn't represent Christ, Jesus represents Christ. If you want to know who Jesus is, look at Jesus in the Scriptures, don't look at His people please. Jesus didn't say follow My people, He says to follow Me:

John 14:6 - 7 (NKJV) ⁶Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. ⁷"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

Mark's Account – Someone Brings Them

However, according to Mark's account, someone brings them to Jesus. If a friend or family member keeps talking about Jesus, listen to them, go search what they say for yourself, be thankful that they care enough to tell you, that they are willing to risk being mocked or rejected like Rachael Scott did, because they love you that much. Let them lead you to Christ, and like these blind men, you too will get to meet Jesus:

Mark 10:46 - 52 (NKJV) ⁴⁶Now 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. ⁴⁷And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁸Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ⁴⁹So 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." ⁵⁰And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. ⁵¹So 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." ⁵²Then 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.

Mix Multitude – Just these 2 Men

Verse 32 – In the mix of the multitude, in all the noise, Jesus stops in front of these two men, and it is now just between Him and these two men.

Mark's Gospel name is Bartimaeus / Scholars try to Reason / What do you Want / Greek

Mark's gospel tells us that the name of one of these men is Bartimaeus. Many scholars and theologians spend all this time and write all these thesis trying to figure out why the other man's name is not give. Some question if it is the same account (which it is). They try to reason out why, and I'll tell you simply why, the reason Bartimaeus' friend is not mentioned is so that we may put ourselves in the picture, in this story, that we see that we are the other blind person that needs to be touched by the Lord. Jesus says to them, "what do you want Me to do for you?" (same question He asked James and John). I pray you will have one-on-one time with the Lord, even right now in the midst of this multitude, that you will allow Him to speak to you and put His finger on the one thing you need in your life. Jesus put His finger on the one thing the rich young ruler needed, but he couldn't bare to do it, and went away sorrowful. I pray you can hear through the multitude today, that you can hear Jesus ask you, "what do you want Me to do for you" today, for that is His question that He will ask you daily, for He sees you, He sees me, through the multitude, through the crowds of people and noise, and says what is your need today, allow me to work, but He will not bust your door down, He waits for you to cry out for your need. The Greek construction of their cry indicates that the blind men kept on crying out to Jesus, and would not stop even when the crowds said to be quite. I also like the answer they give, in the Greek again the imperative is aorist, speaking of the fact that Bartimaeus. asked that Jesus heal him at once. Is He passing by you. If so cry out to Him and tell Him you want more light. Lord give me a new vision, let me see you in a new way, give me light.

Jesus has Compassion / Way to Cross – But Meet with You / I'll be there

Verse 34 - *So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes* - Jesus had compassion. I am on the way to the cross, but I can hear you cry out through the crowd, and I will stop to meet with you. Some of the most important words ever delivered to one another often come in just three words "I'll be there". If you have ever broken down on the side of the road and called a friend you know how comforting those words can be - I'll be there. Grandma I'm graduating in June - I'll be there. Friend my boyfriend just broke up with me - I'll be there. Friend my child is in the hospital - I'll be there. Friend I just got layed off - I'll be there. Friend, I just got back from the doctors, and it wasn't good news – I'll be there. Jesus says to us, what is your need – I'll be there.

Received Sight / First Thing See is Face of God / Not Look at Junk

Verse 34 - *And immediately their eyes received sight*, - Consider this, the first thing these men see if the face of God. They could have went to the pool hall and kept pretending they were still blind and clean-up.

Thanks for these new eyes, now I think I'll go and look at some pornography, or fix my eyes on that new thing. I've opened your eyes so that you might see Me.

Followed Him / Don't Give Line Love Him – If Won't Follow Him / Throw it all Aside

Verse 34 - and they followed Him - It says that they followed Jesus. When you see Him, and you understand what He has done for you, you will follow Him. Don't give the line that you love him if you think you can go off and do what you want, if you love Him you will follow Him. The rebuke here is written within this story of those who claim to be religious, but are distracted by the things of the world, but have not the Lord in your heart. The comparison of the story of the rich young ruler and these two blind men are here by divine design. Mark's account says they threw aside their garments. The garment in this case was the *himation*, the large, upper garment of the oriental, so large that a man would sometimes sleep in it. These men threw it all aside to come to Jesus, in the account of the rich ruler he threw aside the words of Jesus because he couldn't throw aside his riches.

Picture Bart Walking with Jesus / Smile Ear to Ear

Picture Bartimaeus. walking with the crowd. A smile that went from ear to ear, looking around at the crowd, seeing faces, hearing the people, saying man this is so great. How many people he would tell his story to. I have new life, I have gone from beggar and desperation, to new life.

These Accounts Remind Me / Easily Distracted – glad to be Reminded / Perfect Vision – Cross

These accounts here remind us what it is all about; and that is that we will be seeing Jesus, and there will be a reward ceremony, there will be words from Him (well done, well done). I easy I am distracted by the things of the world, and how glad I am to come back to passages like this and be reminded, some day I am going to see Him, and may I not see my stuff, but see my Savior. It isn't about what am I going to get, and what position will I have, but who I am in Christ, and what I should be doing for Him, and in the middle of it, where vision is most perfect, is the cross, and that cross comes with the resurrection power.

Matthew 21

The Triumphal Entry (21:1-22)

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Passage of Triumphal Entry / What a Crew – Bart – Simon - Lazarus

In this passage we will see the Triumphal Entry of the King into Jerusalem. The crowds will be yelling out Hosanna, blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord. What a crew it must have been coming with Him; it appears from the Scriptures that Blind Bartimaeus who isn't blind no more was with Him, Lazarus who was dead but isn't dead no more was with Him, I wonder if Simon the Leper who isn't a leper no more was with him. I can picture many that He had healed were following Him. This is some exciting group coming into Jerusalem with Him, and I am excited to study this passage and relive it again and again, for our King is awesome and worthy of all praise and glory. May we not read this passage as a 3rd party watching from afar, but join the celebration that the lamb of Glory has come, and He has come for you and He has come for me, and in that we rejoice for He has made us white as snow.

Matt 20:32 - 34 (NKJV) ³²So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" ³³They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." ³⁴So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

John 12:1 - 3 (NKJV) ¹Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ²There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Passover – Exodus / Some had no Idea – Others saw the Lamb

The atmosphere is electrifying, it is the Passover now, April time frame, and historians would write that Jerusalem during the Passover would have upwards of 1.5 - 2 million people coming to celebrate the Passover, the Jewish Feast of celebration remembering when the 10th and final plague in Egyptian captivity came over all people (Egyptian and Jew) who had not had their homes covered with the blood of the lamb. For some of the people watching the procession of Jesus coming into Jerusalem, they had no idea they were watching the last and final Lamb to be sacrificed for Passover, but for others they realized and recognized this the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (as we study this passage keep that in mind, although some of the very same people who welcome Him will later in the week reject Him, but there are others that followed Him in, and followed Him all the way to the cross):

Ex 12:11 - 13 (NKJV) ¹¹And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD'S Passover. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. ¹³Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

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!"

(Matthew 21:1 NKJV) Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

(Matthew 21:2 NKJV) saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me.

(Matthew 21:3 NKJV) "And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

(Matthew 21:4 NKJV) All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

(Matthew 21:5 NKJV) "Tell the daughter of Zion, 'Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

Donkey – 1 Kings 1 / Jesus Confirms He is King of the Jews – The KING HAS COME

Riding on a donkey doesn't sound very king like, but in that day the donkey was the royal animal of Jewish monarchy, the Kings of Israel. Jesus riding in on donkey, was one of the illustrations and confirmations He was giving the Jewish nation, I am the King of the Jews. Jesus had always told people not to tell others who He was, but not this day, He is letting it be known without a doubt, "The King has Come".

1 Kin 1:32 - 35 (KJV) ³²And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. ³³The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: ³⁴And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. ³⁵Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.

Roman Caesar – White Symbol of Power / General – Black – 5000 / Parade – End at Arena

A Roman Caesar would have road in on a white horse, a symbol of power, a Roman general would have road in a black horse, a symbol of war; Jesus rides in on a donkey, a symbol of gentleness and peace. He came to bring peace between God and man. We call this event the "Triumphal Entry", but no Roman would have used the term to describe this entry into the city by Jesus. When a Roman general came back to Rome after a complete conquest of an enemy, he was welcomed home with a elaborate official parade. A roman general had to kill or capture at least 5,000 enemy soldiers to merit a Triumph. In the parade he would exhibit his trophies of war and the illustrious prisoners he had captured. The victorious general rode on his black stallion or in a golden chariot, the pagan priest would be burning incense in his honor and the people shouted his name and praised him. The procession ended at the arena where the people were entertained by watching the captives fight the wild beasts. That was a Roman Triumph.

Jesus not far off That / 5000 / The Beasts in the Arena / Friday – Sunday Coming / Entertainment

Our Lord's "triumphal entry" was far from that, but actually when you look into it spiritual, it wasn't really that far off, the parallels are amazing. 5,000 captives, we have no idea how many followed Him into the city that day, but we do know that only a few later 3,000 people's hearts would be conquered there at Pentecost, and then Peter's Sermon in Acts 4, 5000 were saved. Now as the Roman processional would end at the arena, and the captives would be fed to the wild beast for entertainment, Jesus' triumphal procession would end only a few days later, with Him being fed to the Beast (Lucifer the Evil One), and the Romans and the Jews would have great entertainment in that moment, but one Roman soldier would recognize the day for what it was and say "truly this is the Son of God". It was Friday, but Sunday was a coming, and it turned from entertainment, into the cross became bridge, the way, the avenue for God to "enter" into man, and to "obtain" mans' heart.

Acts 2:40 - 41 (NKJV) ⁴⁰And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." ⁴¹Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Acts 4:1 - 4 (NKJV) ¹Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, ²being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. ³And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. ⁴However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Luke's Account – If only knew the Day / Same today if you don't Know Him

In Luke's gospel Jesus said, "if you had known your day". What a day it was, and if only you knew what day it was to you. I pray the same for you today if you do not know Christ personally; that you would know what this day could be for you:

Luke 19:41 - 42 (NKJV) ⁴¹Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴²saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

Zech 9:9 / 1 of 300 / Don't Tell Anyone – they didn't Understand

Verse 4 - All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying - Zechariah 9:9 is being fulfilled (just one of the 300 prophecies Jesus fulfilled). Jesus up to this point had always said to tell no one, is now telling them to tell all, for when He rides that donkey into Jerusalem He will receive and allow public praise and acknowledgment that He is the Messiah, the Promised One of God. As we have said in the past, Jesus told people not to tell anyone, because they didn't have the full story, they didn't understand all the things He had spoken, and He didn't want them running off and trying to tell people the story, when they really didn't understand it themselves. We read in various places that they still didn't understand it all until after the resurrection. But here He allows it, because the Word (Zechariah 9:9) of God confirms all that He has said and done in the past, His riding into Jerusalem on a donkey is the exclamation point of all that He has said and done in the past.

Zech 9:9 (NKJV) ⁹ "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey."

Zech Prophecy tied to Daniel 9 / 700yrs Prior

Zechariah is one of the prophecies that is tied in with other to give the most profound prophecies given in the whole bible; Daniel chapter 9 was spoken some 700 years before this day, and it is the most conclusive prophecy proving out that Jesus was and is the promised Messiah:

(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."

Readers Digest Version of Daniel 9

I will give you the Readers Digest version of Daniel's prophecy of chapter 9. Daniel's prophecy said that from the decree that would go forth to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, it would be exactly 483 years (which is 173,880 days) to the day that the Messiah would be presented to the people. Well, our history books even confirm what was declared, that the Persian ruler Artaxerxes Longimanus, issued/granted on **March 14, 445 B.C.** (Neh 2:1-8) the Jews permission to rebuild Jerusalem's city walls. This decree is the one referred to in Daniel 9:25." So the count-down began from there, 173, 880 from March 14, 445 BC to April 6, 32 AD. This is the timeframe that Jesus was crucified, if Jesus wasn't the Messiah, then it would had to have been someone, who was crucified in this same time frame (even if you went a year on either side) and they would have had not a bone 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. (Please see the supplemental notes in our Matthew chapter 3 study on this subject)

The Wise Men put 2&2 Together / It pays to Study your Bible / Just as they saw Signs – So We Too

The wise men would be putting two and two together, the city would have been buzzing, many Jewish people knew the prophecy of Daniel and were waiting in great anticipation for the Messiah, knowing that His coming was near. You know Christian, 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 coming King, 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 (more on that in chapter 24).

(Matthew 21:6 NKJV) So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

(Matthew 21:7 NKJV) They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them.

Mark's Gospel - Donkey Never Sat On / Not Bucking – Recognized Creator / Rebuke Today

I think it is interesting to note that Mark's gospel says that no one had ever sat on this donkey. Maybe doesn't sound like much to us, but those who have ever worked around these animals know that horses, donkeys, mules, they have to be broken before they can be rode. If you don't first break them then they are going to be bucking and trying to throw the rider off who tries to mount and ride them. But not this donkey, this donkey knew his Creator, and submits to his Creator. No doubt a spiritual application and picture for those people who would blanket the roadside that Jesus would pass, and for us today and that is that is that the creation should submit itself to their Creator. What a rebuke this animal is to the religious leaders of that today, and to many a men today, those that refuse to be broken, and buck and try to throw Him off of their lives.

Mark 11:1 - 2 (NKJV) *¹Now when they drew near Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; ²and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring it.*

(Matthew 21:8 NKJV) And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

(Matthew 21:9 NKJV) Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!"

Hosanna – Save Now / Overthrow Political – Economically / Realized over Week – Not Happening

Because the word "Hosanna" means "save now," the crowd was essentially saying, "Overthrow the Roman yoke politically. Help us economically. Lead us militarily. Save Now!" No wonder that, as the week went on and they realized none of that was His intent, they turned against Jesus. They are expecting Him to go right up to the Antonia fortress, or up Pilate's throne, and establish His kingdom, but instead He heads to the Temple for that is the Kingdom He came to deal with on His first visit to earth. He will come again, and He will deal with the thrones of the earth, and this time He won't be riding on a donkey but He will come on a white horse, a symbol of power, and He will establish His kingdom on earth. Oh yea, the host of heaven will be joining Him, all those who have said Hosanna, but not save us from the Romans, but save me from sin.

Same View World Today / Make Life Comfortable – Financially – Physically – Social - Relationship

Their view of Jesus was a worldly view, and expectation of worldly benefits. I see the same thing happen today, for there can be a tendency within the heart of each of us to cash it in when things don't work out. If you are expecting Jesus to be a "make my life more comfortable" for you, if you expect Him to help you financially or physically, socially or vocationally, relationships and entertainment, you will be disappointed when things don't go the way you thought they would. We need to realize that Jesus Christ came to die for our sin and pay the price for our iniquity. If He never does anything else in this life presently, that is more than enough to merit our loyalty, our affection, and our devotion eternally. If He never does another thing for me, if He never gives another blessing to me, I owe Him my life because of what He did on Calvary.

People Ask today – Why Disease / Not have this Man Rule Over Us

By the way, when people ask today why does God allow wars, diseases, famines, babies to die, and evil to exist, here is the answer, because when He came the world rejected Him and said we will not have this man rule over us.

Luke 19:14 (NKJV) *¹⁴But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'*

(Matthew 21:10 NKJV) And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"

(Matthew 21:11 NKJV) So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Singing Psalm 118 / Verse 10 – Moved – Seio - Seismic

So they were singing Psalm 118, one of the praise songs (also known as a *hallel song*, which means praise song) that were associated with the Passover Feast (songs they would sing during the week of Passover). Verse 10 – says all the city was moved, The Greek word translated “moved” is *seio* from which we get our word “seismic” that we use when the earth shakes. In other words, Matthew writes that the whole city was “quaking”—not physically, but mentally and emotionally—when Jesus made His entry. The city was rocking!

*Psa 118:22 - 26 (NKJV)*²² *The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.* ²³ *This was the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.* ²⁴ *This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.* ²⁵ *Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.* ²⁶ *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.*

(Matthew 21:12 NKJV) Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

(Matthew 21:13 NKJV) And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

Quoting Ish 56 / Identifies Himself as God

Verse 13, quoting Isaiah 56:7, Jesus here is identifying Himself as God, by saying this is My house!

*Isa 56:7 (NKJV)*⁷ *Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations."*

Jesus didn't loose Cool / John 2 – Makes Whip / Background on how Ripped People Off

This is the second time Jesus clears the temple, and in John's gospel (John 2:13–15), the first time He clears the temple it says that Jesus made a whip out of chords. This dispels that Jesus lost His cool, reacted out of control. On the contrary Jesus was very calm and disciplined, as it would take some time to make this whip. I picture Him weaving the whip, watching the vendors rip the people off. He is taking it all, gathering information of who is ripping off who. Here is the background on this situation; God declared that the animal that was to be sacrificed had to be spotless and without blemish, so the religious leaders saw that as an opportunity to take advantage of the people. If a person brought their own sacrifice, the priest examining would most always find some defect and say sorry you can't sacrifice this one, but you are in luck because down on table 4 ole Moshe is selling some sacrifices that we have already examined and gave the ok for sacrifice approval. Now, since you were in the temple, the Roman currency could not be accepted (that would be an offense to God using the money of the Gentiles), so they had to first go to the money exchanger at table 3 and covert from Roman currency to the temple currency that of course had a horrendous exchange rate. After that currency exchange they could go to ole Moshe and buy an animal to sacrifice at (of course) a horrendous inflated price.

*John 2:13 - 16 (NKJV)*¹³*Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.* ¹⁴*And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business.* ¹⁵*When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables.*

¹⁶*And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!"*

Changes time of Fellowship to Heartache / Sincerely Worship – Seriously taken Advantage of

So here comes people who had a heart for God, they came to make their sacrifice so that their sins may be covered, and instead of it being a time of peace and fellowship with their God, it became a stress and a burden, that many would leave with their sins covered, but walking back home in their shorts because they had to sell their coat and blanket to have enough money to make the sacrifice. It became a sacrifice alright. So the people came to sincerely worship, and were seriously taken advantage of. Hey, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and for those that today take advantage of people that come to sincerely worship should be looking around their ministry, for if they did, they would see Jesus weaving a whip together; and I say to them, if you see Jesus weaving a whip, I'd get real nervous. I would like to ask those people that get up and say, God has told me today that there are 5 people here today that can give 1,000 dollars, and if that is you and you don't give, God will not bless you.....I would like to ask them that if Jesus said don't let your left know what your right hand is doing, then why would God tell you what someone else should give, if He told us not to even tell anyone.

*Matt 6:3 - 4 (NKJV)*³*But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.* ⁴*that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

Some People Hate Church / Why Church Begg for Money

Some people hate going to church anymore because all that they hear about while they are there is money. I one time heard a mocker of God say, if money is the root of all evil, then why is the church always begging for it.

2nd Clearing / We are the Temple / Not a 1 time Process – Lord wants Purity in the Temple

Now, on another note, keep in mind that Jesus had already cleansed the temple at the outset of His public ministry (John 2:13–15). So, too, because I myself am a temple (1 Corinthians 3:16), the Lord has to come and overturn the tables of my life. And although I wish this were a one-time process, it's not. Just when I think I've learned a lesson, suddenly I find the old junk back in my temple once again. Then the Lord comes in faithfully and deals with it radically. The Lord not only desires purity in our temples individually, but also corporately.

***1 Cor 3:16 - 17 (NKJV)** ¹⁶Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? ¹⁷If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

(Matthew 21:14 NKJV) Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them.

(Matthew 21:15 NKJV) But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant

Priests Upset over lame and kids – Not the Thieves

The scribes and the chief priest are indignant, angry and sickened by what they are seeing. The chief priests and scribes are upset about the lame, the sick, and kids coming into the temple, but they weren't upset about the thieves that had set-up shop there.

They are Scribes – but miss the 300 / Spiritual Blind – End Chp 20 / Son of David

They are scribes (recorders and studiers of the Scriptures), that is all that they did was read the Scriptures, yet they missed this, they missed not just 1, not just 2, not just 3 prophecies, but 300 prophecies regarding the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled. It is no coincidence that we finished chapter 20 with two blind men calling out to Jesus, calling Him the Son of David which is the name the Jewish people associated to the Messiah (*2 Samuel 7:16-17*) and immediately they receive their sight. So the blind can see, but these religious leaders who can read miss all 300 prophecies and become spiritual blinded, even though the Christ is in their very workplace, fulfilling Scriptures before them, yet they can't see Him.

***Matt 20:32 - 34 (NKJV)** ³²So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" ³³They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." ³⁴So Jesus had compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.*

Children Singing – Lame Healed / Come in after Cleared – Free to Fellowship with Jesus /

The children were singing out, Hosanna to the Son of David; what a scene we have here, little children are singing His praise, and those who were not whole were coming into the temple. You see the lame and blind didn't come into the temple, they stayed outside and begged. The children didn't come into the temple, they would receive glares not glows if they came in, beat-it kids this is adult stuff, beat-it lame man, you must be in some kind of sin since you are not whole like me; it is after Jesus clears the temple that they come rushing in, they know they can freely come and be received by Jesus. I would say this is the closest this temple had ever been to realizing its true purpose and glory.

Kids see Real Thing – Blown Away / May Kids see Real thing Here & Home

The kids came in and saw the real thing, and they were blown away, and they broke forth in praise. Oh may children see the real things when they come into our church, and watch us parents

(Matthew 21:16 NKJV) and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"

Quoting Psalm 8 / What an Awesome God

Jesus quotes Psalm 8. I love that, Jesus is humbling them by quoting the very Scriptures they were suppose to be experts in. Jesus takes that Psalm and applies it to Himself. Listen to this Psalm, what words they are to all men; what an awesome God He is.

Psa 8:1 - 9 (NKJV)¹ O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!² Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,⁴ What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.⁶ You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,⁷ All sheep and oxen— Even the beasts of the field,⁸ The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.⁹ O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

Can Span Heavens with Hand – Touch Heart of 3 year Old

What a God, You can span the heavens with your hand, yet you can touch the heart of a 3 year old who can sing Jesus loves me this I know, and mean it with all his or her heart.

4 things a Temple Should Be – Corporately & Individually

In the following passage, I see four characteristics He is looking for in us, His corporate temple (1 Peter 2:5). The house of God, we are the temple of God, and here we have what we should be and should be doing:

- **Verse 13 - "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'** - individually we should be a people of prayer, and corporately this church should be a church of prayer. There is power in prayer. Once you believe that, your life will change, and so will the churches.
- **Verse 14 - Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them –** Individually we should be a people that bring ministry to those that are hurting. Corporately as a church the same. Every person that walks in here should be ministered to by us. They should be given the word which is life and healing, and they should be embraced in love and acceptance.
- **Verse 15 - But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did –** Third, this is to be a place where power is released. Individually our lives should be a place where God's power is recognized, that people say they that call themselves Christians are clearly different from the rest of the world. Corporately, the same is true as a church.
- **Verse 16 - 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise –** Individually and here corporately our lives should be a life and place of praise and worship. The old religious people in our text were "sore displeased," but the kids were crying, "Hosanna." You see, when the kids cried "Hosanna" it wasn't for political reasons; it wasn't for economic reasons; it wasn't for vocational reasons. They cried "Hosanna" simply because they were excited about Jesus. I take you back to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, that even if Jesus never did one more thing in our lives then come, that is still a lifetime of praise that is due Him.

(Matthew 21:17 NKJV) Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

(Matthew 21:18 NKJV) Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry.

(Matthew 21:19 NKJV) And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

(Matthew 21:20 NKJV) And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

(Matthew 21:21 NKJV) So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done.

(Matthew 21:22 NKJV) "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

OT Scriptures – Israel Fig Tree

OT Scriptures that refer to Israel being the Fig Tree, Judges 9:10, Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10, and Joel 1:6:

Hos 9:10 (NKJV)¹⁰ "I found Israel Like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers As the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season. But they went to Baal Peor, And separated themselves to that shame; They became an abomination like the thing they loved.

Uses this as Example of Israel Produced no Fruit / 70AD – Jesus Wept – Luke 19

He comes to the fig tree not looking for fruit, He already knows that it is fruitless; Christ comes to use it as an example of Israel. It had leaves, but no fruit. Jesus' hunger was more than physical, it was spiritual, and He hungered for Israel to produce the fruit that they were created for. This is the first time Jesus uses His power for judgment, and He demonstrates to His disciples what would happen to this Nation for being fruitless. It will only be 70AD that the Nation will be crushed by the Roman Army, historians say the blood flowed through Jerusalem like a river, that in some places the blood flowed up to the ankles of a man; hence why Jesus would be weeping when He came into Jerusalem, and how He wished He could gather her to Him as a hen gathers her chick. His heart for Israel is the same for you today, and how He wishes to gather you to Himself that He might protect you and provide for you.

Luke 19:41 - 42 (NKJV) ⁴¹Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, ⁴²saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes."

(Matthew 21:22 NKJV) "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

Church Needs to Be Careful

The Church today needs to be careful that we don't have a bunch of leaves and it looks like there is all kinds of great things going on, but when you examine it closely there is no fruit.

Above 4 things we Should be Doing / Cross Examination / Not doing Good – Good News – V22

The above 4 things that a church and individual should be and be doing. Great cross-examination (I like that play on words – to examine ourselves in light of the Cross) for us of how we are doing, what kind of fruit we are producing. Maybe you are right now saying, I'm not doing so good, good news, verse 22:

Sounds like Broad Prayer / No need to Move Mountains

Sounds like a broad prayer that we can ask for anything. We have spoken of this before that Jesus doesn't literally mean that we should be moving mountains, for there really is no reason for us to move mountains; what I believe the point He makes is that things before that seem as mountains, our prayers are able to overcome them.

What is Context / Not Riches – Not Healing / Ask in Will

What is the context? Well many a people want to use this for name it and claim it, for access to riches now in this world, not waiting to get our inheritance in heaven, I want it and I want it now, but we are only a few chapters away from the story of the rich young ruler and the dangers that riches can become. It isn't position or power, for we just studied the disciples saying what will we get and who should we be, and we saw that when we ask for that we lose focus of who are and what we should be doing. Some take it to mean claim-it and you will be healed; they could make that argument especially based on that we just read of Blind Bartimaeus being healed, and Jesus saying what is it that you want for me to do for you, and Bartimaeus. responds, heal me at once. That does flow nicely, but it doesn't fit in the big picture, for even Jesus will say Father if there be any other way, let this cup pass from Me, and we know what He covered His prayer with, nevertheless, not thy will but your will be done. So all prayer has to be in the bounds to the will of God as we are told in 1 John - ask in the will of God (and again we know His Word is His will – so know the Word, know His will):

1 John 5:14 - 15 (NKJV) ¹⁴Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

Context – Israel is Fruitless / Any Prayer for Fruit is Guarantee Answer – Gal 5 / Fruit before Harv

Well, if Jesus said it, then it has to be true, so what does He mean, where is this promise to be applied? The answer is in the context. The context is that Israel is spiritually fruitless and thus the application (thus the guarantee) that any prayer that we lift before the Lord concerning spiritual fruit will be answered. Galatians 5 says the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Are you lacking any of these fruits in your life, then ask in prayer, believing, and you will receive. Israel was called to be a light unto the Gentiles (the world), and they had all the trappings of religion, but bore no fruit that people wanted to follow their God. Do you want to be a light unto the world, do you wish that you could lead others to Christ, but do you feel the task is mountainous

to you, that is impossible, then ask in prayer, believing, and you will receive. But here is the key for you and for me, we must first bear the fruit of the spirit, before we will ever bear the fruit of the harvest.

Gal 5:22 - 25 (NKJV) ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. ²⁴And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Root of Fruit is Jesus – Abide / God Wants you to be Fruitful / Distraction – Discouragement

The root of the fruit is where we have to begin, and that root (vine) is abiding in Jesus. We must continually abide in Him, then as we abide, we ask in prayer (which is being open and honest with the Lord), asking we say Lord, more fruit! And then we believe He wants to produce that fruit, and believing, we will receive. Precious saint, God wants you to be fruitful, He wants you to be fruitful more than you do, and He says to you today, oh just ask Me so that I might give to you.

I believe this is word from the Lord to many here today, he that has an ear, let him hear; there are 2 two things the enemy will do to try to stop that from happening, he will use distractions and discouragement. He will try to distract you with all the stuff around you, for some will see their stuff, but others will see their Savior. Satan wants you to see stuff to distract you, and then once distracted you will constantly be discouraged because you aren't doing the things you know God has called you to do. I haven't been reading, I haven't been praying, I haven't been serving, you may even be engaged in sin, and then Satan is there to discourage you all along the way on each point, and you say oh what is the use. I think possibly Satan's greatest weapon is discouragement, for it keeps the believer from drawing near to God. For when we draw near, we will hear Him say, you ask for spiritual fruit, and immediately, you will receive it - guarantee.

John 15:5 (NKJV) ⁵*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.*

1 Verse!

What a wonderful passage of scripture we have studied today, it is breathtaking, and I could literally sum this day (this triumphal entry) up in 1 verse, what the Lord would say of it for those there that day, and for you here this day:

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰*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.*

He is God the Initiator, Not God the Responder

Matthew 21:23-46

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Final Week – Now Tuesday / Mark – Chronological / Dates can be Confusing

We are in the final week of the King's Life, it is now Tuesday, and just the day before Jesus had cleared the Temple. Trying to figure out the days and the chronological order can be quite confusing, and not every Bible student or teacher is in agreement on the chronology and day. But it is good to recognize that Mark's Gospel gives more a chronological order, while Matthew, Luke, and John give more of a recounting of the happenings (so some events are lumped together in one story even though they occurred over a day or two period – the cursing of the fig tree is one example of that as Jesus cursed it the day before and explained the judgment the next day to the disciples – Mark breaks it out over 2 days as Matthew retells it in one story). Also, the dates can become confusing because in the Jewish calendar the day begins at sunset and goes to sunset, except for the Jews who lived in the northern region (Galilee) and they calculated the days from sunrise to sunrise (Jesus was from the northern region and is where his headquarters). To make it a little more confusing, we Americans calculate the day beginning at midnight.

The Jewish Calendar of Events:

Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:

- Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
- Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
- Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)

11th – Monday

- Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
- Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
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12th – Tuesday

- Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
- Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
- The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
- Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)

13th – Wednesday

- The Gospels are Silent

14th – Thursday –

- Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
- Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
- The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
- The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
- Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)

15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins

16th – Saturday - Sabbath

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

By What Authority – turn Tables Over / These Men – People Today think turn God into Responder

In our passage before us today, with the cleansing of the Temple fresh in their minds, the chief priests and elders demanded to know by whose authority He overturned the tables and drove out the crooks. They come to Jesus (God) and they challenge Him, they initiate the challenge, and expect a response, they expect God to respond to their questioning. As those men were then, so people can be today, and that is they think they can turn the One True and Living God into a responder of their challenges, questions, or promptings. What we will see here today in this passage of Scripture is that God is no responder to man, God is always the initiator, and man is always the responder. I think if each of us can lock that into our minds, ground that into our doctrine and theology, we will find our lives flowing and working much better, and the reason life will work and flow much better is because we understand the divine order, Creator and created. For some this may seem heavy to them, they don't like the idea of being a responder to God (for those that feel that way you are not in good company as we read the next 3 chapters); but for those that can grasp this that God is the imitator and we are the responder, this becomes quite freeing to us in that we can rest in Him, knowing He is in control of all things in our lives.

The Baptism of John – From Heaven or Man

(Matthew 21:23 NKJV) Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

(Matthew 21:24 NKJV) But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things:

(Matthew 21:25 NKJV) "The baptism of John; where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'

(Matthew 21:26 NKJV) "But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet."

(Matthew 21:27 NKJV) So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Jerusalem Packed / Temple Area Packed / Leaders Think Have Jesus on Spot / Belittle – No Seminary – No Priesthood – Just a Carpenter

Now this the Passover, Jerusalem is packed, somewhere between 1.5 – 2 people. The temple mount area is packed out with people coming to make sacrifices, so it isn't hard to imagine 10's of thousands of people up on the temple mount area. The religious leaders think they have put Jesus on the spot by asking what power and authority do you claim to do what you do, coming in here and overturning tables, and making all this ruckus. The hope of their challenge is belittle Jesus in front of all these people, and have the people turn on Him. They are making the challenge that He is just a carpenter, He has no seminary training (if you will), He wasn't taught under one of the great religious teachers; they are trying to make the point before people that would God really send the Messiah who was a carpenter, not schooled in the priesthood or trained by the rabbi's; surely God wouldn't send a carpenter to save us. I can even imagine some of their jokes and jabs against Jesus, hey we need a Savior not table, but while you are here that door over there needs replaced.

People would say Yes – Where did You / Jesus puts them in Catch 22 / Jews Hated Herod

I am sure that many a people observing this immediately wonder this too, yes where did you come from; but Jesus out plays them in their own game by posing His question to them. Verses 25-26 are commentary enough, Jesus puts them in the catch 22. They reason amongst themselves, if say John the Baptist was from heaven, then we confirm his ministry, and we confirm his statement, "behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (John 1:29), and He must increase and I must decrease (John 3:30). If we say John was in the flesh, then we still have a dilemma in that the people loved John, who their King Herod had beheaded. A study in Jewish history shows us that the Jewish people did not like King Herod, for the most part they despised him. They thought he was weak, and a total sell-out to the Roman Empire that was occupying their land, and a Holy Land at that. So if these priests say John was in the flesh they would have started a mob scene against them for the people loved John the Baptist,

because John was man enough and bold enough to stand up to King Herod and say you are wrong for stealing your brother's wife and making her your own (that is a violation of the 7th commandment, thy shall not commit adultery). They may even say to these priest, how come you didn't have the guts to stand up to Herod for his sin, you are the religious and spiritual voice of God yet you remained silent.

John 1:29 - 31 (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! ³⁰This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' ³¹I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

John 3:30 - 36 (NKJV) ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease. ³¹He 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. ³²And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. ³³He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true. ³⁴For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. ³⁵The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. ³⁶He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Mark 6:27 (NKJV) ²⁷Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison,

Ex 20:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.

Sit back to Appreciate – Herod Kills John – but Can't Silence Him / Herod makes John Hero / Jesus can't Die Today / Jesus bringing John Up Assures This / 10th Nissan for Presentation

We have to sit back and think back to really appreciate this whole scene and situation. Herod kills John the Baptist, thinking he has silenced John's voice, only to have John's voice come roaring back louder and stronger. By killing John, Herod now has made him a hero amongst the people, a folk-legend of a single man standing up against a mighty king. And now here it is only a few months after John is beheaded, God is using him still for His glory and purposes. Jesus can not die today, He can not die tomorrow, to be the perfect Lamb of God, He has to die on the 14th on Nissan (in the Jewish Calendar). If these religious leaders could have trapped Jesus here at this moment, accusing Him of claiming to be God, and convincing the people He wasn't, the Levitical Law for such blasphemy was stoning to death on the spot (Lev 24:16). But Jesus couldn't die today, nor tomorrow, it has to be on the 14th of Nissan because that is the date that was prescribed by God for the Passover Lamb to be killed (and that is the very date that Jesus will be killed. By the way, the Passover Lamb was to be bought or brought into the home 4 days prior according to the pattern established for them to follow for the Passover; the 10th of Nissan was yesterday, and that was the day Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey.....right on-schedule. Our God is amazing, He is mighty, He is wonderful.

Ex 12:1 - 6 (NKJV) ¹Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, ²"This month shall be your beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you. ³Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: '**On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household.** ⁴And 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. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶Now 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.

Lev 23:5 (NKJV) ⁵On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover.

(John 19:31 NKJV) Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Lev 24:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶And whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name of the LORD, he shall be put to death.

Application – Never Underestimate Power of Today's Witness Tomorrow

Can I make an application for us today about this story, never underestimate the power of today's witness for tomorrow. The witness, the words, the actions, do not just end on that day, God will use them further and further into the future and we may not even realize it when He does. You may be doing something for the Lord today that seems to go unnoticed, or seemed to have no impact, maybe even seemed like a waste of time after it was over, or maybe even seemed like Satan had victory over you and made you look foolish; but precious saints don't ever underestimate the power of today's witness and how God will use it for tomorrow. Herod (better said Satan) thought they had the victory of silencing Jesus those months ago, and little did they know how loud and how strong the voice of John would come screaming back upon them. Satan, Jesus will die on schedule, His schedule, not yours, and we sit here today

saying totally amazing, not today or tomorrow, but the 14th of Nissan, right on schedule, and He will have to rise again on the 17th of Nissan which is the same day the Ark rested on Mt Ararat (and we will talk about that when we get there – but in a nutshell, that was the beginning of the new world).

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Bumpy and Smooth Roads / God is Good – All the Time

I might add here by the way. There is often this belief that when everything is going well in our lives, then we must be in God's will. When things get bumpy or difficult we can question and even say since things are going so bad, this can't be God's will. John the Baptist, he had a really bad day, thrown in prison, blasphemed, he could have really questioned if he was in God's will. Then he gets beheaded (but let it be stated that he wouldn't water down or weaken his witness); on the way to the sword many may have said since things aren't going good, it wasn't God's will, well here it is Satan you can not kill Jesus today for reason of blaspheme because of the witness and testimony of John the Baptist. May we remember that when things are not going well, that just because they aren't doesn't mean God is not in it. All we need to do is hold fast to His word, and whatever happens happens and we can trust in that. May we also trust in that God is good, and He is for us. One of my teachers from Bible College was telling about his trip to a war-torn area of Africa, a place where people have nothing and live on the edge of losing life and limb on any given second. But he said they have a saying over there as the believers pass each others, and one says "God is Good", and the other responds "All the Time He is Good, even in war". **Rom 8:28 - 31 (NKJV)** ²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Which Son Did the Father's Will

(Matthew 21:28 NKJV) "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'

(Matthew 21:29 NKJV) "He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.

(Matthew 21:30 NKJV) "Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.

(Matthew 21:31 NKJV) "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

(Matthew 21:32 NKJV) "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

Obedient One in the Will / Be Doers not Hearers

Hard to imagine a son actually doing this isn't it? Jesus is saying the obedient one is the one who got up and worked, even if at first he said I will not work. God says the obedient ones are the ones who are doing what God said to do. In James it says let us be doers of the word, and not hearers only.

James 1:22 (NKJV) *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

Lots people – Like Fig Tree – Leaves no Fruit / Raise Hand – Won't Do what Called to Do

Lots of people and lots of churches are like the Fig Tree, lots of leaves but no fruit. Lots of leaves (all the trappings of being spiritual), but not producing any fruit in their lives. People raise their hands and proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior, but they aren't doing what God calls them to do. Jesus asks us today, who is doing the will of the Father, the one who says yes with his lips, but won't do what he has been asked to do; or the one who is doing what God called them to do.

Initiating and Responding

The person who is truly obedient to the Lord is the one who acknowledges God initiating them to go into the field and work and produce fruit, and the person who responds rather than cast back challenges of why he can't or what He needs God to do first before he goes work.

God's Grace still gives Opportunity to Turn

Verse 31 - "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. - Look at God's grace here as He says to them, "Go into the kingdom of God before you they are preceding you. This was the fact which Jesus saw and declared, he does not cut off all hope that the Pharisees might follow, if they willed to do so; he only shows that they have lost the position which they ought to have occupied, and that those whom they despised and spurned have accepted the offered salvation, and shall have their reward. We must remark that the Lord has no censure for those who sometime were disobedient, but afterwards repented; his rebuke falls on the professors and self-righteous, who ought to have been leaders and guides, and were in truth impious and irreligious

The Parable of the Vineyard

Continuing the Story – He will tell Another (33-39) / Should Trigger Ish 5

So continuing with our story, it appears Jesus is going alright I still don't think you get it, so let Me tell you another parable and maybe you'll get this one, so verses 33-39 Jesus tells another parable concerning a vineyard. The parable of the vineyard should trigger their memory back to the Old Testament; Jesus is talking to the religious leaders, those that should have known their Scriptures, so what Jesus is going to tell them isn't something new, He is retelling a story that had already been told in Isaiah chapter 5. As soon as Jesus would start to tell this parable their minds should have tied back to the passage in Isaiah.

Isa 5:1 - 30 (NKJV) *¹Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. ²He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes. ³"And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. ⁴What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes? ⁵And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. ⁶I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds That they rain no rain on it."⁷ **For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.***

Let's have Overview / Vineyard – Landowner / Prophets – Son / Their Actions Condemn Them

Let me give you an overview of what the parable means, and then we will read it. Jesus is going to use the picture of vineyard (which is Israel), and the Landowner (who is God) and give them the 4000 year history of Israel in 3 minutes, culminating with them killing their Messiah. Jesus will talk of how God gave

them the land to harvest (that is bearing much spiritual fruit). He speaks of how God sent them prophets to lead them to God, but they would kill them, and then how God sent His Son to them to lead them, and they would kill Him. And then Jesus finishes the parable saying to them that their own actions condemn them, and that God's judgment will be upon them.

(Matthew 21:33 NKJV) "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country.

Leasing very Common – Easy to Relate

The leasing of land was and is something was very common to them, so they could easily relate to this story.

(Matthew 21:34 NKJV) "Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit.

Jesus states – God expecting a Harvest / Cursed Fig Tree – Israel Fruitless

Jesus is clearly stating that God was expecting a harvest of fruit from them. The cursing of the fig tree (our last study) was Jesus' statement that Israel was fruitless.

(Matthew 21:35 NKJV) "And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another.

(Matthew 21:36 NKJV) "Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them.

Servants – Reference to Prophets / Killed them Physically / Killed their Words (173,880)

The servants mentioned here are a reference to all the prophets God had sent to Israel over the years, yet they continually would repent then return to their wicked ways. There was 400 years of silence from Micah until the next prophet, the very prophet that was living in their day, but they allowed the last prophet John the Baptist to be killed. They not only killed the prophets before them physically, but they killed their words by ignoring them. Daniel gave them a count-down clock, 173,880 days your Messiah will come once you start to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (see our last study), but they killed that word. John the Baptist pointed with his very finger, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world", but they killed that prophet with his words too. These religious leaders should have been showing up at King Herod's door with stones, for that was the punishment for adultery, but instead they bury the word of God under a pile of rocks.

Lev 20:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰*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.*

Cursory Look / Zech – Isaiah – Jeremiah – John Baptist / Chapter 23 Nails Them

Just a cursory look at some of the prophets the Lord had sent to Israel; there was the prophet Zechariah (2 Chr 24:20-22) was stoned, Isaiah was sawn in two (according to tradition), Jeremiah was beaten and thrown in a pit, John the Baptist was beheaded. The people of Israel over and over destroyed their prophets to silence the words the prophets spoke from the Lord. Jesus is going to really nail them again on this in chapter 23 (which is only a few hours after this parable), Jesus won't speak in a parable at that point, He will speak it them in black and white, what are you going to do with this.

Matt 23:31 - 36 (NKJV) ³¹*"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.*

³²*Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. ³³Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?*

³⁴*Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, ³⁵that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.*

³⁶*Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.*

3 Ways – Beating – Killing - stoning

It is interesting the 3 ways the prophets were rejected, beating, killing, and stoning, and I am sure you can relate to these:

Beating - The word of God comes to a person and they beat it back, they are throwing punches at it, trying to knock it out by saying it really doesn't say that. Man wrote the Bible, not God. That is a contradiction. What about evolution? If God is a God of love then how can He allow this or allow that, how could God send someone to hell, I just can't accept that He would say such a thing or do such a thing. So they are trying to land what they believe are knock-out punches against the word.

Killing - Then there is the killing of the word, and they do that by killing the message. Oh, what hypocrites, oh did you hear what they did, and they call themselves Christians, they are nothing but a bunch of Bible-thumpers. Kill the messenger, destroy their reputation, and then destroy the message, in their minds the two are one.

Stoning - Then there is the stoning, and I am sure you have experienced that; and that is where a person will be casting stones at you to keep you from getting close enough to them to share the word. Sometime they just get plain mean. When I was in Mexico on missions, when you wanted to keep the diseased dogs away from you, all you had to do was bend down to pick up a rock and they run away from you. Well there are some people so hardened to the gospel they consider you same, and any ole rock will do if it means keeping you with the Word of God away from them.

(Matthew 21:37 NKJV) "Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.'

(Matthew 21:38 NKJV) "But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.'

(Matthew 21:39 NKJV) "So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Only 3 days they will Kill Jesus / Jesus talking of His Torture – yet Still offering Salvation

Only 3 days later they will be doing this to Jesus, yet they don't see it. Amazingly Jesus is giving them opportunity to turn and repent, yet they miss it. How gracious He is, He is talking about His torturing and crucifixion, yet He still is trying to open their spiritual eyes and break through their hard hearts.

Clearly Warning to All – Mercy Extended but Man must Decide what Do (v40)

But clearly a word of warning to all, His grace and mercy is freely extended, but each man must decide if he will freely receive, verse 40, which Jesus will ask them what shall God do to those who reject the Son. What we will read in the next verse is that these men will pronounce judgment upon themselves.

(Matthew 21:40 NKJV) "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

(Matthew 21:41 NKJV) They said to Him, "He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."

Picture Israel Condemned – Church Born

This is a picture of Israel being condemned, and the kingdom going to the Gentiles, what is called the Church.

Vineyard in OT was Israel / Church Today is to Abide

The vineyard in the OT was Israel; the vineyard today is the Church, and we the Church are to be abiding in Him. Just as Israel had the responsibility to be fruitful before the Lord, that is now the responsibility of the Church today, and each and every one of us who call ourselves Believers in Him.

John 15:1 - 4 (NKJV) ¹*"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

How do I know I am His – Our Lives will Follow / Be as the First Son

How do I know if I am truly His, our lives will follow. We will be as that first son, we will be out in His vineyard producing fruit.

How Produce Fruit – Back to Last Study – Fruitless Fig Tree

How are we to do that, how can I produce fruit unto the Lord, back to our last study on the Fruitless Fig Tree.

Stone the Builders Rejected

Psalm 118 – It is on Everyone’s Lips and Minds / Uses it Again to Point to Self

Jesus will now in the next verses quote again Psalm 118, He is using this hallel song that was song during Passover, a song these very men would have been singing, the song the children had just been singing in the temple, the song possibly hundreds of thousands had been singing the day before as He rode into Jerusalem, and they still miss it. I would think this song would be ringing in their minds over and over because they would have heard it so much over the past few days; ever have that happen to you where you hear a song so much you find yourself whistling it or singing it to yourself without even realizing you are doing it? This is what I picture this song being, we have heard it so much we are hearing it in our sleep. What a difference between hearing and listening.

Psa 118:22 - 26 (NKJV)²² *The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone.* ²³ *This was the LORD'S doing; It is marvelous in our eyes.* ²⁴ *This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.* ²⁵ *Save now, I pray, O LORD; O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.* ²⁶ *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.*

(Matthew 21:42 NKJV) Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?"

(Matthew 21:43 NKJV) "Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.

(Matthew 21:44 NKJV) "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

Jesus Confirms their Statement – Kingdom taken from You

Jesus confirms their very statement of verse 41; yes the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to another.

Story of Chief Cornerstone

The story of the chief cornerstone is an interesting one, according to extra-biblical writings when the temple was under construction, stones were quarried miles away and transported to the temple mount. They did not want any hammering or chiseling at the temple mount, they wanted the stones worked away from the holy ground of the temple. Now some of these stones were forty feet wide and twenty feet high, these stones were massive (you can still see the remains of some of these stones there in Jerusalem in what has become the "Wailing Wall" there on the temple mount. These stones were massive, yet they fit together so perfectly that no mortar was needed, for not even a knife blade could fit between them. Tradition had it that one stone arrived on the scene but, because no one could figure out where it was supposed to go, the builders rolled it off a cliff into the Kidron Valley. Not until the foundation was complete did the builders discover they were one stone short. Sure enough, the stone they had rejected was none other than the cornerstone. Here, Jesus pulls from that tradition as well as from Psalm 118, and says, "Haven't you read? The One who was rejected, the One who was cast away is indeed the chief cornerstone, the foundation stone."

Peter uses this Imagery

Peter picks up on this imagery in his epistle,

1 Pet 2:4 - 10 (NKJV) ⁴*Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,* ⁵*you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* ⁶*Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."* ⁷*Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,"* ⁸*and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.* ⁹*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;* ¹⁰*who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

Used 3 ways in Scriptures

We can see the imagery of the cornerstone presented 3-ways in the Scriptures:

- To the Jews, He is a stumbling stone (Romans 9:32, 33). They say oh He couldn't be the Messiah, and they stumble on very name of Jesus.

- To the Gentiles, He is a smiting stone (Daniel 2:34). Many people in the world say the message of the cross is foolishness, Christianity is a bloody religion, you people are out there. Or the religious people who think they are right with God because of their good works, and they stumble and get upset when they look at that sinner who lived in sin, but one day heard the gospel of the cross, received Him and are living on-fire for Him, and the religious people say no way, they are not in the same group as me.
- To the believer, He is the foundation stone (Ephesians 2:20). Truly, Jesus is our Rock.

Rom 9:32 - 10:1 (NKJV) ³²Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. ³³As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." ³⁴Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.

Dan 2:34 (NKJV) ³⁴You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces.

Eph 2:20 - 22 (NKJV) ²⁰having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²²in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Verse 44 – Fall on Him – or Fall on You

Verse 44 - "And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." – Jesus is real clear to all men, either you will fall on Him and be saved, or He will fall on you and you'll be crushed. It's your choice. I highly recommend the first. I recommend building your life upon the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

(Matthew 21:45 NKJV) Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.

They finally getting the Point

At last, the chief priests and elders were getting the point that Jesus did what He did in the authority of the Father and of the Son. But, as we will see in chapter 22, He had one more parable left, which will speak of the authority of the Holy Spirit.

(Matthew 21:46 NKJV) But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Not this Day / Must be 14th of Nissan / God as intimately involved in your Life

Not this day, Jesus can not die on this day, for it has to be the 14th of Nissan; and for us today, ask intimately involved was God on the making sure that the 10th of Nissan Jesus rides into Jerusalem, and that on the 14th of Nissan Jesus will go to the cross, and on the 17th He will raise from the dead.....as intimately involved in Jesus life and times, God is as intimately involved in your life. You are continually upon His mind He loves you so much. God has a specific plan for your life, and He will see it through to the end

Psa 139:17 - 18 (NKJV) ¹⁷ How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them! ¹⁸ If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand; When I awake, I am still with You.

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.

Phil 1:6 (NKJV) ⁶being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Life becomes Feeing / We can Have Confidence we are not in Alone

While some may not like the idea of God is the initiator and we are the responder, when a Christian can come to that place and seize and glean that truth, life becomes very freeing, things that once seemed mountainous now become hills as we look at them and say Lord you have allowed this, or even initiated this, now Lord how do I respond, and in all things we can have the confidence we are not in this alone, and we can have confidence the one with total authority is working for us:

Rom 8:28 - 31 (NKJV) ²⁸And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. ²⁹For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be

the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. ³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

Right on Schedule

Christian, let me tell you this, just as Jesus was right on schedule for His Triumphal Entry to Jerusalem, and just as He was right on schedule for the cross, and the resurrection (we will talk about that then), we are also right on schedule for His Second Coming.

1 John 3:1 - 3 (NKJV) ¹Behold 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. 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. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Matthew 22

The Final Questions and Challenges (both God and Man) – 22:1-46

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Final Week – Now Tuesday / Clear Temple - Respond

We are in the final week of the King's Life, it is now Tuesday, and just the day before Jesus had cleared the Temple. In our passage last study, with the cleansing of the Temple fresh in their minds, the chief priests and elders demanded to know by whose authority He overturned the tables and drove out the crooks. They come to Jesus (God) and they challenge Him, they initiate the challenge, and expect a response, they expect God to respond to their questioning. As those men were then, so people can be today, and that is they think they can turn the One True and Living God into a responder of their challenges, questions, or promptings. What we saw there in that passage of Scripture is that God is no responder to man, God is always the initiator, and man is always the responder. Well for context purposes let us remember that it is still the same day, we are still in the same conversation, and the challenges against Jesus continue.

Long Day / Silent Wednesday / Pray it Effect You

Tuesday is one extremely long day in the life of Jesus, and the contents of Scripture; He will face-off against the religious leaders, and then give the great end-times teaching on the Mount of Olives (please see the appendix that gives the chronological order of Jesus' last week in the Scriptures). As we look at the chronological order of the Scriptures, we will find something quite amazing, and that is there is nothing recorded in the Scriptures for tomorrow (Wednesday) (remind you Jesus goes to the cross on Thursday – contrary to man's observation today, a study of the Scriptures confirm that it was Thursday); but why are the Scriptures silent on that Wednesday? Was it the calm before the storm? Was Jesus just spending time with family and friends? Was He just spending time with the disciples? Was He resting, was He in prayer all day? The answer is probably all the above, but God by Divine design remains silent for a reason. I will tell you what I have experienced personally from having to pastor and teach these passages (Mt 22-23), it is exhausting. It is physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting; I pray these 2 chapters have the same effect on you. I pray you don't just hear the text today, but that you experience the text today. I doubt the "happy" churches would pick these verses as their Sunday morning topic; thus I am ever thankful for verse-by-verse because we have to face these passages. Honestly, I take absolutely no joy in teaching these passages, in teaching passages on judgment, condemnation, and eternal damnation; but as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ I must.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:

Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)

Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)

Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)

11th – Monday

Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)

Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)

Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)

12th – Tuesday

Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)

13th – Wednesday

The Gospels are Silent

14th – Thursday –

Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)

15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins

16th – Saturday - Sabbath

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

2 Things – Salvation/Evangelizing (people are perishing)

It is my hearts desire for 2 things to happen today, and that is that for anyone here today who has not committed their life to Jesus Christ, that today will be the day of salvation for you. Secondly, that we as a people will let the Spirit of God bring us to a holy place, and that is that people around us are perishing; maybe those people are a spouse, a child, a parent, a brother or sister, a neighbor, a co-worker, whomever they may be may we end up where Jesus' heart ended when He passes His final word of judgment and condemnation upon these people.

(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!"

Pray Hearts Broken Open

I pray that today our hearts will be broken open like never before for those that are perishing. Before we get into our study I would like to have our worship leader come and sing a special song for us, to prepare our heart for this passage of Scripture.

Continuing Challenges / I Stand before You / Applicable to Believers Too

In this passage we the challenges and the questioning continue, all the questions that are still asked and challenged today; we will end the chapter today with Jesus presenting to them that their Savior is standing before them, what will they do with Him. Although these verses may seem that they are applicable to the non-believer only, God has rich words for the believer too, as each of these topics will speak to the believer on how to go deeper in the Lord, and how to have life, and that more abundant:

- Parable of Wedding Feast (22:1-14) – Improperly Dressed
- Question on Taxes (22:15-22) – Separation of Church and State
- Question on the Resurrection (22:23-33) – Missing that He is Alive Today
- Question on the Greatest Commandment (22:34-40) – Missing the Heart of the Matter
- Jesus asks Question on the "Son of David" (22:41-46) – He stands before You

Parable of Wedding Feast (22:1-14) – Improperly Dressed

(Matthew 22:1 NKJV) And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:

(Matthew 22:2 NKJV) "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,

(Matthew 22:3 NKJV) "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

Spirit woo Bride for Son / Jew 1st then Gentile

God the Father set His Spirit upon men and woman to woo a bride for His Son. The ministry of the Spirit is to call people to the wedding, to win a bride for Jesus Christ. Who did He call first? Salvation is to the Jew first and then the Gentile (Romans 2:9, 10).

(Matthew 22:4 NKJV) "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'"

(Matthew 22:5 NKJV) "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

Called – But say Busy Tonight / Lots of Work

The people are called but they say not tonight, I'm busy, got other things that are more important or interesting to me rather than come to your son's wedding. They can miss out on work and business to go to a wedding. Lots of people will miss out on the marriage supper of the Lamb because the things of the world were more important.

Word for Believer

But you know there is also a word here for the believer, the trading in of the temporal for the eternal, the immediate fleeting satisfaction for the overflowing abundant blessings that come from the Lord. Lots of people say I really don't have time for the things of the Lord, I got all this stuff going on in my life and taking time out to be with the Lord just doesn't work well right now, and well really I don't see how I am going to get all the things I want by investing time away from those things and just "well" sitting around with Jesus. How many people trade the immediate fleeting satisfaction, for the overflowing abundant blessings of God that He has promised us. God says do it My way and you will be blessed, but a person can say God your way doesn't seem to be working out, or it isn't moving at the pace I want it to, so they go off on their way and continue to invest in temporal things that never come to the fruition that they were looking for to start with. I have lost track of how many times I have told someone, do it God's way, and in the end you will have what you are desiring, in a much more abundant way to boot. But they can't wait on the Lord, and they go off and try to make something happen, or go here and do that to try to fill the void immediately, but because they aren't doing it God's way those things never truly work out, yet they keep throwing their time at it, trying to make it work, and in the end if they had just waited upon the Lord they would have had all they wanted, and had it 10-100 times sooner. I am reminded of the true story of an old prospector illustrating acting in faith. Many years ago in a California desert there was a rundown hut. Nearby was a pump, the only source of water for miles around. Attached to the pump was a tin can with a message inside, written in pencil on a sheet of brown wrapping paper. This was the message: "This pump is all right as of June, 1932. I put a new sucker washer into it and it ought to last five years. But the washer dries out and the pump has got to be primed. Under the white rock I buried a bottle of water, out of the sun and cork end up. There's enough water in it to prime this pump but not if you drink some first. Pour in about 1/4 and let her soak to wet the leather. Then pour in the rest medium fast and pump for all your worth. You'll git water. The well never has ran dry. Have faith. When you git watered up, fill the bottle and put it back like you found it for the next feller. Signed: Desert Pete. P.S. Don't go drinking the water first! Prime the pump with it and you'll git all you can hold." Too many people are drinking the cup of water and missing out on the well of water, going on to continually be thirsty, when they could have been drenched. It takes faith, but God's word is true (read the Scriptures below):

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

Psa 37:7 (NKJV)⁷ *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.*

Prov 3:5 - 6 (NKJV)⁵ *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;*⁶ *In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.*

(Matthew 22:6 NKJV) "And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them.

(Matthew 22:7 NKJV) "But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Under Occupation for not heeding Prophets / 70AD – Jerusalem Destroyed

Israel is under Roman occupation, the audience is not free and it is because they refused to heed to God's Word through the prophets. It will be less than 40 years later (70AD) and many of these people will have these words come flooding back upon them as Titus and the Roman Army will come and utterly

destroy and burn Jerusalem down, including the destruction of the very Temple they are currently standing before.

(Matthew 22:8 NKJV) "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.'

(Matthew 22:9 NKJV) 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'

(Matthew 22:10 NKJV) "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Kingdom goes to Church

So just as Jesus had said in the past parables, the kingdom will go to others, and that is what we call today the Church.

Church won't be Perfect / Jewish – Israel - Temple

But even the Church will not be perfect and spotless, Jesus will go to say that some are come into the Church, but they won't be part of the Church, and God will separate them out. The picture of the Church is the same as the picture of Israel at this time, where people believed they were God's chosen because they were Jewish, part of the nation Israel, and they went to the Temple. Jesus is making a strong point all hearing this then, and hearing it today, just because you call yourself Christian, because (for us) are part of a Christian nation, and go to a building called the church, it doesn't mean that you are mine.

(Matthew 22:11 NKJV) "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

(Matthew 22:12 NKJV) "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless.

(Matthew 22:13 NKJV) "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

(Matthew 22:14 NKJV) "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Why Wedding Garment / Can't come to God – Any Ole Way / Put on the Lord Jesus

We may wonder why the king supplied a wedding garment, but it really isn't that much different than today; in our weddings today the bride maids wear bridal gowns, the best men wear tuxedos, and in our story before us the king bought clothes for all, everybody is in the bridal party for this is the king's son getting married. But this man shows up in his blue jeans and AC/DC t-shirt and the king is furious. How disrespectful, this is the king's son and you think you can show up any ole way you want. As then, so today is the application for us, that people have lost or forgotten the respect before the holiness of God. They think they can show up and do any anything they want, totally disregarding the King's (God) command and words to be clothed correctly, to put on the wedding garment and come to the feast. Many people think they can keep the clothes of the world on and come before the holy God and be accepted by Him, God says our clothes of the world are filthy rags before Him (Isa 64:6). Jesus is painting the picture here that says not so, you must put on the wedding garment. What is the wedding garment, the context of the story tells us, the wedding garment is Jesus Christ. The Scripture declare to us, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and cast off the world. Jesus is saying I am the wedding garment, put Me on and come into the wedding feast while there is still an invitation available to you; be robed in the righteousness of God

(Isa 64:6 NKJV) But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away

(Rom 13:11 NKJV) And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.

(Rom 13:12 NKJV) The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

(Rom 13:13 NKJV) Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy.

(Rom 13:14 NKJV) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

(Rev 7:9 NKJV) After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, (Rev 7:10 NKJV) and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

Question on Taxes (22:15-22) – Separation of Church and State

(Matthew 22:15 NKJV) Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.

(Matthew 22:16 NKJV) And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.

(Matthew 22:17 NKJV) "Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

(Matthew 22:18 NKJV) But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?"

Unlikely Teammates

Unlikely teammates, but a common hatred has a way of uniting people, but only for that common goal and then they turn on each other behind each others back. The Pharisees hated Rome and their Jewish King Herod, they felt Herod was a sell-out of the people to Rome. The Herodians, they loved Herod, thus they enjoyed Herod's chummy relationship with Rome.

Plan a Set-up

The plan here was a set-up. If Jesus said no don't pay taxes, then they could get Him killed for treason against Rome. But if Jesus said yes to pay the taxes, then we would feel the way we fell about Governor O'Malley saying he is going to raise our sales tax next year. Jesus is God, therefore He is too God for them.

(Matthew 22:19 NKJV) "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius.

(Matthew 22:20 NKJV) And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"

(Matthew 22:21 NKJV) They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

(Matthew 22:22 NKJV) When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

Coin in Image / People Wrapped who Aligned With / Lose Sight

Jesus is saying the coin has been made in the image of Caesar, give it to him; but you have been made in the image of God, therefore give yourself to Him. People then, and people now, get so wrapped up in who they are aligned with here on earth (I'm a Pharisee, I'm a Herodian, I am a Republican, a Democrat, a Catholic, a Calvary Chapel, I'm a Ravens fan, I'm a Steelers fan) that they lose sight of who they are to be aligned with, and that is the One whom they are made in His image. These men had polarized themselves (isolated themselves) into groups with causes, and missed the greatest cause for life, to fellowship with their Creator.

(Gen 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."

(Gen 1:27 NKJV) So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Aligning Separates / 4yrs – 100's Billions – 3,000 American Lives

Their aligning themselves into group, establishing division amongst themselves, their failure to understand the Scriptures and their true purpose in their life lead them into this place of Roman occupation, for long-long ago they quit letting God be their King and now here they are no longer free and strong; and now on top of that they are dangerously close to going into eternal damnation. Today the Republicans and Democrats have spent 4 years, a couple hundred billion dollars, and over 3,000 American lives (10's of thousands Iraqi lives) trying to figure out how to end this war in Iraq, yet God has told us, just as He had told these people of Israel in this story, how to bring it to an end.....

(2 Chr 7:14 NKJV) "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

(2 Chr 7:15 NKJV) "Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

(2 Chr 7:16 NKJV) "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

(2 Chr 7:17 NKJV) "As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments,

(2 Chr 7:18 NKJV) "then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.'

(2 Chr 7:19 NKJV) "But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them,

(2 Chr 7:20 NKJV) "then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples.

(2 Chr 7:21 NKJV) "And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?'

(2 Chr 7:22 NKJV) "Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.'"

Repent – Come back to 1 Nation under god

If we as a Nation would repent and come back to the Lord as one nation under God (as we once were), if we come back to the image we were made in, if we would repent and turn back to Him, if we as a Nation would pray as one to Him, then He would end this war in a day, seal and become our Homeland Defense, and He would heal our land, and so would have Israel on this very day we study.

Question on the Resurrection (22:23-33) – Missing that He is Alive Today

(Matthew 22:23 NKJV) The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,

(Matthew 22:24 NKJV) saying: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.

(Matthew 22:25 NKJV) "Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother.

(Matthew 22:26 NKJV) "Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh.

(Matthew 22:27 NKJV) "Last of all the woman died also.

(Matthew 22:28 NKJV) "Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

Don't Believe – ask Anyways

Now they don't believe in the resurrection but they are going to ask Jesus a question about it. As it was then, so it is today, I really don't believe in God, don't live for Him, but if there is a heaven I'm sure I'll be accepted into it.

Leverite Marriage

Their question is in reference to what is called the "leverite marriage" which was established in Deuteronomy 25:5-10, and it was to protect widow and children of a mans brother if he was to die. The oldest brother was to bring the family in and make them his own. So these guys are asking if all 7 had taken her in as wife, whose wife would she be in the resurrection (which we don't believe in anyways). Jesus says what a ridiculous question:

(Matthew 22:29 NKJV) Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.

(Matthew 22:30 NKJV) "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven.

(Matthew 22:31 NKJV) "But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying,

(Matthew 22:32 NKJV) 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

(Matthew 22:33 NKJV) And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

Verse 29 – Totally Mistaken (misapply the Scriptures) / & Miss the Power of Resurrection

Jesus says in verse 29 you are totally mistaken, you don't know the Scriptures (you totally misapply them), and worse than that you are missing the main point, and that is the power of God, that He is a living God.

Quotes Exodus 3:6 ' Not I was but I am / Man is Eternal

Jesus points to the power by saying/quoting (Exodus 3:6) "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". Notice He doesn't say "I was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob", for they are all dead and gone. Rather He says I am their God for they are alive today. They are alive for man is an eternal being, and thus He sends the clear message that there is life after this life, and you had better be prepared (no doubt the parable of the wedding feast fresh in their minds).

Jesus loves Speaking on Resurrection / Affect how Live Today

Believers today, have you noticed all of all past studies how often Jesus speaks about the resurrection. Jesus loves to speak about the resurrection; He loves to speak about it because it is pure power. There is power in knowing that we will see God face to face, if we truly believe that it will effect how we live everyday here on earth (where we closed last weeks study), we will live pure lives, lives set-apart for Him. Living for the resurrection, looking forward to it will affect us on what we do with the talents He gives, whether we will use them for His glory, whether we will seek first the kingdom of God, whether we will store our treasures up in heaven. It will determine how we love our neighbor (next topic):

1 John 3:1 - 3 (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. 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. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

(Mat 6:33 NKJV) "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(Mat 6:19 NKJV) "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

(Mat 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.

(Mat 6:21 NKJV) "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

He is Alive – Resurrection Power Available for You / What you think is Dead – He can Revive

But before we move on to that topic, precious saint may you hear the words of Jesus today in your life, that He is the God who is alive today, and has the resurrection power flowing through His veins, and that power is available to you today from Him. What thing you think is dead, He will raise again from the dead; is it a relationship? He can revive it! Is it a wayward child, He can revive it! Is it a past failing that you can't get past, that constantly haunts you, He can breath new life into you give you the power to move on. Whatever it may be, He says I am alive today to breathe life into you.

Jesus loves to talk of Resurrection – Lets take Example

Jesus loved to talk about the resurrection, even with the people who didn't believe in it, let us take that example and do the same, for the resurrection is the power of the gospel, anyone can die, but only Jesus had to power over death to raise again.

Question on the Greatest Commandment (22:34-40) – Missing the Heart of the Matter

(Matthew 22:34 NKJV) But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.

(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."

Reduced to Rules & Regulation / Missing the heart of God

These Pharisees had taken the 10 commandments and added 613 (248 were positive, 365 were negative) more rules and regulation to make sure that a person was keeping the 10 commandments. They had missed the heart of the Law, God words of love to protect and provide for man from the dangers of sin, and they had reduced it to a bunch of rules and regulations, totally missing the heart of God. So it is today, how people can get so wrapped up in the rules they miss the heart of God. These religious people come with critical hearts, they grab the lawyer so they can pierce and pound with the Law, and the Pharisees are from being the extinction list today.

Simplifies into 2

Jesus takes the 613 laws and simplifies them into 2 or them; love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and soul; and love your neighbor as yourself (clearly pointing out that we already love ourselves).

Beautiful Story

There is a beautiful and true story that gives a beautiful picture of what Jesus is saying here. A nurse escorted a tired, anxious young man, to the bedside of an elderly man. "Your son is here" she whispered to the patient. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened. He was heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack and he dimly saw the young man standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand and the young man tightly wrapped his fingers around it, squeezing a message of encouragement. The nurse brought a chair next to the bedside. All through the night the young man sat holding the old mans hand, and offering gentle words of hope. The dying man said nothing as he held tightly to his son. As dawn approached, the patient died. The young man placed on the bed the lifeless hand he had been holding, and then he went to notify the nurse. While the nurse did what was necessary, the young man waited. When she had finished her task, the nurse began to say words of sympathy to the young man. But he interrupted her. "Who was that man?" He asked. The startled nurse replied, "I thought he was your father". "No, he was not my father (he must be in another room on this wing), "He answered. "I never saw him before in my life." "Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?" asked the nurse. He replied, "I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here." When I realized he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, I knew how much he needed me...."

Didn't Matter not his Job

It didn't matter that it wasn't his family, his responsibility, his job, it came down to that this man needed a son, and his son wasn't there physically so he stepped in and filled the role, even if it took all night. How I pray we can play the role of the Son, who isn't here in the flesh but His Spirit lives within us. That we would love God in obedience to what He has called us to do, and that we would love our neighbors in the sacrifice that His Son did.

Jesus asks Question on the "Son of David" (22:41-46) – He stands before You

(Matthew 22:41 NKJV) While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, **(Matthew 22:42 NKJV)** saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David."

Reference to Messiah

Son of David is a reference to the Messiah, the Savior that would come, and He would come through the loins and lineage of King David:

(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.

(Matthew 22:43 NKJV) He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: **(Matthew 22:44 NKJV)** 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'?"

(Matthew 22:45 NKJV) "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"

(Matthew 22:46 NKJV) And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Quotes Ps 110 / Son and Lord – I Am Eternal / The Messiah you Waited For

Jesus quotes (Psalm 110) that the Messiah would not only come from David, but that He would also be David's God. Jesus is saying I can only be David's offspring, and David's God by being eternal, the ever living God. I am the Son of David, the Messiah, Savior you have long waited for and need, and I am standing right in front of you. I picture the scene as the Temple Mount would have 100's of thousands of lambs bleating, and Jesus would be standing before them as the final Lamb of God who would become the final sacrifice for man's sin.

I stand in Front of You

Jesus says I am standing right in front of, your Savior is here, what are you going to do. These men have heard every story about Jesus by now, they know all that has been said that He has done. What could they say about His claim:

- in chemistry, He turned water to wine.
 - in biology, He was born without the normal conception.
 - in physics, He disproved the law of gravity when He ascended into heaven.
 - in economics, He disproved the law of diminishing return by feeding 5,000 men with two fishes & 5 loaves of bread.
 - in medicine, He cured the sick and the blind, without administering a single dose of drugs.
 - in history, He is the beginning and the end.
 - in government, He said that He shall be called wonderful counselor, prince of peace.
 - in religion, He said no one comes to the father except through him.
-
- He had no servants, yet they called him master;
 - had no degree, yet they called him teacher;
 - had no medicines, yet they called him healer.
 - He had no armies, yet rulers feared him.
 - He won no military battles, yet he conquered the world.
 - He committed no crime, yet they crucified him.
 - He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today

I Stand before you – What will You do with this Knowledge

I am your God, your Messiah, your Savior, I am standing before you today, what will you do with Me, what will you do with the knowledge that you now have:

- Will you clothe yourself with the wedding garment for the marriage feast?
- Will you recognize the image you were made in?
- Will you recognize and cry out for the power of the resurrection that is available for you today?
- Will you see through the rules of religion and receive Me into your heart?

Today!

I stand before you today, what will you do with Me?

Matthew 23

Jesus Denounces the False Religious Leaders – 23:1-39

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Final Week – Now Tuesday / Clear Temple - Respond

We are in the final week of the King’s Life, it is now Tuesday, and just the day before Jesus had cleared the Temple. In our passage last study, with the cleansing of the Temple fresh in their minds, the chief priests and elders demanded to know by whose authority He overturned the tables and drove out the crooks. They come to Jesus (God) and they challenge Him, they initiate the challenge, and expect a response, they expect God to respond to their questioning. As those men were then, so people can be today, and that is they think they can turn the One True and Living God into a responder of their challenges, questions, or promptings. What we saw there in that passage of Scripture is that God is no responder to man, God is always the initiator, and man is always the responder. Well for context purposes let us remember that it is still the same day, we are still in the same conversation, and the challenges against Jesus continue.

Long Day / Silent Wednesday / Pray it Effect You

Tuesday is one extremely long day in the life of Jesus, and the contents of Scripture; He will face-off against the religious leaders, and then give the great end-times teaching on the Mount of Olives (please see the appendix that gives the chronological order of Jesus’ last week in the Scriptures). As we look at the chronological order of the Scriptures, we will find something quite amazing, and that is there is nothing recorded in the Scriptures for tomorrow (Wednesday) (remind you Jesus goes to the cross on Thursday – contrary to man’s observation today, a study of the Scriptures confirm that it was Thursday); but why are the Scriptures silent on that Wednesday? Was it the calm before the storm? Was Jesus just spending time with family and friends? Was He just spending time with the disciples? Was He resting, was He in prayer all day? The answer is probably all the above, but God by Divine design remains silent for a reason. I will tell you what I have experienced personally from having to pastor and teach these passages (Mt 22-23), it is exhausting. It is physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting; I pray these 2 chapters have the same effect on you. I pray you don’t just hear the text today, but that you experience the text today. I doubt the “happy” churches would pick these verses as their Sunday morning topic; thus I am ever thankful for verse-by-verse because we have to face these passages. Honestly, I take absolutely no joy in teaching these passages, in teaching passages on judgment, condemnation, and eternal damnation; but as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ I must.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:

- Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
- Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
- Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)

11th – Monday

- Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
- Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
- Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)

12th – Tuesday

Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)

Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)

The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)

Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)

13th – Wednesday

The Gospels are Silent

14th – Thursday –

Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)

Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)

The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)

The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)

Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)

15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins

16th – Saturday - Sabbath

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

2 Things – Salvation/Evangelizing (people are perishing)

It is my hearts desire for 2 things to happen today, and that is that for anyone here today who has not committed their life to Jesus Christ, that today will be the day of salvation for you. Secondly, that we as a people will let the Spirit of God bring us to a holy place, and that is that people around us are perishing; maybe those people are a spouse, a child, a parent, a brother or sister, a neighbor, a co-worker, whomever they may be may we end up where Jesus' heart ended when He passes His final word of judgment and condemnation upon these people.

(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!"

Pray Hearts Broken Open

I pray that today our hearts will be broken open like never before for those that are perishing. Before we get into our study I would like to have our worship leader come and sing a special song for us, to prepare our heart for this passage of Scripture.

End of Challenges - I Stand before You / Applicable to Believers Too

As we ended our last study there in chapter 22, we saw Jesus standing before all His challengers presenting Himself as the Messiah, their Savior, and basically saying to them what will you do with this knowledge, and so he does today as He continually presents Himself to man today (maybe that is you today) and shows Himself as your Savior – what will you do (as we seen last week, being of the Jewish religion, the Nation Israel, and attending the Temple didn't mean a relationship with Christ, just the same today that calling oneself a Christian, living in the Christian nation America, and attending church doesn't mean a relationship), Jesus asks all men and woman, what will you do with Me? Also, although these verses may seem that they are applicable to the non-believer only, God has rich words for the believer too, as each of these topics will speak to the believer on how to go deeper in the Lord, and how to have life, and that more abundant,

(Matthew 22:41 NKJV) While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

(Matthew 22:42 NKJV) saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David."

Today – Denounce False Religious Leaders / Shows us Traits to Avoid – To have it All

In today's passage we will read of Jesus denouncing the false spiritual leaders of Israel. He will show us traits to avoid ourselves as believers so that we may have a relationship, and not a religion, He will show us today how to have it all, all that we need, all the treasures and wisdom and knowledge that is found only in Christ.

Marcellus

In the days of the Roman Empire, a certain wealthy senator became estranged from his son. When he died unexpectedly, his will was opened. 'Because my son does not appreciate what I've done, I leave all of my worldly possessions to my loyal slave, Marcellus,' the will read. 'However, because I am a man of

grace, I bequeath to my son one of my possessions of his choosing.' 'Sorry,' said the testator to the son. 'You can only take one of your dad's possessions. Which will it be?' 'I take Marcellus,' said the son. Brilliant! That's the idea. When you take Jesus Christ, you get all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. When you open your heart to Him, you find everything you need. It's all in Him. Why is this understanding so important?—because it is the only way to keep from being sucked into 'enticing words,' cults and other dead-end pursuits of pseudo-spirituality as we will read of today.

4 Traits of False Spiritual Leadership (or person):

(Matthew 23:1 NKJV) Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,

(Matthew 23:2 NKJV) saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.

(Matthew 23:3 NKJV) "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

(Matthew 23:4 NKJV) "For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

Here we see 3 signs of a false spiritual leader or person, the lack God-given authority, they lay heavy burdens on other people, and they lift not a finger for another person (they lack sympathy).

1st Sign – Lacks Authority / Moses Seat – No Record of this Assigned / Only Authority the Word

Verses 1-2 – Sit in Moses' seat - The first sign of false spiritual leadership is that it lacks God-given authority. Newer translations properly render this verse: "The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in Moses' seat." In other words, the scribes and Pharisees had seized the position of authority, even though they were not called by God to do so. There is no record in the Scriptures that God assigned any authority to this group. Their only authority was the Word of God. Therefore, the people were to obey whatever the Pharisees taught from the Word. But the people were not to obey the traditions and the man-made rules of the Pharisees.

2nd Bind Heavy Burdens – Talk the Talk / Jesus lightens the Burdens / Satan makes Legalistic

Verse 3-4 – they bind/lay heavy burdens - The second sign of false spiritual leadership is that it binds heavy burdens on others, but won't bind a burden upon themselves. They can talk the talk, but refuse to walk the walk. The Pharisees were harder on others than they were on themselves. Jesus came to lighten men's burdens (Matt. 11:28-30), but legalistic religion always seeks to make burdens heavier. Jesus never asks us to do anything that He has not first done. By the way, if Satan can't get you to sin, then he will settle for turning you into a legalist, self-righteous. We can wear out those around us pointing out their faults and failings, but also put ourselves under a works trip, and measure our spirituality based on our performance, thus missing the freedom of His grace.

Matt 11:28-30 (NKJV) ²⁸*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* ²⁹*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.* ³⁰*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

Don't Reject Word / Jesus is the Word – He is the Example / People Drawn- People Follow

Notice that Jesus says don't reject the word because of their hypocrisy. Do the things out of the word of God, regardless of the messenger. Jesus is the Word, therefore He is the example of the Word, He is the Word in action, and when the Word was in action people responded. People saw something real, they saw something genuine, and they were drawn to following Him, and isn't that what happened to Blind Bartimaeus, the leper, Lazarus, to the many that followed Him in on that Triumphant Entry, and isn't that what happened to you and I, that when we read His word it moved in us, we were drawn to Him, we saw something real, we saw something genuine, we knew real love, true love when we saw it and we were drawn to Him and followed Him with our hearts.

Won't lift Finger / 3rd Lack Sympathy

Verse 4 - but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers - Thirdly, false spiritual leaders lack sympathy. They bind heavy, legalistic burdens on others but won't lift a finger to help anyone bear them. The only time they lift a finger is to point out someone else's faults.

(Matthew 23:5 NKJV) "But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

(Matthew 23:6 NKJV) "They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, (Matthew 23:7 NKJV) "greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

4th – they Lack Humility

Finally, false spiritual leaders lack humility. When the Pharisees went into the synagogue, they sat on the platform in large chairs in order to be seen by all. As time went on, they made phylacteries (little leather boxes that contained the Scriptures that was tied to their hands and heads) so big that some could hardly stand straight under the weight (Duet 6). They obeyed the command in Numbers 15 to place blue cloth on the hem of their robes as a reminder of their heavenly calling. But as their pride increased, so did the size of their blue borders where they were wearing more blue than white (maybe the originally Levi's blue jeans).

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

Num 15:38 (NKJV) 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.*

Something in Flesh loves Attention / To Them Success meant Recognition / Religion for Attention

Something in their flesh loved the attention and praises of men. To them, success meant recognition by men and praise from men. They were not concerned about the approval of God. They used their religion to attract attention, not to glorify God (Matt. 5:16).

Matt 5:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Most Difficult People – those looking for Titles or Recognition

The most difficult people in a church can be those who are looking for a title or to be recognized for what they do or have done. We seen back in chapter 20 when James and John come to Jesus asking for a position and title, and we then read they were no longer the 12, but the 10 and the 2.

(Matthew 20:24 NKJV) And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers.

Good Self Examination / Authority – Legalistic – Sympathy - Humility

So the examination for ourselves, and it is a good one to come back to and examine ourselves to; do assume an authority that hasn't been given to me, do I lay legalistic trips on people, do I lack sympathy for those that are lost or hurting, and do I lack humility. Anyone in ministry should regularly come back and spend quiet time with the Lord asking for the Lord to examine them.

(Matthew 23:8 NKJV) "But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.

(Matthew 23:9 NKJV) "Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

(Matthew 23:10 NKJV) "And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ.

(Matthew 23:11 NKJV) "But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant.

(Matthew 23:12 NKJV) "And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Not Biological – but Spiritual Ladder / Danger for Both / I'll take Marcellus

Not talking about biology, as most of us call our father, dad, nor is He talking about leadership and order in the church/temple, but He is speaking of making a spiritual ladder; and the higher up the ladder you were, the more spiritual and closer to God you were. It is dangerous for the person who assumes for they can become all we just read and not servants, and for the followers, for if they think someone is higher on the spiritual ladder, they will go to them first, rather than Jesus first, for remember, "I'll take Marcellus", I will take Jesus for in Him is all wisdom and knowledge, and all we need for all our needs.

True Spiritual Leader – Avoids Elevation Titles and Accepts Lowly Tasks / Jesus washes Feet

Jesus says the true spiritual leader does two things: He avoids elevated titles and he accepts lowly tasks. Jesus avoided the titles and honors that people wanted to heap upon Him in His early ministry, choosing instead to humble Himself, to eat with sinners, to wash feet, and to touch lepers. Jesus is the ultimate spiritual Leader.

Jesus Ends last Sermon – 8 Woes – Beatitudes / Happy - Grievous

Following His description of a true spiritual leader, Jesus did something I find intriguing. He ended His last sermon pronouncing eight woes. Bible students, think back. How did Jesus begin His public ministry? By pronouncing eight blessings in the form of the Beatitudes. Watch and see how the eight woes at the end of His preaching ministry correlate perfectly with the eight blessings given at the beginning of His ministry. Blessed means oh how happy, and woe means oh how grievous.

8 woes saying Your Religion not Working / Antiochus invading Egypt – Circle is Called Life

With these 8 woes Jesus is laying it out for the Pharisees, it is decision time for you, I a, telling you that your religion doesn't work before God, the religion you have made up isn't God's, and know you must decide if you are going to humble yourself and change. When Antiochus invaded Egypt, the Romans delivered an ultimatum to the ambitious Syrian who would be a king. Hoping to gain time, he told the Roman tribune that he needed to think over their demands. He would give them an answer later. The tribune took swift action. He drew a circle in the sand around Antiochus and said, "Decide before you step out of that circle." The heaven we read of in the Bible is real. The God it speaks of is holy, almighty and glorious. His throne is the immovable center of the universe. He rules over all. He offers mankind salvation and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. And He draws a circle around us called life, and he tells us to make our decision concerning Him before we step out of that circle.

Woe 1

(Matthew 23:13 NKJV) "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

Poor in Spirit – Proud in Spirit / Not Going but Preventing Others

Matt 5:3 (NKJV)³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Although the kingdom of heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, the Pharisees were proud in spirit. "I thank You, God, that I am not as other men," they prayed (see Luke 18:11). Their pride, Jesus said, would not only keep them from entering the kingdom, but would prevent others as well.

Hypocrite – Actor on Stage / Jesus says just Playing the Part

In this day a "hypocrite" was an actor on a stage; Jesus is saying you are just playing a part. Lots of churches today, their pulpit is filled with men who are not saved.

Woe 2

(Matthew 23:14 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

Mourn Comforted – Manipulated the Mourners

Matt 5:4 (NKJV)⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.

Jesus promised that the mourners will be comforted. The Pharisees, however, manipulated those who mourned. You see, when a man died, the Pharisees would show up on his doorstep telling his widow that if she wanted to honor her husband's memory, she would make a donation to their ministry. Watch out for that, precious people. In this day when there's an abundance of fund-raising, be on guard against those who seek to manipulate rather than to comfort.

Woe 3

(Matthew 23:15 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.

Rather than Meek – Convert to Legalism and Hypocrisy / Worse Converts

Matt 5:5 (NKJV)⁵ Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

The meek were to inherit the earth. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were trying to convert the earth to their legalistic, hypocritical, religious system. The tragedy is that when a legalist lays his trap on someone else, the convert or proselyte becomes more zealous than the teacher and the end result is damnation.

Woe 4

(Matthew 23:16 NKJV) "Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'

(Matthew 23:17 NKJV) "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

(Matthew 23:18 NKJV) "And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.'

(Matthew 23:19 NKJV) "Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

(Matthew 23:20 NKJV) "Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it.

(Matthew 23:21 NKJV) "He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it.

(Matthew 23:22 NKJV) "And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

Not hungering for Righteousness – Playing games with Semantics

*Matt 5:6 (NKJV)*⁶ *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness—for integrity, truth, and simplicity. The Pharisees weren't hungering for righteousness. They were playing games with semantics and vocabulary. In Jesus' day, if one took an oath saying, "I swear by the temple," he could be lying through his teeth, and that would be acceptable. It was only when he said "I swear by the gold in the temple," that he was obligated to tell the truth. Thus, righteousness became a game.

Fool - Blockhead

Definition of fool -*dull* or *stupid* (as if *shut* up), that is, *heedless*, (morally) *blockhead*, (apparently) *absurd*:—fool (-ish, X -ishness).

Woe 5

(Matthew 23:23 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

(Matthew 23:24 NKJV) "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Got the Gnat – Missed the Camel in the Pool / Got Details – Missed Love and Mercy

*Matt 5:7 (NKJV)*⁷ *Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy.*

According to Leviticus 11, the largest unclean animal was a camel. The smallest was a gnat. Jesus said the Pharisees picked gnats out of their soup but missed the big camel swimming around. They had all the little details down—even tithing their spice seeds—but missed the big picture of love, faith, mercy and righteousness.

Tithing in NT

By the way there are those that say Jesus never taught on tithing, or that it isn't a New Testament principle, well right here Jesus confirms tithing by saying to these people you tithe you mints and spices, you were right in doing so.

Woe 6

(Matthew 23:25 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

(Matthew 23:26 NKJV) "Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Purity enables person to See God / Hypocrisy Blinds person from Seeing

Matt 5:8 (NKJV)⁸ *Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.*

The purity of the true believer enables him to see God. The hypocrisy of the Pharisee blinds him to the things of God.

The Sapling Tree

A man was visiting his boyhood home when a heavy storm hit. As he stood looking out the front window, a great gust of wind toppled a tall, stately tree in the front yard. The man could hardly believe that the beautiful tree had fallen. Later, when he examined the broken trunk, he saw that the wind was not the only reason for the fall. The tree had been weakened inside by disease. Then he recalled that as a boy he had used a hatchet to chop away some of the bark when it was only a slender sapling. Over the years, water seeped in through the gashes, and disease found an opening. Slowly, the trunk had begun to decay from within. Although the sapling grew into what appeared to be a strong tree, it could not withstand the force of the wind. Because of a hidden fault, the tree came crashing to the ground. Christian if you think a little impurity won't hurt your walk with Christ, you are strongly and sadly mistaken, the little "thing" that you think won't matter will work itself in and through you, and you will become weakened, even if you think you are so strong, and a storm will come, they always do, and it will be too late to stand strong and weather the storm. *Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.*

Woe 7

(Matthew 23:27 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

(Matthew 23:28 NKJV) "Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Claims men of Peace – Plotting to murder the Prince of Peace

Matt 5:9 (NKJV)⁹ *Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.*

At the same time the Pharisees claimed to be men of peace, of righteousness for all, they were secretly plotting the murder of the Prince of Peace.

Woe 8

(Matthew 23:29 NKJV) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,

(Matthew 23:30 NKJV) "and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

(Matthew 23:31 NKJV) "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

(Matthew 23:32 NKJV) "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt.

(Matthew 23:33 NKJV) "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?

(Matthew 23:34 NKJV) "Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,

(Matthew 23:35 NKJV) "that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.

(Matthew 23:36 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Built Monuments – We wouldn't Kill Them / Invalidated – seeking to Kill who Prophets Spoke Of

Matt 5:10 (NKJV)¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

The Pharisees built monuments and tombs for the prophets that had been slain, they would go lift prayers and have days of remembrance for them, they would talk of how great the martyred prophets were. They said "If they (the prophets) had been alive in our day, we wouldn't have killed them," boasted the Pharisees. But their claim was invalidated by the fact that at that very moment they sought to execute the One of whom the prophets spoke. From Abel to Zechariah—from A to Z—they killed the prophets (the Hebrew Bible ends with 2 Chronicles) so Jesus covers the first and the last as Abel was killed in Genesis and Zechariah was killed in 2 Chronicles.

What came Upon them – His Blood be Upon us / 40yrs Later it Was

What will come upon them? The blood, the death, the scourging, the tribulation, the persecution that had befallen the prophets throughout history. "His blood be upon our heads and our sons' heads," the Jews cried a few days later when they demanded the crucifixion of Jesus (see Matthew 27:25). And His blood would indeed be on their heads, for less than forty years after this, the Romans annihilated Jerusalem and slit the throats of ten thousand Jews living in Damascus.

(Matthew 27:25 NKJV) And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Conclusion

(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!'"

Names used Twice – Heart was Breaking

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem..." Every time Jesus used a name twice, it was because His heart was breaking....

***Luke 22:31 - 32 (NKJV)** ³¹And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."*

***Luke 10:41 - 42 (NKJV)** ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. ⁴²But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*

***Acts 9:4 (NKJV)** ⁴Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"*

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I wanted to gather you under My wings like a mother hen, to shield you from the heat, but you wouldn't let Me."

Last Message / Step out of Circle

Jesus has just ended His last message to these religious leaders, He will now withdraw Himself to speaking only to His disciples and followers; Jesus is saying to them how I want to draw you to Myself, wrap you up in My arms of love, there is a wrath that is coming and I am the only escape you have from it. You must decide before you decide before you step out of this circle.

40 Years Jerusalem Destroyed / The Talmud

In 40 years Titus and the Roman Army will come into Jerusalem and utterly destroy it, not one stone of the Temple will be left standing as they will set the Temple on fire and ram the foundation to have the stones fall and the molten gold break loose so that they may get the gold off the rocks. But here is an amazing writing that is in the Talmud, which is a collection of ancient Rabbinical discussions and commentary, often focusing on Jewish law, customs and ceremonies. It was compiled in a written form from about 200 AD to about 500 AD.

Yom Kippur – Covering of Sins / Scarlet Cloth – turned White

Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, is the holiest day in all of Judaism, and was central to the kapparah (covering) of the sins of Israel. In the Talmud it is recorded that there was the yearly ceremony which was part of the yearly Yom Kippur holiday and it involved, among other things, a scarlet thread, or red cloth, that would turn white to symbolize the temporary removal of sin. This transformation in the color

of the cloth took place during the Yom Kippur ceremony within the Temple in Jerusalem. From ancient times, up until 70 A.D., Judaism relied on the Temple in Jerusalem to carry out the ceremonies associated with Yom Kippur, in the ways that are prescribed in the Old Testament of the Bible.

Temple Destroyed

But, during the first century, the very same century in which Jesus prophesized the total destruction of the Temple (Matthew 24:1-2) and equated himself as being the Temple (John 2:19,21), the Temple in Jerusalem was utterly destroyed by the Romans, and it hasn't been rebuilt since then. The Temple was destroyed in the year 70 A.D., which is about 1937 years ago, as of this writing in 2007.

Jews can't Sacrifice today – No Temple / Talmud says Quit Working 40yrs Prior

Ever since the destruction, Judaism hasn't been able to carry out some of the ceremonies associated with Yom Kippur that required the use of the Temple., But here is what is amazing, the sin-atonement ceremony - the one involving the scarlet thread or red cloth – it is written in the Talmud that it actually stopped working about 40 years before the destruction of the Temple.

.....and it has further been taught: 'For forty years before the destruction of the Temple the thread of scarlet never turned white but it remained red'. - Rosh HaShanah 31b, Babylonian Talmud, Soncino Press Edition."

Judaic Source – Says it Quit Working

In other words, we have a Judaic (non-Christian) source claiming that Judaism's sin-atonement ceremony stopped working properly in or about the year 30 AD. And that is either the same year, or very close to the same year, that Jesus was crucified and resurrected, thus becoming the permanent atonement of sin.

The Odds are Incredible

Regardless of whether one acknowledged that Jesus is the Christ, the odds that these two events would happen either during the same year or near the same year is incredible.

Spring – Fall Feasts / Only 6 months Later – Religion will stop Working / Jesus before Them

Jesus will be crucified in just a few days, the month is April for Passover was a Spring Feast for Israel. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement was a Fall Feast, and it was in September or October. In only 6 months after what they had trusted in year after year for several hundred years will stop working, the cloth would remain scarlet, and their confidence that their sins were covered would never be again. Jesus is saying here, and His words would resonate again against them 6 months later, your religion doesn't work, but here am I, choose Me and choose eternal life.

Verse 39 – God not Done with Israel

*Verse 39 - 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!' - I love the way Jesus ends this sermon. What were the people crying when He first rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord." Now Jesus refers back to that cry and says, "You'll say it again, only next time you'll say it with new understanding." Jesus isn't done with the Jewish people or the Nation Israel, and we will discuss this more in our next chapter (24) **Rom 11:25 - 27 (NKJV)** ²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. ²⁶And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" ²⁷ For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

Jesus Finished chp22 – The Messiah Before You / Matt 16 – Jesus before Disciples

Before Jesus had gone off into His denunciation of these religious leaders, he had finished chapter 22 with basically saying to them, who is the Messiah, I am the Messiah, I am standing before you right now, and you must decide what you are going to do with Me. We have recorded that they said not a word to Him. But if you recall a similar story, Jesus stool before the disciples in chapter 16 and ask them, who do you think I am, and Peter answered you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus said to him you have said well Peter, and upon this confession I will build My Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

Matt 22:41 - 46 (NKJV) ⁴¹While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, ⁴²saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." ⁴³He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: ⁴⁴ 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?' ⁴⁵If David

then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" ⁴⁶And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Matt 16:13 - 16 (NKJV) ¹³When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "***Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?***" ¹⁴So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "***But who do you say that I am?***" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Matt 16:17 - 19 (NKJV) ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, "***Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.***" ¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Those that Received Him – Celebration

For those who have received and accepted Jesus Christ we read this passage in celebration and expectation of His soon return. We rejoice that the scarlet cloth reminder of our sins and failing before the Holy God has been washed white as snow and we are free and forgiven in Christ. We take today's passage and apply it to our lives that we may "take Marcelles", take Christ and have all wisdom and knowledge and can apply these things to our lives and live that life and that more abundant.

Isa 1:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool."

For Others Today

But for others today, those of you that haven't decided who He is, today the Lord is calling out to you to decide, and I beseech you to do it before you step out of this circle.

Matthew 24

The Fullness of the Gentiles – 24:1-3

Montana Meth Project / Pictures

Maybe you have seen or heard of the controversial billboards and commercials in Montana. They are part of the Montana Meth Project, a privately funded but state led project to reduce the use and devastation of the drug methamphetamine. The graphic billboards greet many a drivers as they enter into the State, and the billboards can be seen in most every part of State and cities in the State. If the person should miss them while driving on the road they will most likely see them while sitting on their couch at home as they are also making and showing commercial that air during the prime-time hour, and on the major network television stations. There has been high criticism of the billboards and commercials saying that they are too graphic, too disturbing, to unsettling, and should not be in the public view. Regardless of what the critics may say, the results are work as the State has reported a 50% drop in the use of Meth.

Today – Disciples ask Signs of End of Age / Many Churches say Don't Teach – Too Upsetting

Today in our study the disciples will ask Jesus what are the signs of the end of the age. Jesus' answer will be quite shocking, quite graphic, and quite disturbing. There are many churches today that say the church shouldn't be teaching on prophecy and end times things for they are too upsetting to people; rather the church should be teaching on topics of relevance (so they say), such as marriage, child-rearing, and finances and the sorts, don't be putting Montana Meth Projects on billboards or piping it into the comfort of our homes.

Teach on Relevant Issues / Jesus Agrees / The Faithful Servant – Evil Servant

I agree with them fully, and so does Jesus, and in Matthew 24 Jesus will say that the servant that is looking for His Master's soon return will be faithful in all things (which will include marriage, child-rearing, and finances just to name a few), but He goes on to say that the servant that says his Master is delayed in coming, begins to mistreat others and get drunk with the things of the world and carnality.

Matt 24:45 - 51 (NKJV) ⁴⁵*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Jesus paints Troubling Picture – Graphical End Times / Hopes the same as Montana Meth - Save

Jesus will paint a troubling, disturbing, and graphical picture of the end time, and His reason and hope is that same as the Montana Meth Project, and that is to save souls from the devastation and destruction to come. He says be ready for it can happen at any moment:

Matt 24:44 (NKJV) ⁴⁴*Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.*

Speak of War – Famine – Pestilence / No longer Local – but Global / Food Lion / Pictures

He will speak of wars, famines, pestilence, and the earth in upheaval as it experiences earthquakes and many other natural disasters, and that is just the first 8 verses of this chapter, which are just a glimpse of the details we are given in the Book of Revelation. You may say well all those things are happening today, they are part of everyday life, true that is, but you see when the things Jesus is talking about here in chapter 24, the war, famine, and pestilence just to name a few, they will no longer be local problems but they will be global. The images you see in Iraq will be seen on Route 100, the famine in Sudan will hit the Food Lion off of Mountain Road, and the images of Africa concerning pestilence will be in Pasadena, Riviera Beach, Annapolis, and Brooklyn Park too. Jesus will paint a troubling, disturbing, and graphical picture of the end time, and His reason and hope is that same as the Montana Meth Project, and that is to save souls from the devastation and destruction to come. He says be ready for it can happen at any moment:

Matt 24:6 - 8 (NKJV) ⁶*And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

Disciples ask 3 Questions

The disciples will ask 3 questions of Him in verse 3, and the questions make a good outline for our end-time study over the next few weeks here in chapters 24-25:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

Jesus answers more than Ask – Teach, Equip, Prepare / Encourage you Today – Still the Same

Jesus will answer more than they ask; their knowledge is very limited in this subject at this point, but Jesus will answer them over and above what they ask so that He might teach them, equip them, and prepare them for what is to come. Before I move on can I encourage you in that, today and everyday that you meet with Jesus may you know that He wasn't to teach you, to equip you, and prepare you for tomorrow too so that it doesn't take you by surprise or leave you ill prepared, I pray you fall in love with His Word, for the Word is the person of Jesus Christ (the Word that became flesh and dwelt amongst us), and as you fellowship with Him in His Word, you will find something wonderful happen, and that is that the person of this Word, Jesus Christ, is the person you become. Only this word, this Bible can do such a thing.

Destruction of Temple

(Matthew 24:1 NKJV) Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

(Matthew 24:2 NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Answers Jewish Flavor / Discourse after Matt 23 – O' Jerusalem

Jesus will answer these questions with a very Jewish flavor to them. Mind you this discourse comes after Matthew 23:37-39, and Jesus saying oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I would gather you to myself if only you would let Me (and that is the same He says to each of us today), but Jerusalem you will be left in desolation, and you will see Me no more until you say, "blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord". We today have the benefit of all the Scriptures, and 2000 years of history, so we can easily piece this teaching together.

Matt 23:37 - 39 (NKJV) ³⁷"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! ³⁸See! Your house is left to you desolate; ³⁹for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"

When see Destruction of Temple & Blessed is He that comes in the Name

When will these things be, speaking of the destruction of the Temple (as Jesus says here in verse 2), and when will they say, "blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord" (whether the disciples knew specifically what they were asking can be debated by the theologians, but the point is mute because Jesus is going to answer both questions.

Answers Destruction in Luke 21 / Titus 70AD – 1 million / Drunken Soldier – flaming Arrow

Jesus answers the destruction of the Temple first, and then "blessed is He...." Later in this discourse.

Jesus answers the destruction of the Temple in Luke 21:20-24, and so it came to pass as we have spoken of before, in 70AD when Titus and the 10th Roman Legion came in and utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. History says that 1 million Jews were killed, and 100,000 thousand taken captive and dispersed to foreign lands. They say that the blood flowed like a river through Jerusalem, and that the blood came up to the ankles of a man. Although Titus did not order the destruction of the temple, historians say that a drunken Roman soldier launched a flaming arrow into the Temple that started the fire, and then the Roman soldiers rammed the base so that all the stones would tumble over each other thus knocking the layered gold from the stones. Total destruction just as Jesus had said.

Luke 21:20 - 24 (NKJV) ²⁰"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²²For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³But woe to those who are

pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Jerusalem in Gentile Hands – Until Time of Gentiles Fulfilled

But here is a prophetic key for all here today to know and understand, it is vital for us and so exciting, lock in and understand this beloved. Jesus says that Jerusalem will be in Gentile hands from then (70AD) up until the time of the Gentiles are fulfilled. Here is a brief bullet listing of the history of Israel and the land (see supplemental notes below for the details).

- God gives the land to Abraham / Isaac / Jacob
- Jacob takes the family to Egypt during famine / enslaved for 400 years
- Moses / Joshua / Judges / Kings / Then Kingdom Splits
- Babylonian Empire (Nebuchadnezzar)
- Medo-Persian Empire (Cyrus the Great) / Nehemiah Return to Land
- Grecian Empire (Alexander the Great)
- Roman Empire (Julius Caesar)
- They Missed the Messiah
- Titus Destroys Jerusalem in 70AD
- 132AD Emperor Hadrian renames the Land “Palestine”
- Mohammed Starts the Muslim Movement
- 7th Century Rome Falls / Arabs & Islam Rise
- 1066AD Crusader Period
- 1516 Ottoman Empire (Modern Day Turkey)
- 1917 Ottoman Empire Falls to Great Britain WW1
- WW2 Hitler Kills 6 Million Jews in Europe
- Post WW2 UN Control
- May 14, 1948 A Nation Born in a Day

1 Day a Nation is Born / Just as Isaiah Prophecied

On May 14, 1948 in one day the nation Israel was rebirthed and took possession of the land. After 2,000 years of not having a homeland, after the destruction of the Temple, after the land being controlled by various other groups and nations, on May 14th, 1948 Great Britain (via United Nations) gave the land back to the Jewish people, and “majority” of the world immediately recognized them as a Nation again. In one day they became a nation, just as Isaiah prophesied.

(Isaiah 66:8 NKJV) Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.

Made Nation in 1948 – but not Owners of Jerusalem / Divided 3&3 (Jer sep) / May 1967 – 6day War

Here is a powerful word today, and that is that the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled because Jerusalem is no longer in Gentile hands, the Jewish people and the Nation Israel are in control of it now after 2000 years of it being in Gentile hands. Now here is an important point to understand, when Israel was made a nation in a day, they still did not have control over Jerusalem for in April of 1947, the British relinquished their mandate of Palestine to the United Nations, which issued a complex partition plan in November of that year, effectively dividing Israel into a Jewish and an Arab state. The United Nations Partition Plan divided Palestine into six parts - three Jewish and three Arab - linked at two crossing points, **and Jerusalem was declared to be a separate enclave under international control.** Although the plan was accepted by the Jews in spite of the fact that it left them with mostly uninhabitable desert, it was rejected by the Arabs, but passed into international law anyway by a 33-10 vote (with 10 abstentions) in the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947. The British began an unilateral pullout from Israel, and hostilities broke out immediately between Arabs and Jews - hostilities that reached a crescendo on May 14, 1948, when the British Mandate expired and the modern State of Israel was proclaimed. The next day, the armies of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq invaded Israel, and were miraculously held off by an ill-equipped, poorly trained volunteer Israeli army, which used picks, shovels, hoes, hunting rifles and homemade armored cars to repel the invaders. A series of armistice agreements were signed between February and July of 1949, which gave Israel sovereign control of all of Galilee, the coastal plain, the Negev, the Jerusalem corridor, and the Gaza strip. **Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan.** Most of the Arabs living in the areas assigned to Israel left and moved into neighboring Arab

countries, expecting to be absorbed into the populations by their Arab brethren, but instead were interned in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, and not allowed to become citizens. Jordan then annexed almost all of the land allocated by the UN as an Arab Palestinian state, and Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip along the southern Mediterranean coast. After the War of Independence, the neighboring Arab nations, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, signed armistice agreements, but considered themselves to be at war anyway, sending terrorists and suicide bombers across the borders regularly. In 1956, Egypt, equipped with the latest Soviet weaponry, attacked Israel from the south, but Israel overran the Sinai Peninsula within a few days, and then withdrew under pressure from the United States. Terrorist incursions continued from Egypt, Jordan, and Syrian controlled Lebanon through the 1960's until May of 1967, when Egypt and Jordan, invaded Israel intent on destroying it. The war lasted six days (June 5-10, 1967), and the Golan Heights, all of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the Western Wall of Solomon's temple compound, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula were captured and held by Israel. Jerusalem was annexed into Israel and the remaining areas were placed under military administration. It was in June 1967 that Jerusalem was no longer being trodden under by the Gentiles. Jerusalem is under Israeli control today – finally and thus is the fulfillment of Luke 21.

Luke written to Non-Jew / Daniel chp 9 / 483years – March 14, 445BC – Jesus' Triumphal Entry

What we read here is by amazing Divine Design, for Luke is written primarily to a non-Jewish audience, thus the inclusion of the Time of the Gentiles, however Matthew is written primarily to the Jews, and thus omits the Time of the Gentiles. Now track with me Bible students, for we have seen and talked of this just a few weeks ago as we looked the Triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. We say in Daniel chapter 9, a period of 70, seven year periods, which equals 490 years total. Daniel breaks it out into 69 seven year periods, and then a single 7 year period. We studied that first 69 seven year period equaling 483 years, and studied how it said that from the command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, 483 years later Daniel said your Messiah would come. We studied how in **March 14, 445 B.C.** (Neh 2:1-8) Artaxerxes Longimanus gave the command to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (and that this is recorded in the secular history books), and that 483 years to the day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey was heralded the Messiah, and for the first time He allowed them to do so.

Dan 9:24 - 27 (NKJV)²⁴ *“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.”*²⁵ *“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.”*²⁶ *“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.”*²⁷ *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.”*

Cut-off Just as Daniel Said / Here we read of the Final Week / 2 Days to Cross

But just as Daniel said, he would be cut off and rejected by His people; and here we are in our Matthew looking at the final week of Jesus and He is being rejected by His people and in just 3 days He will be crucified.

One 7yr Left – That is Jesus talking about Here – The Tribulation (Jacob's Trouble)

So, this still leaves us one seven year period (from Daniel 9) to be fulfilled, and that is what Jesus will begin to discuss in verses 4 and on. It is know as the Tribulation Period, in Israel is known as the Time of Jacob's trouble. It is spoken of here in Matthew 24, and is given very specific details in Revelation chapters 6-18.

(Jeremiah 30:7 NKJV) Alas! For that day is great, So that none is like it; And it is the time of Jacob's trouble, But he shall be saved out of it.

What happened between Cut-off and Jacob's Trouble? / Time of Gentiles / It is Over - Borrowed

So what happened between Jesus being cutoff, and the start of this last 7 year period, it is what Jesus has just said here in Luke 21 – the Time of the Gentiles; and guess what, it is over as of June 10, 1967 Why hasn't God started the final 7 years you may ask, because he is extending grace because He wishes that none should perish, but that all should seek repentance (2 Peter 2:9), because all the things we start to read in verse 4 make the Montana Meth Project pale in comparison.

2 Pet 3:9 (NKJV) ⁹The 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.

Many Know This – PTL – Great Bible Students / Most Christians waiting to Die – We to be Change

I know many of you sitting here today are saying, I've heard this and know all these things, and I say praise the Lord, you are great Bible students, for the majority of the churches have no idea of these things, and what is next. They are waiting to die, as we however are waiting to be changed in a twinkling of an eye, and how glorious that Day will be.

1 Cor 15:51 - 52 (NKJV) ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵²in 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.

I Speak of Rapture / God not Appointed Bride to Wrath / Tribulation against Christ Rejecting World

I speak of the rapture, for God has promised to remove His children from this period of time, this period of Tribulation, for the Tribulation period will be God's wrath against a Christ rejecting world, and He will not allow His Bride (His love) to be punished along with those who have rejected Him, and He will not allow His Bride to go through the things we will read about in chapters 24-25.

1 Thess 5:9 - 11 (NKJV) ⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. ¹¹Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Rev 3:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.

Where Rapture in Bible – Harpazo / Never heard of Rain in Noah's Day

What is this "rapture" you speak of you may ask, where did you get that from for I have never seen that word in my Bible. The word rapture comes from the Latin word "rapturous"; rapturous was the Latin word used to translate the Greek word "harpazo", (in 1 Thess 4:17) which means to "seize up". People say they never heard of the word, so how can it happen, all I can say is that no one had ever heard of the word rain before the flood came, but it happened.

1 Thess 4:15 - 5:1 (NKJV) ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (**harpazo**) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸Therefore comfort one another with these words. ¹But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

1 Cor 15:51 - 52 (NKJV) ⁵¹Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ⁵²in 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.

God says Take you Away before Tribulation (which after time of Gentiles) / No more Church

God says I will snatch away my church before this Tribulation period begins (which begins after the time of the Gentiles is complete). In the Book of Revelation as I has said, chapters 6-18 speaks in very detail of the events of this Tribulation period; but before that in chapters 2-3 we read of God's letter to the 7 churches and He tells them to be ready for His soon return for them. As Paul had said at the sound of the trumpet we shall all be changed, Revelation 4 (following 2-3 letters to the churches) the writer says he heard a voice that sounded as a trumpet say, "come up here so I can show you the things that must now take place", and then begins some 13 chapters speaking of this Tribulation Period.....and amazingly we won't see the word for church used in those 13 chapters nor the rest of the book for that matter, 19 times in the first 3 chapters the word church is used, and then no more for the rest of the book.

Rev 4:1 (NKJV) ¹After these things I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

June 1967 – Period Over – Living on Borrowed time / Come up Here / Not today – then tomorrow

June 1967, the time of the Gentiles is over, we are now living on borrowed time, His saying, "Come up Here" is near. If we don't hear those words today, then we will hear them tomorrow; if He doesn't come today, then ask me tomorrow and I will tell you the same thing again, if not today, then tomorrow.

Could speak more on Marriage-Fianances-Purity-Addictions

Ray could you speak more on:

- Marriage and relationships for mine needs some help – I just did!
- Could you speak more on finances and stewardship – I just did!
- Could you speak more on sexual purity, I really struggle with that – I just did!
- Could you speak more on addictions and strongholds – I'm struggling – I just did!

Servant who Watchful – Will be Faithful / Servant not – Given Over

For the servant who is being watchful for His Masters soon return will be default be faithful and an over comer in all these areas. However the person who says my Master is delaying His coming will be given to these things and will be overcome by them.

Matt 24:45 - 51 (NKJV) ⁴⁵*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. ⁴⁷Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. ⁴⁸But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' ⁴⁹and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, ⁵⁰the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, ⁵¹and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Great next Few Weeks / Come have Vision Sharpened / lay-up Crown

We have a great next few weeks in this study, come and have your vision sharpened to 20/20 to see His soon return, and like these disciples, we may be equipped and prepared, and lay-up a crown for heaven as Paul says to Timothy:

2 Tim 4:6 - 8 (NKJV) ⁶*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. ⁷I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.*

If you not Sure of Relationship with Jesus / As Day of Noah – Some Missed Boat / Know – to Make

If you are here today and you are not sure of your relationship with Christ, hear the words of Jesus who said these times will be like the days of Noah, and as we know many a people missed the boat. We here at Calvary Chapel exist for 2 reasons, to know Him and to make Him known. If you are today and don't know Him, make sure that you do before you leave here, don't risk missing the boat for it could be departing at any moment.

Matt 24:36 - 39 (NKJV) ³⁶*But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. ³⁷But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. ³⁸For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

John 3:16 / 25 word Parade of Hope and eternal Life

John 3:16, a 25-word parade of hope and eternal life to all of mankind; it starts with God and ends with life, and life can only come through God:

John 3:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶*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.*

The word "love" spells it all out for us, describes His love for us..

L – He left everything to come for us. He left His throne, He left His praises, He left it all to come to a manger, to be poor, to be spit upon, to be rejected, to be despised, He left it all for you and for me.

O – He overcame everything to have us. He overcame sin, He overcame death, and He overcame Hell, for nothing could keep Him from us.

V – He verified it all. He verified everything that He said He thinks about you and thinks about me. He says He knows the thoughts that He thinks towards you thoughts of peace and not of evil to give us a future and a hope (Jer 29:11). He says if we were to count the thoughts that He has towards us they would outnumber the grains of sand on the shore (Ps 139). He verified all that He every said about how He considers precious and of value and worth, and He verified all that He ever said by coming, by leaving it all, and overcoming it all, to get to us.

E – He expressed it all in 1 act, the cross. He expressed how much He loves you and He loves me, by leaving it all, overcoming it, and going to the cross to prove how much He loves us and how much we are worth to Him.

The 4 Horses: (False Christ, War, Famines, Pestilence, and Earthquakes) - 24:1-8

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Tuesday – Final Week / Sunday Exactly – Thursday Exactly

It is Tuesday in the life of the King, His final week. On Sunday was His Triumphal entry into Jerusalem, to the exact day as prophesied in the Book of Daniel chapter 9. Monday He cleansed the Temple and now it is Tuesday and in 2 days Jesus will go to the cross as the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world (and again exactly on the day and time that the Passover lamb were to be sacrificed according to the Scriptures).

The Jewish calendar of Events:

- Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:
 - Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
 - Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
 - Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)
- 11th – Monday
 - Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
 - Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
- 12th – Tuesday
 - Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 - Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 - The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 - Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
- 13th – Wednesday
 - The Gospels are Silent
- 14th – Thursday –
 - Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 - Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 - The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 - The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 - Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
- 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
- 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
- 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

As Exact – So His 2nd Coming / Disciples ask 3 Questions

As exact were His triumphal entry, and His sacrifice on the cross are, the things Jesus will speak of here chapter 24 are as sure to happen at the exact time God has predetermined. The disciples will ask 3 questions of Him in verse 3, and the questions make a good outline for our end-time study over the next few weeks here in chapters 24-25.

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

Maybe Visiting – 7 New Birth, 20 Repentance, 70 Baptism / 300 2nd Coming – 1 in 10 verses

Now maybe you are just joining this study or visiting, and think these things are over top, and are for the extremists. Let me quote an article by Billy Graham, he says the NT has 7 specific verses that speak of the new-birth 7 times, now that is important. The NT has 20 specific verses speaking of repentance with faith, and that is very important I think we all would agree. 70 times the subject of baptism, which is very important. As important as these things are, there are some 300 mentions of Jesus' Second Coming, in fact 1 out of 10 verses in the NT deal with Jesus' Second Coming.

Be Ready, not Caught by Surprise

He gives us the details with a great purpose in mind, and that is that they will be ready, and that we will be ready, that we won't be caught by surprise, but actively waiting. Knowing that Jesus could come at anytime will lead the believer to live a faithful life unto the Lord, and for the person who hasn't made a decision about who Christ is, will be faced with a decision; and secondly we might be living a life worthy of the calling as it says in 1 John:

Matt 24:44 (NKJV) *“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”*

1 John 3:2 - 3 (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. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”*

(Matthew 24:1 NKJV) Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

(Matthew 24:2 NKJV) And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

30 Minute Walk to Ponder / Mind Boggling Temple utterly Destroyed / Tell Us More

From the Temple to the Mount of Olives is probably about a 30 minute walk; these disciples will have 30 minutes to ponder this statement, the whole Temple will be destroyed, not one stone left upon another, this is mind boggling to them that this could possibly happen. They obviously talked amongst themselves about it because they come together in verse 3 and said, how can this be, tell us more for we don't understand.

Base Application - Jesus I don't Understand / Marriage ready to Topple / He is Sitting

As interesting as the statistics we will study today about the signs of the times, the days that we live in, let us not miss this most base application we see here.....Jesus I don't understand, please explain more, and here we see Jesus sitting and waiting for them to come with their question. Maybe your marriage feels like it is ready to topple over, maybe something dear to you has been or is on the verge of being thrown down, such as an illness in you or your family, a friend has turned on you, something you have done is going to bring seemingly collapse upon you, whatever it may be, do you see Jesus, He is waiting for you to come. You have thought about it for some time, you have talked about with some people, but still have no clarity and no answers which bring you comfort; see verse 6 where He says listen, so you are not troubled. Don't be troubled, and I think it is important where Jesus is when they ask those 3 big questions, when will the tribulation be, when will you return, what happens at the end of the age, they ask those 3 big questions, and Jesus is seated. Seated, He is in a place of rest, and He is resting because He is in control. Christian when it seems that your world is falling apart, get on up to the mountain, grab a seat, rest with Him, rest in Him, leave the rest to Him, and let Him bring you rest and comfort with His words....."I am in control, let me take control".

(Matthew 24:6 NKJV) *“And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. **See that you are not troubled;** for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.”*

So Shocking a Statement – Baffling Today / Soldiers Wages / Jews Favored – Security in Things

Again, what a shocking statement to these disciples, to say that the Temple would be utterly destroyed, to say that so complete the destruction would be in that every stone would be toppled over, and thrown down, to the disciples that would be mind blowing. It still is to me today that this could be so for the

stones of the Temple could range upwards in size to 40 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 10 feet high; that would make them weigh upwards of 600 - 750 tons (1,500,000 lbs). I marvel at the thought of they built the Temple with out modern day machinery such as cranes and forklifts. Then to be able to destroy it without modern machinery is equally amazing to me; no explosives, no wrecking balls, but the Temple was destroyed by Titus' army just as Jesus said it would be. You see part of the Roman soldier's wages was anything he took as booty from the battle, so the Temple being covered with gold (2.5 Billion in gold is and estimate of what it would be worth today) was the mother load. Historical writings say they shot flaming arrows and threw torches inside the temple, and because the inside was covered with cedar, the whole Temple was quickly engulfed in a blaze. The soldiers (somehow which is beyond me) used battering rams and pry bars to topple the stones over themselves, and then as they crashed upon each other the molten hot gold would break loose and separate from the stones, and then all they had to do is pick it up or rake it out of the ground. I have been to Jerusalem and you can still see some of these stones (toppled over each other) in the valley next to the Temple. To the Jew to hear these words, and then to see them come to pass, would be mind-blowing; for the Jew the associated the Temple with God's favor upon their nation. What Jesus is saying to these disciples (and to us today) is I don't want you looking at things the way the world does, I don't want you think there is security in the things of the world, for in one hour they can all be toppled over and burned up. This thing that looks so stable, yet in one hour it will be dismantled. Jesus will give a discourse over these next verses, and He will spell it out for us that the things of the world will have less and less stability in them, and that we need to fix our sight and lives on the only thing that is sure and solid, and that is Jesus Christ.

Jesus now Gives Signs / Be Ready – Not Overcome / Like watching CNN

Jesus will now go on to give them some of those signs and things that will happen in the last days, and all these words are given so that a man or woman might be ready, that they might not be overcome by them or surprised by them. We will read these verse, and it will seem all we are doing is watching a typical evening broadcast of CNN.

Outline

Signs of the Times:

- False Christ's (Messiah's) – 24:4-5
- Wars – 24:6
- Rumors of Wars (Terrorism) – 24:6
- Nation against Nation – 24:7
- Kingdom against Kingdom – 24:7
- Famine – 24:7
- Pestilence– 24:7
- Earthquakes (and Upheavals) – 24:7

False Christs

(Matthew 24:4 NKJV) And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

(Matthew 24:5 NKJV) "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

1st Thing Jesus Address – Follow Wrong – bad Times / Know by the Word – No Act not in Word

Notice the first thing Jesus addresses, He says let no one deceive you. The first thing He addresses is who man follows. Follow the wrong Christ, and you be troubled and your whole world will come tumbling down. Jesus makes it real simple how to follow the true Christ, how to know Him from the counterfeit phonies (and if the world would apply this, millions would have been saved from falling for the phonies, and millions more to come), Jesus says you will know the Christ not by what he says, but what has been written. Verse 5, many will come saying; verse 23, then if anyone says to you. But Jesus says in verse 35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." The Christ will not perform any acts that has not be written of in this Bible.

(Matthew 24:5 NKJV) "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

(Matthew 24:23 NKJV) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

(Matthew 24:35 NKJV) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

If you Missed the Rapture – No Christ until Revelation 19

If you have missed the rapture, and you see all these things written of in chapter 24, or the things in Revelation 6-18, know real clearly Christ will not appear until the final world war that happens at the Valley of Megiddo (as spoken of in Revelation 19). Anyone who comes on the scene prior to that is a counterfeit, no matter how wonderful they are, nor the great signs and wonders they perform.

Rev 19:11 (NKJV) ¹¹Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

Rev 19:19 (NKJV) ¹⁹And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

Talking of False Christ / Jesus of Miami

Talking about false Christ, how about this guy called Jesus of Miami? He claims to be the Second Coming of Jesus, and to have over a million followers worldwide, and his church in Miami has over 10,000 members, and 100's of sister churches (300), and his followers are tattooing the number 666 on their body. He says there is no sin and there is no hell, and heaven can be found here on earth by following him. He drives a Lexus, drinks Dewers, and lost 46K in a night of gambling. But even being Jesus he still finds marriage is hard, his wife is currently suing Him for divorce. He (actually the church) pays his first wife 144K a year in alimony. In 2005 he made 540K salary, and they thought that was too much so the dropped it to 228K...300 hundred sister churches, 10's of thousand followers.....

Hollywood Blvd / Bob Coy / Not all Humorous – Koresh(70) – Jones(900) - Moon

They say out on Hollywood Boulevard in California, they count on the average of 60-70 new people show up with signs or clothing or something of the likes and claim to be the Messiah. Bob Coy said he was giving an evangelical message one week and all through the message he kept saying today I want to introduce you to the Messiah (which he meant in the born-again sense), well when he was giving the altar call this girl came up and stood next to him on the platform, and he said can what are you doing, and she said well you told the people here several times that you wanted to introduce them to the Messiah so I thought I should come up here for you to introduce me. Now these types of people we don't feel threatened by, they are hardly serious to us, and we can even find it amusing until we really consider how lost they are. But not all are laughable, some have been outright murderers and extremely dangerous to society such as David Koresh, who died with more than 70 of his Branch Davidian followers in a fiery end to a standoff with federal authorities, or Jim Jones, the founder of the Peoples Temple who committed mass suicide with 900 followers in 1978, Sun Yung Moon (who has a million followers) and the likes..

4 Horses of Revelation

If you notice, verses 4-7 are directly correlate the 4 horses of Revelation 6, a white horse, a red horse, a pale horse, and a black horse:

Rev 6:1 - 8 (NKJV) ¹Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." ²And I looked, and behold, a **white horse**. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer. ³When He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁴Another horse, **fiery red**, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to take peace from the earth, and that people should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword. ⁵When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, a **black horse**, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine." ⁷When He opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." ⁸So I looked, and behold, a **pale horse**. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, and by the beasts of the earth.

Many Come – Culminate with 1 / Come in Peace (no arrows) - 7 yr Peace Deal – break at 3.5

There will be many false Christ's that come, but it will culminate with this 1 final false "anti" Christ who will come on the scene as a man of peace first (hence why he has only a bow in Revelation 6 but no arrows). He will broker a peace agreement between Israel and her enemies (Daniel 9). Let's think about that, no politician has yet to succeed in that, can you imagine the one who can, people will say this man must be

part God to do such a thing. He will broker a peace agreement for 7 years, but half-way through he himself will bring war upon Israel (but we will talk more about that in verse 15).

(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."

By the Way – Come out of Revived Rome

By the way, he will come out of the revived Roman Empire (Daniel 7 and Revelation 13), which was originally headquartered in Rome and stretched through most of Europe, and here we are living in a generation that is seeing the European Union coming together, the United States of Europe, who would ever have thought it. Look at their website: <http://europa.eu.int>

(Revelation 13:1 NKJV) Then I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name.

(Revelation 13:2 NKJV) Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like the feet of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority.

Wars and Rumors of War (Terrorism) / The Red Horse

(Matthew 24:6 NKJV) "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

(Matthew 24:7 NKJV) "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

Verse 6 - And you will hear of wars

Ability to Self Destroy / Not Cut short Totally Destroy

We live in the generation that has the ability to self-destroy ourselves. Jesus said if the days were not cut short there would be no flesh left.

(Matthew 24:22 NKJV) "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

European Report / 32 Active & 570 Reserves / 40% Spending on War machine / 3 Trillion

A European report said that today there are 32 million active military soldiers and 570 million in the reserves. 40% of global spending is spent on the military. On any given year, there is over 3 trillion dollars spent on war armament. That is like 8 billion a day.

WW2 – 32 War – 25 Civilians – 25 Camps – 9 Wounded

In WW2, 32 million killed in battle, another 25 million civilians were killed, and 25 million killed in concentration camps, for a total of 82 million, and let's not forget the 9 million wounded or maimed in the war.

USA & Russia Destroy World 8X Over / 12 Other nations Coming Up

Today it is estimated that the USA has the nuclear arsenal to destroy the world 4 times over, and Russia has the same ability for a total of 8, but add to that the 12 nations that are now nuclear capable, and Iran is coming on fast to join the group.

1 Trident Sub (3 Billion) – 24 Nukes Missiles – 15 Individual Warheads – 360 Targets / 40 Times W2

1 Trident submarine (which cost 3 billion dollars to build) carries 24 nuclear missiles; each missile can carry 15 individual warheads, for a total of 360 targets destroyed. One submarine has 40 times more detonated power than all the combined weaponry of WW2, which killed 82 million people.

How Volatile? / 1995 Norway Satellite – 3 Suitcases – 20 minutes to Decide

How volatile and fragile is this world that we live in, on January 25, 1995 Norway and the US sent a weather satellite up on board a US missile to observe the Northern Lights. Once launched, Russia spotted the launch, used the Nuclear Hot-line and contacted the USA saying we see a nuclear missile launch, the US denies it and said it is a weather satellite; Russia not sure if it is a nuclear first-strike by the US, goes through its protocol which is 3 suitcases with keys and codes. The first 2 suitcases were opened and executed, the third was brought before Boris Yeltsin and there were some military commanders encouraging him to execute the final commands to retaliate against a US city. This was the

first time ever all 3 suitcases were opened. There is only 20 minutes to decide if the launch is a threat or not.

Source: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/missileers/falsealarms.html>

This Week Radar Scans the Horizon / Can't Stop – Just Destroy / Scans 24x7 – threat is Real

This week I got the opportunity to visit a facility that produces a ship based radar that scans the horizon looking for nuclear missile launched against this nation. The problem is that we still can't do anything about them once they are launched (our Country is trying to build a missile defense shield, but has a long way to go). Right now all we can do is scan the horizon looking for nuclear missiles launched against this Country, so that we might be able to respond with like kind. We can't stop yours, and you can't stop ours. The philosophy is that since we can see your launch, and you can see ours, if you try to destroy us, we will do the same to you, so no one wins. As I toured the facility I really didn't understand much of the technical stuff they talked about, but what I did leave there with was that there are some smart people building things to watch our Homeland 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, because the threat is real. Several months ago I got to go to a plant where they build fighter jets, once again I couldn't grab all that technically, but I did come away with this, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, the human and mechanical machinery of that facility never stops, fighter jets continually roll off the production line because war is a way of the world.

First Generation Destroy the World Over

We are the first generation that has the ability to totally destroy the world over, and it did not come into full swing until the Atomic Age, which is only 60 years old.

Not day of Peace since 1945 / 90% Peace Treaties Broken this Century

There has not been a day of peace on this earth since 1945. Since 1945 there has been a war going on somewhere in this world. As for peace treaties, 90% of this centuries peace treaties have been broken.

Verse 6 - and rumors of wars

Cold War – Most Expensive

Do you know the most expensive war ever fought never had a shot fired, that was the Cold War; and that in our lifetime.

Terrorism – Coming but know not When

Then there is terrorism, we are coming to attack you, you just don't know when, and you can't attack us first because we really don't exist in one place, we just come together for an attack and drift away into the shades afterward.

1993 World Trade Center – Just Embolden Them / 3 Years Later

In 1993 the World Trade Center was attempted to be brought down by terrorist, they got to the base but couldn't bring it down; however what it did do was embolden the terrorist to see that they could bring terrorism to our soil. Only 8 years later September 11th.

15K Nukes Unaccounted For / Miami Customs Sting

There is an estimate 15,000 nuclear weapons that are unaccounted for after the break-up of the former Soviet Union. In 1997 in Miami, US Custom officials posing as terrorist (who wanted to detonate a Nuke in a US city) set-up a sting operation that purchased a nuclear bomb via Columbia, that came from the Soviet Union, from a terrorist group who was more than happy to sell it to them to destroy America. The sting ended in an arrest, but the point of the story is that the nuclear weapon was available on the black market, I should also not that 30 surface to air missiles were available for purchase in that deal.

Source: <http://www.nisat.org/publications/armsfixers/default.htm>

Jesus says – Don't Trust what See – They will Come Toppling Down / Solid Rock - Jesus

Jesus is told the disciples don't put your trust in the things you can see, for they will all coming toppling down at some point, just as the Temple did. For us, we need to put our trust in the solid rock, the Rock of Ages, Jesus Christ,

Verse 7 - For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

Race verses Race / Rwanda – Hitler – Milosevic – Kurds – Jews – Christians

Verse 7 - nation will rise against nation - This can literally be interpreted as race versus race. We see people trying to exterminate who races of people everyday, and more so as each day passes. Look at Rwanda, look at Hitler with the Jews, look at Slobodan Milošević, look at the Sunnis and Shiites, both Muslims but still hating each other' but united they hate the Jews, the Kurds, and the Christians.

Localized – will go Global / Scenes of Iraq on Rt 100

These signs that we see today will increase in frequency; the wars we see today are localized, but will culminate with global war. The scenes of war in Iraq, will be the same scenes we see on Route 100 in Pasadena.

Famines / Black Horse

Verse 7 - And there will be famines,

Wars Produce Famine / 1 Day Military Spending feed the Whole World

Wars and military spending are the greatest producer of famines in the world today. Take our military spending for just 1 day and we could feed the whole world for a year.

30m babies / 50% Malnourished / Avg American throws out food for 6 / American Dog 80%

They say 30 million babies die of starvation every year in 3rd world countries, that is just babies. Today, close to 50% of the world is malnourished. Yet they say the average American home throws out enough food every day to feed a family of 6 in a 3rd world county, and the average American dog eats better than 80% of the world.

Signs Local – Will go Global / Sudan - Food Lion on Mt Road

These signs that we see today will increase in frequency; the famine we see today are localized, but will culminate with global famine. The scenes of famine in the Sudan, will reach to the Food Lion off mountain Road, the Giant off Route 2, and the Lauers off of Edwin Raynor.

Pestilence / Pale Horse

Verse 7 - pestilences,

Aids, Ebola, Bird Flu

Today we deal with AIDS, Ebola, Avian Bird Flu, not to mention things like the bubonic plague in the past.

Aids Statistics (from World Health Organization)

People living with HIV/AIDS in 2006 - 39.5 million

People newly infected with HIV in 2006 - 4.3 million

More than 25 million people have died of AIDS since 1981.

Africa has 12 million AIDS orphans.

Americans living with AIDS in 2006 – 1 million (that is 1 in 300 people)

Aids Survive 7 days dry Blood / Univ Pitt – 48hrs in Sewage

A study I read said that the AIDS virus can survive up to 7 days, even after the blood has dried.

University of Pittsburgh study said that the AIDS virus has the ability to live 48 hours waste water (sewage). They concluded by encouraging all the workers who had to work with raw sewage to wear 2 pairs of surgical gloves under their work gloves to protect themselves from the AIDS virus. But our government and health professionals are telling the teenagers and others to make sure that they wear a condom and practice safe sex, even though they swage worker is encouraged to ware double surgical gloves.

Signs Local – Will go global / Africa – Reach Baltimore & Annapolis

These signs that we see today will increase in frequency; the pestilence we see today are localized, but will culminate with global pestilence. The scenes of pestilence we see in Africa, will reach Baltimore City, Annapolis, Pasadena, and from East Coast to West Coast.

Verse 7 - and earthquakes in various places.

Tuesday Catonsville

Tuesday Catonsville experienced a 1.0 quake. That is only 15 miles from here.

Earthquake Statistics

14th century – 147 major

15 century – 174

16 century – 253

17 century – 378

18 century - 640

19 century – 2119

This century – over 5,000, resulting in over 500, 000 deaths.

US Geological Survey Reports

(Number of Killer Earthquakes – Ratings 6.0 magnitude or greater)

1890-1899 – 1

1900 – 1910 - 3

1910 – 1920 - 2

1920 – 1930 - 2

1930 – 1940 – 5

1940 – 1950 - 4

1950 – 1960 – 9

1960 – 1970 – 13

1970 – 1980 – 51

1980 – 1990 – 86

1990 – 2000 – 100

Could be Underground Testing / Oil Sucking

Could it be our underground testing of nukes that has caused the raise, is it the sucking of the oil out of the ground? Something is causing the increase.

(Matthew 24:8 NKJV) "All these are the beginning of sorrows.

Tachometer / rpm / Little at First – Faster / Tach is Pegging / Roman Empire – Birth Nation - Jer

In Revelation 1, it says the things that must shortly take place, the word there for “shortly” in the Greek is “tachos”, it is where we get our word tachometer. It is the “rpm”, revolutions per minute of the engine.

The higher the rpm’s, the faster the engine is turning, and there is a point where you will hit redline and be turning your engine so fast it will blow. Same application here, we will see signs about us, a little at first, and then more, and more, and more, so much so that we will hit the redline. Precious people the tachometer is pegging, look at the signs around us. The revived Roman Empire before our very eyes, the Rebirth of Israel, Jerusalem being taken back over to the Jews, wars, rumors of war, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, the signs are all before us like never before; I am excited, the engine is about to blow.

(Revelation 1:1 NKJV) The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants; things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,

Preaching Chapter 22-23 Exhausting / 24-25 Exciting - READY / Getting My Bride / No Guarantee

Preaching on chapter 22-23 was exhausting to me; preaching on chapter 24-25 is exciting and joyous for me, because I am ready. These are the signs of Jesus saying I am preparing to come get My bride and take her home. However, let me cover my past teachings and this current teaching, although the Church will not go through the Tribulation, it doesn’t mean that we (especially here in the USA) are immune and

exempt from hard times. These things we read about are signs, the engine revving up, and God may allow hard time upon America to separate those who are talking, and who is walking, He may purge the leaven out of the Church in America, and this great nation and the ease and abundance we enjoy could be taken away (just a few more September 11th could totally destroy our economy). You know democracy is great, but it can't compare to theocracy (God Reigning), and many people have put their trust in democracy over theocracy, and may very well allow democracy to fail so the world can see that that isn't the answer either.

Just signs of Sorrows / Original – Labor Pains / at 8cm / Another Birthing – New Life – Jhn 3:16

These signs are all just the beginning of sorrows; it doesn't change the good news for the person who puts their trust in Jesus today. This word for "sorrows" here in the original language means "birth pains, labor pains". The passage is saying all the signs are saying that birthing is near, it is inevitable. I would say we are at 8cm. This birthing is frightful, but there is another birthing spoken of in the Scriptures and that is the birthing of new spiritual life:

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

For Birth – had to be Intimacy – Before that Initiating – For God

In order for there to be birthing, there first has to be intimacy, and before there can be intimacy there had to be an initiating by someone.....*For God so loved the world.*

For God – the Initiator / His Heart Moving – Saying I want You

For God so loved the world. - God the initiator, His heart moving, His heart taken by you, and it was nothing that we have done but the heart of God saying I want to take you as My own, to be joined to you so that I might love and cherish you forever.

Thus Initiating Begins – Not flowers and Candy / Most Precious Treasure

And thus starts the initiating, I will woo you by giving you flowers, candy, and jewelry? No better, more precious, something totally priceless, the sum value of the universe could not equal it, I will give you My Son, My one and only Son, My most precious treasure.

Those hearts moved – Romance Begins / Sweeter than Sweetest Perfume – Champagne - Flower

For those whose heart is moved, begins a romance, a love story that has no end, a love story that is sweeter than the sweetest perfume, more sparkling than the finest champagne, it's fragrance a bouquet and melody of every flower known to man.

This Romance – Love story ends in Marriage Bed / Birthing of New Life

This romance, this love story ends at the marriage bed, with the intimacy of love, the birthing of the two becoming one, and the beginning of new life. John 3:16 starts with God and ends with life, new life and abundant life.

What Going On while Chp 24 / 7 Year Wedding Celebrate / IS GOD TUGGING YOUR HEART?

What is going on in heaven while these things (of chapters 24) are going on here on earth? It is called the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb", it is a 7 year wedding reception celebration, and I am ready for it. If you are here today and feel this tugging on your heart, that is God trying to initiate a love story with you, a romance that will have no end. I pray you hear His Words today:

For God so loved the world – the world, that is you individually, and that is you inclusively, for He says the world to show that none are excluded, regardless of what you have done, and where you have been.

That He gave His only begotten Son – Why His Son, why His most precious gift, because His gift had to not only be beautiful, it had to be powerful, and only Jesus Christ had the power to cover your sin and my sin that separated us from the Holy God and build a bridge between sinful man to a perfect and Holy God.

And whoever should believe in Him – belief, acceptance of His marriage proposal, saying “I do”, and the forsaking of all others (that is what repentance is, it is the turning away from all those things that compete against God, draw us away from Him, and take us away from the love and intimacy of this romance with Him).

Shall not perish but have everlasting life – It starts (initiates) with God and ends with life, eternal life, abundant life (John 10:10). If the wedding reception last 7 years, imagine the honeymoon? That would also mean that today we are celebrating the wedding, and what a glorious day it is as He spends it professing His love for you, His love for me. May our words profess that love back to Him before all men today, straight from our heart.

He who Endures to the End (24:9-13)

Studying Olivet's Discourse – Given from Location

We are studying what is known as the Olivet's Discourse and the naming is derived from where Jesus gives this series of teaching, it is there upon the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem.

Initiated by 3 Questions

The teaching was initiated by the disciples asking Jesus the following 3 questions concerning the End Times:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Studying 1st Question / v.1-8 not good / Closer we get – more Frequency / Breakneck Speed

Well we are studying our way through the first questions what will be the sign of the Tribulation (and that is leading up to and into the Tribulation), and the things that will be going on are not good, We made it through verse 8, and we have seen there will be wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. The closer we get, the greater the increase in frequency and intensity in all those things, and we see that the generation we live in is unlike and other in the history of mankind, we can see all these things unfolding at breakneck speed before our very eyes. So we pick-up today here in verse 9.

Persecution of the Saints

(Matthew 24:9 NKJV) "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake.

(Matthew 24:10 NKJV) "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.

Deliver "you" – Believers & Followers / Suffer 1-8 and also Personal Trib / Reward at End

Jesus says they will deliver "you" up, as He is speaking to His followers, His disciples, those that believe in Him. Anyone bearing the family name (for My name's sake), the name Christian after Jesus the Christ, will suffer personal tribulation in the midst of the global Tribulation. On top of having to endure wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes isn't enough, the believers in Christ will also be betrayed by family and friends, sought out by government authorities, and the ones delivered or caught will be killed. But Jesus says there is a reward for the those who endure to the end, He is reiterating what He taught there on the Sermon on the Mount:

Matt 5:10 (NKJV)¹⁰ *Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Why Hated – Verse 11

Why will they be hated, why will they be singled out from the rest of the world, because there will be people energizing the world to hate them, lets look at verse 11.

False Prophets

(Matthew 24:11 NKJV) "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Prophets Speak on Behalf of God / Noah,Jeremiah,John / These False – Proclaim & Condemn

There will be many false prophets. The role of a prophet was to speak the word of God, on behalf of God, as directed by God, unto the people, Noah was a prophet, he said a flood was coming, but people rejected that word and they were all washed up. Jeremiah was a prophet, said the Babylonians were coming and to repent and turn back to God, but people rejected that word and they crushed and dispersed. John the Baptist was a prophet, said Jesus was the Messiah (the Lamb of God who would take away their sin personally), but they rejected his word. Well in the Tribulation there will come these false prophets who will say they are sent by God and they will proclaim they have a word from the Lord, and they will be doing two things; they will point and proclaim that the Anti-Christ (the final false Christ,

verse 5) is God himself, and secondly when the true believers say no he is not, these false prophets will turn people against the believers. These believers will be the ones who missed the rapture, missed the signs of His soon return in verses 1-8, and not only will they have to endure wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes, they will also have to endure betrayal, beatings, and beheading. Oh if only they would have heeded the true prophets, and heeded the signs of the time. But Jesus says there is a reward for the those who endure to the end, He is reiterating what He taught there on the Sermon on the Mount:

Matt 5:11 - 12 (NKJV) *11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

Love will Grow Cold

(Matthew 24:12 NKJV) "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Lawless because of War / New Orleans / Heartless Times – Endure & Reward

Lawlessness will abound obviously, for with war will come the New Orleans flood environment we say last year. People will be stealing, raping, doing horrible things because there will little enforcement to stop them. The love of many will grow cold, it will be a cold and heartless time here on the planet, but Jesus says there is a reward for those who endure to the end.....verse 13.

He who Endures

(Matthew 24:13 NKJV) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Jesus saying – Don't Quit / Endure All 1-8, Betrayal, Beatens, Beheaded – Endure & Reward

Jesus is saying to them, don't quit, yes times will be hard and you will have to endure was, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, betrayal, beatings, and even beheading, but don't faint, don't quit, don't retreat, never ever give up, for there is a reward at the end for those who endure.

Why God Allows This / Heeded Prophets too Late – Today is Day of Salvation

The question has to be asked, why? Why would God let them go through these tribulations. The answer is they heeded the words of the prophets too late, those who said Today is the day of salvation, for there is a horrible time coming upon this earth and here is how you escape (don't know if you realize it but every person in this room has the ability and opportunity of being a modern day prophet).

2 Cor 6:1 - 2 (NKJV) *1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 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.*

Why God not Spare Jerusalem – 70 AD / Free-will Rejected John, 2 Days Later Rejected Jesus

Why didn't God spare Israel from the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD, why didn't spare 1,000,000 million Jews from being killed and another 100,000 taken captive? The answer is that by their free-will, their freedom of choice they rejected the words of the prophets, they rejected John the Baptist's word, they even rejected Jesus who stood right before them. Jesus offered them escape on this very day we study (Tuesday), but in only 2 days they will reject to the point of crucifixion, but how Jesus longed to save them:

Matt 23:37 - 39 (NKJV) *37 "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! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 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!'"*

Under Roman Occupation / Before Persian, Grecian, Babylonian / Give us a King

The nation of Israel at this time was under the occupation of the Roman Empire, before that was the Persian Empire (Cyrus the Great), before that was the Grecian Empire (Alexander the Great), and before that was the Babylonian Empire (the mighty (Nebuchadnezzar). They had said give us a king like the other nations, the prophets said God wants to be our King, but they didn't heed the voice of the prophets and lived centuries under occupation:

1 Sam 8:6 - 7 (NKJV) *6 But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.*

All Goes back to Garden – Wise Enough to Rule

But it all goes back to one place, it started there with Adam who said, “I think I am wise enough to rule over myself, I think I know what is good and not good for me”. Adam means man, and he represents all mankind, for we too would have made the same decision (and we prove that out nearly everyday).

Gen 3:6 (NKJV) ⁶So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

We Believers Face Tribulation like Them / Trib is Hard – not Pleasant / Jesus says Don't Quit

So here we are living as believers in a fallen world just as we read of these people living in the Tribulation period facing wars, famines, pestilence, natural disasters, people against them, hating them, totally set apart from the rest of the world. As they faced tribulation so too do we. Our tribulation may not be as extreme as their, but I know not what tomorrow may bring for us a nation. Tribulation at whatever extreme is tribulation and it is hard, and it is not pleasant. Jesus says we will face tribulation (2 Tim 3:12). He knows that we do, but just as He said to them, He says to us, I know it is hard, but don't quit, never ever quit.

2 Tim 3:12 (NKJV) ¹²Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Article 3 Reasons Teens Walk Away

I read an article last week on Lifeway.com that had polled teenagers that had walked away from Christ, from teenagers that were once on-fire and committed to Christ but had since walked away. Here are the top 3 reasons they gave for walking away:

1. I just need a Break
2. I am just so Busy
3. I just want to enjoy Myself

I can Relate – You can Too

I can relate to that, and I think you can too. Teen or not, these three reasons are ever present to all of us.

Hard & Long Walk / Consider Job – Family, Possessions, Friends / Endure & Reward

I just need a Break – I is a hard walk, it is along walk. How many times (sometimes in a week) I say I want a break. But lets consider Job for a minute, talk about someone who wanted a break; he lost his family, all his possessions were destroyed, and his friends brought anything but comfort to his life. But Job endured to the end, and we read of his story and there was a reward at the end for him who had endured.

Job 19:25 - 27 (NKJV) ²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God, ²⁷ Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Consider Solomon – Family, Possessions, Friends

I'm am just so Busy – Busy, boy that makes me think of King Solomon. He too faced the same three things Job did but look how differently he handled them. Lost his family, hardly he had 700 wives, that would keep you busy. Things, he had horses and stables, servants and possessions, and his failings wasn't being wealthy, it was the counting of them, and the counting of them consumed him with how do I have, is it as much as the other king, and do I have enough. Friends, the friends he joined himself with did not follow after God, and they ended up leading him away from God in to idolatry.

1 Kin 11:1 - 8 (NKJV) ¹But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites— ²from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. ³And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. ⁴For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. ⁵For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as did his father David. ⁷Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. ⁸And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Remember Matt 14 – Meet you on the Other Side / Remember those Days

I just want to enjoy Myself – Do you remember the story in Matthew 14, where Jesus says to the disciples I am going to send the multitude away, you guys get in the boat and go ahead of Me, and I will meet you on the other side of the Lake. We read of a great storm rose up against them, and how they battled

against it for hours. The wind was against them, which means to me all they had to do was turn the boat 180 degrees and the wind would have been at their backs and they could have let the wind blow them back to shore where they had started from. But they didn't, they wouldn't, they chose to battle the storm to get to where Jesus said I will meet you at. They would rather battle the storm to get to where Jesus was, then cruise with the wind at their back and be miles away from Him. Beloved, remember those days (I pray they are recent days), do you remember the times when there was no greater joy in life, nothing sweeter, nothing more vital than getting to Jesus, no matter the struggle.

Matt 14:22 - 24 (NKJV) ²²Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. ²³And 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. ²⁴But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

Key to Enduring – Getting to Jesus

You see that is the key to enduring, it is getting to Jesus.

Moses chose Reproach / World offer Heartache / Leads 40yrs Dry Times / See Invisible God

Having grown up in Pharaoh's court, Moses was in line to ascend the very throne of Pharaoh. Yet he chose instead to take on the reproach of Christ, for it was a greater treasure than the best Egypt had to offer. I like that! Sure, we go through suffering and reproach, tribulations and difficulties. But even they are better than the best the world has to offer us, with its heartache, disappointment, and disillusionment. At forty years of age, Moses said, "I would rather be with God's people and suffer than remain in this place where the pleasures of sin are for but a season." And he split the scene. Then he began to lead the people out of Egypt. For forty years, he led them through the wilderness. It wasn't easy. It was hot and dry. You think you're going through dry times? Think of Moses! You think people don't like you? Scripture says three million Jews rose up as a single man with rocks in hand, ready to stone him (Exodus 17:4). How did Moses make it? How did he endure the rejection, dry times, and constant troubles from within and without? Look at verse 27: "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured as seeing him who is invisible."

Heb 11:24 - 27 (NKJV) ²⁴By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. ²⁷By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

Moses saw God in Every Situation / Look at Hand – See nail Prints / We can see Loves Enough

In other words, Moses saw God's hand in every situation. Look at God's hand, and what will you see? A nail print. The invisible God became a visible Man in Christ Jesus. And as I see His nail-scarred hand, I have no choice but to say, "If You loved me enough to be pinned to the Cross for me and to plunge into hell for me, I will trust You, even though I may not understand what's happening presently."

John 3:16 – The "For God"

John 3:16 says that "For God" so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. Precious saints He is the "For God", He is the God that is for us.

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. John 3:17

*For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, **for God** does not give the Spirit by measure. **John 3:34 (NKJV)***

*Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, **for God** is able to make him stand. **Rom 14:4 (NKJV)***

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **1 Thess 5:9 (NKJV)**

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. **2 Tim 1:7 (NKJV)**

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

*What then shall we say to these things? If **God is for us**, who can be against us? **Rom 8:31 (NKJV)***

He is God that For Us / He says NEVER QUIT – EVER!

He is the God that is for us, and He is the God that says, Do Not Quit, EVER!"

Churchill – German Blitzkrieg – England didn't go Down / Speak at Alma Mater

Winston Churchill, 248 pounds of solid inspiration, saw England through Germany's blitzkrieg. As the Third Reich dropped thousands of bombs on London, Hitler felt, as did other international observers, that England would fall easily. But this bulldog of a man, Winston Churchill, went on the air time and time again, calling his nation to hang on and to believe. And England didn't go down. Years later, one of his alma maters, an exclusive prep school, asked him to speak at graduation. When he accepted the invitation, the headmaster of the school was elated. For weeks he told the student body, "Soon Winston Churchill is coming. The most powerful orator in history is going to speak here. When he comes, bring your pencils and paper and take note of every word he says." Finally the day came. The graduation service began. The students, sitting behind the speakers' podium, had pencils and paper poised. The parents and guests settled in for a long, inspirational speech. After many flowery introductions, Churchill finally arose from his chair, took the podium, and turned around to address the young men behind him. **"Gentlemen," he said, "Never give up. Never give up. Never, never, never, never, give up."** Then he sat down. The students were stunned. The audience was amazed. And none of them ever, ever, ever forgot it. That's what Jesus says to us. Never give up. He that endures to the end shall be saved.

Endure to End – Sozo – Full Orb of God's Blessings / But can't Quit

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved - The Greek word translated "saved" is sozo, a word that refers to the full orb of God's blessing. In other words, according to Matthew 24:13, those who endure the marathon will experience the blessing of God upon themselves, their families, their ministries, their finances, and their vocations. They will experience the full orb of God's blessing in every area of their lives. But those blessings only come if you don't quit!

Billy Borden (see article below)

In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden Dairy estate, he was already a millionaire. For his high school graduation present, his parents gave 16-year-old Borden a trip around the world. As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, Bill Borden wrote home to say, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field." One friend expressed surprise that he was "throwing himself away as a missionary." In response, Bill wrote two words in the back of his Bible: **"No reserves."** He went to Yale and Princeton to study, and while there started a morning prayer group that started with 3 people his freshman year and ended with 1,500 his senior year. After school he turned down many lucrative and prestigious job offers and left for China to preach the gospel. He wrote two more words in his Bible before he left, **"No retreats."** While there in China, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead. The world questioned if Borden's untimely death was a waste. The answer is not in God's plan. Prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in his Bible. Underneath the words "No reserves" and "No retreats," he had written: **"No regrets."**

No Reserves, Retreats, Regrets / May we Never – Ever - Quit

Oh precious saints, may we have no reserves, may we hold nothing back in these few short years we live on this earth, may we not retreat when the tribulations come upon us, and may we have no regrets, may we live a life that was spent on Him. And Christian, may we never, ever, Quit!

Article on William Borden - No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets

In 1904 William Borden graduated from a Chicago high school. As heir to the Borden Dairy estate, he was already a millionaire. For his high school graduation present, his parents gave 16-year-old Borden a trip around the world. As the young man traveled through Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, he felt a growing burden for the world's hurting people. Finally, Bill Borden wrote home to say, "I'm going to give my life to prepare for the mission field."

One friend expressed surprise that he was "throwing himself away as a missionary."

In response, Bill wrote two words in the back of his Bible: **"No reserves."**

Even though young Borden was wealthy, he arrived on the campus of Yale University in 1905 trying to look like just one more freshman. Very quickly, however, Borden's classmates noticed something unusual about him and it wasn't his money. One of them wrote: "He came to college far ahead, spiritually, of any of us. He had already given his heart in full surrender to Christ and had really done it. We who were his classmates learned to lean on him and find in him a strength that was solid as a rock, just because of this settled purpose and consecration."

During his college years, Bill Borden made one entry in his personal journal that defined what his classmates were seeing in him. That entry said simply: "Say 'no' to self and 'yes' to Jesus every time."

Borden's first disappointment at Yale came when the university president spoke on the students' need of "having a fixed purpose." After hearing that speech, Borden wrote: "He neglected to say what our purpose should be, and where we should get the ability to persevere and the strength to resist temptations."

Surveying the Yale faculty and much of the student body, Borden lamented what he saw as the end result of this empty philosophy: moral weakness and sin-ruined lives. During his first semester at Yale, Borden started something that would transform campus life. One of his friends described how it happened: "It was well on in the first term when Bill and I began to pray together in the morning before breakfast. I cannot say positively whose suggestion it was, but I feel sure it must have originated with Bill. We had been meeting only a short time when a third student joined us and soon after a fourth. The time was spent in prayer after a brief reading of Scripture. Bill's handling of Scripture was helpful. . . . He would read to us from the Bible, show us something that God had promised and then proceed to claim the promise with assurance."

Borden's small morning prayer group gave birth to a movement that spread across the campus. By the end of his first year, 150 freshmen were meeting for weekly Bible study and prayer. By the time Bill Borden was a senior, one thousand of Yale's 1,300 students were meeting in such groups. Borden made it his habit to seek out the most "incurable" students and try to bring them to salvation. "In his sophomore year we organized Bible study groups and divided up the class of 300 or more, each man interested taking a certain number, so that all might, if possible, be reached. The names were gone over one by one, and the question asked, 'Who will take this person?' When it came to someone thought to be a hard proposition, there would be an ominous pause. Nobody wanted the responsibility. Then Bill's voice would be heard, 'Put him down to me.'"

Borden's outreach ministry was not confined to the Yale campus. He cared about widows and orphans and cripples. He rescued drunks from the streets of New Haven. To rehabilitate them, he founded the Yale Hope Mission. One of his friends wrote that he "might often be found in the lower parts of the city at night, on the street, in a cheap lodging house or some restaurant to which he had taken a poor hungry fellow to feed him, seeking to lead men to Christ."

Borden's missionary call narrowed to the Muslim Kansu people in China. Once that goal was in sight, Borden never wavered. He also inspired his classmates to consider missionary service. One of them said: "He certainly was one of the strongest characters I have ever known, and he put backbone into the rest of

us at college. There was real iron in him, and I always felt he was of the stuff martyrs were made of, and heroic missionaries of more modern times."

"Although he was a millionaire, Bill seemed to realize always that he must be about his Father's business, and not wasting time in the pursuit of amusement." Although Borden refused to join a fraternity, "he did more with his classmates in his senior year than ever before." He presided over the huge student missionary conference held at Yale and served as president of the honor society Phi Beta Kappa. Upon graduation from Yale, Borden turned down some high paying job offers. In his Bible, he wrote two more words: **"No retreats."**

William Borden went on to graduate work at Princeton Seminary in New Jersey. When he finished his studies at Princeton, he sailed for China. Because he was hoping to work with Muslims, he stopped first in Egypt to study Arabic. While there, he contracted spinal meningitis. Within a month, 25-year-old William Borden was dead.

When news William Whiting Borden's death was cabled back to the U.S., the story was carried by nearly every American newspaper. "A wave of sorrow went round the world . . . Borden not only gave (away) his wealth, but himself, in a way so joyous and natural that it (seemed) a privilege rather than a sacrifice" wrote Mary Taylor in her introduction to his biography.

Was Borden's untimely death a waste? Not in God's plan. Prior to his death, Borden had written two more words in his Bible. Underneath the words **"No reserves" and "No retreats," he had written: "No regrets."**

The Gospel of the Kingdom (24:14)

Studying Olivet's Discourse – Given from Location

We are studying what is known as the Olivet's Discourse and the naming is derived from where Jesus gives this series of teaching, it is there upon the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem.

Initiated by 3 Questions

The teaching was initiated by the disciples asking Jesus the following 3 questions concerning the End Times:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Still Question 1 / Things not Good

We are still studying the first question pertaining to the Tribulation Period, and we have studied through the first 13 verses over the last three weeks and we have seen that things are not going well here on the earth. On a global scale, no longer just in local spots as we see around us today, but on a global scale there are wars, famines, pestilence, natural disasters, and if you are a follower of Christ at this time you will be singled out and betrayed by family and friends, beaten and killed. It is a terrible time upon the earth. As our past studies have shown, this period could begin at any moment.

Reward for those who Endure

But in verse 13, Jesus promises a reward to all believers who endure to the end; He promises them that they will be saved.

(Matthew 24:13 NKJV) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved."

People who missed the Rapture

Now at this point in our study, the context of this study, the people that Jesus is talking about are people who missed the Rapture, people who did not personally receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior today, for the Rapture could happen today, and if not today than tomorrow, and ask me tomorrow and I'll tell you the same thing. So these people didn't take the time to seriously consider the things of God as they were told by pastors, friends and family, or had read in the Bible themselves, they thought they would check into them later after they took care of others priorities. But after the very same people who told them these things suddenly disappear, along with all the people they hung out with in their little Jesus group, some of these people realize their error, some still won't, but now all will have to endure through this Tribulation Period which consists of wars, famines, pestilence, and natural disasters all on a global scale. They will see wars vehicles cruising up I-95, pestilence will overrun North Arundel Hospital, and they will see natural disaster from their front porch, if it is still left standing.

Good News is Good News still Preached & Available

But the good news is that the Good News will still be preached, for the Gospel means good news, and that good news will make it to every part of the world, and God will still be extending His hand in love to all who would take it.

Everlasting Gospel

(Matthew 24:14 NKJV) "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

Will Cover all – Reach all / N. America to Asia / Every Sq. Inch – Every Soul – Every Nation

This gospel (good news) will cover all and reach all. It will go out to all the world, from Greenland to Australia, and North America to the Asian continent, not one inch of soil will be left untouched, for the gospel will go to all the nations regardless of their religious persuasion, the Gospel of Jesus Christ will be preached to the nations that look to Buddha, the nations that say Allah is God, or the nations that hold to

the Hindu beliefs, every nation, every square inch of soil will be presented the one true gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Only One Way – 1 Road – Road of Cross / Message Preached will be Unmistakable

For there is only one way, for not all roads lead to God, for there is only one road, the Via Del Rosa, the way of the cross at Calvary, the path Jesus the Christ walked carrying the cross to that hill outside Jerusalem, a hill called Golgotha. That is the message that will be preached at this time, so unmistakable it will be because God is going to use an angel to proclaim it, there will be no confusion, man will hear and then be faced with the decision to believe and follow, or deny and reject it.

Rev 14:6 (NKJV) *Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.*

Maybe Wars diminish Bible – But Gospel not Silenced or Diminished

Maybe with all the war, famine, pestilence, and natural disaster going on, Bibles will be in short supply (maybe even outlawed), maybe all the killing of the believers at this time will silence the Christian voice, even if that is so the gospel will not be silenced, nor diminished, for it will make it to every square inch of soil, to every nation, it will be preached.

What Preached – Same Message of 2000 Years / Unchangeable– Change Man / Simple – 1 Verse

What will be preached, the same message that has been preached for 2,000 years. People and times may change, but this gospel is unchangeable regardless how the world tries to change it today. Only the unchangeable gospel has the power to change man. If it was so weak that it could be changed, then it would never have the power to change the heart of man. This gospel of the Kingdom, amazingly simple, yet simply amazing. Amazingly simple that Jesus could sum up the way to eternal life for all of mankind in one verse, John 3:16; and simply amazing that the One who spoke it was God Himself in the flesh, who was willing to leave His throne and come take sinful man's punishment for offending the perfect and pure Heavenly Father.

John 3:16 (NKJV) *16 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.*

God Gave – Diff between Religion & Relationship

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; how important to notice that it is God who gave, and not man, and that is the difference between a religion and a personal relationship with God. Religion demands man, puts an emphasis on man, says that it is something that man gives, it is man working himself to God. But the gospel of the kingdom, it is God who gives, and He gives Himself, and it comes to each man individually to choose do I receive what He is offering me, His very Self, an offer to have a personal relationship with me.

Offer to the World / Every Sq. Inch – Tribe and Tongue / For God so Loved

The offer is to the world, for God so loved the world. That world, every square inch of soil covering every nation, tribe, and tongue; none are excluded, for the offer is to every last person on earth, for God so loves the world.

What Type People He Loves / Seen it in our Matthew Studies / Here Handful the Represent World

What type of people does He love, who are the people that He loves, He has shown us in our 23 chapters of study, He has demonstrated His love towards people in our past studies and these people whom He has touched are a representation of you and me, a representation of who He loves, and who this offer is extended to. Here is just a handful of them, the first 5 that He met and touched in this gospel:

A Leper:

Matthew 8:1-4, we read of Jesus healing a leper. Jesus loves the lepers of this world. He loves to touch the people of the world that the world says don't touch, stay away, they have a problem, they are a problem, the people the world wants to keep at arms length. You don't fit in, you aren't our type, please stay away. Jesus says come unto Me, My world is open to you.

Matt 8:3 (NKJV) *3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

A Servant:

Matthew 8:5-13, we read of Jesus healing the centurion's servant. What was the name of this servant, we don't know but God does. Jesus loves to come to the people of the world who no one knows their name, the people that seem to fall through the cracks, who go through their who lives seemingly unnoticed. Jesus says come unto Me, in My world I know your name.

Matt 8:6 - 7 (NKJV)⁶saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." ⁷And Jesus said to him, "*I will come and heal him.*"

A Mother-in-Law:

Matthew 8:14-15, we read of Jesus healing the fever of Peter's Mother-in-Law. Jesus loves the mothers, the fathers, the family. Jesus comes to the homes that have love, where everyone's name is known, but He comes because at some point in life every family needs a visit and touch from Jesus.

Matt 8:14 - 15 (NKJV)¹⁴Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. ¹⁵So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

A Demon Possessed Man:

Matthew 8:28-34 we read of Jesus casting the demons out of the demon possessed men, men who had lived a life of doing ungodly things. Jesus loves these people of the world, He says your past acts will not exclude you from My Kingdom, from having a personal relationship with Me, it doesn't matter who you have opened yourself up to, for open yourself up to Me, enter into My world, and you will cleansed and forgiven and experience everlasting life.

Matt 8:28 (NKJV)²⁸When 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.

A Paralytic:

Matthew 9:1-8, we read of Jesus telling the paralytic to arise and take up his bed and walk. Jesus loves the paralytics of the world, those that are alive but hardly living. This thing whatever it may be is keeping them from living, they feel trapped within their lives in this world, and just can't seem to move on from the place they are in. Maybe it a past failure that has brought their life into a standstill, maybe one moment, one action, one disaster has brought their life to a screeching halt, and feel it will never move forward again. Maybe it is something they do daily, that has them paralyzed from moving on and forward in life. Jesus comes to them in this world and says arise from this place, for I have the power to change you, for only the Unchangeable Gospel has the power to change man.

Matt 9:6 - 7 (NKJV)⁶But 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.*" ⁷And he arose and departed to his house.

These are the People / Where you Fall In / Lonely to Broken – Strong to Weak – Utter to Gutter

These are the people of the world that Jesus loves; where do you fall into in His world? These are just a handful of the world that God so loves that He sent His only begotten Son. These are the people of the world, you and I, that He says I love you.....can you hear My love for you today. From the lonely to the brokenhearted; from the strong to the weak, from the uttermost to the gutter-most, from the reputable name to the no name, this is the world that he gave His only begotten Son to.

Where you Fall – It is Somewhere for His Love calls – Every Sq. Inch

So where in the world do you fall in, it is somewhere for His love calls out to every square inch of soil, to every nation small and great, and every soul of every one of those nations.

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

That Whosoever – Oh Believer or Seeker / God Initiates – Man Responds / My offer is My Son

That whosoever believes in Him – oh whether you are a believer here today or a seeker checking these things of God, oh what beautiful words. God gives, man receives; God initiates, man responds. If man initiated and God responded, then He wouldn't be very much of a God, but God initiates, and He initiates His love to this world by giving His only begotten Son. He says this is My offering to you, My peace and love offering to you (the world), here is My only Son.

Our Response – Believe / Not Event but way of Life / Were are to Be – L – I – E – V – E

Our response is to believe, and that belief brings us into everlasting life. The belief is as alive..... as the life we receive, the everlasting life. Our belief is not merely a one-time event, but a way of life. It is our very being, for we are human “beings”, and our belief is how we live, and how we are to “Be”. What does it mean to believe, what are we to be doing, for memory purposes lets spell it out, Be-L-I-E-V-E. We are to.....

Be Loosed: Believer we are to be loosed from any works trips. He gave, we need not live under this continual fear that we aren't doing enough, or need to be doing more. . There was nothing the leper could do but come and let Jesus work. God gave, man receives.

Be Identified: Believer we are to be identified with Christ and His works upon the cross. Nothing we have done or will do, we can just rest in His finished work there upon the cross. The no-name servant has been known for 2,000 years only as the one who Jesus healed, that is the identity of the no-name servant. God gave, man receives.

Be Enjoying: Believer we are to be enjoying His sufficiency, that His precious blood has washed away every one of our sins, past, present, and future. Like Peter's mother-in-law, we are part of a family where Jesus comes into our homes, our lives, and His presence brings joy and love, and the family we belong to is everlasting because He gave, and we receive.

Be Victorious: Believer we are to believe we have the victory over any grasp that sin may have upon our lives. We are not defeated or slaves to it, but believing that through the precious blood of Jesus we can and will have victory over it, and be free. Ask the demon-possessed men, Satan has no grip upon any man when man says Jesus help me, and Jesus says be gone from him. God gave, man receives.

Be Expectant: Believer we are to be expectant, we are to expect and believe that God is for us, that He wants to do great things in our life, and through our lives; and just as the paralytic was able to get up and walk home the moment Jesus showed up and said lets go, we are to always be living in that expectation that whatever our situation is, Jesus is coming to break through and have us moving forward. Why, because God gave, and man receives, and He still gives today, therefore we can receive today. Listen Believer, this isn't as good as it gets until you get to heaven, salvation is only the beginning of what God wants to do, God wants to do so much more in your life, live a life expecting more, and watch Him come through move you on to great things. This unchangeable gospel has the power to change man, live a life expecting it to do so. If you expect God to conform you into His image, He will.....if you will Believe.

If you are a Seeker

If you are a seeker here today, these things you have just heard are all family promises, and they are wonderful promises of God. But to be a part of His family, you first have to receive His offering, that He gave His only begotten Son. He gave His Son as an offer to trade places with you, because your sin separates you from Him. But whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. How does one believe unto salvation, how does one receive God's free gift of eternal life, by.....

Be Loosed: Be loosed that you can work or earn your way to heaven. There is nothing that man could possible give to a holy God. Rather we are to.....

Be Identified: with Jesus Christ, that Jesus took your place for the punishment of sin that was due you.

Be Enjoying: the sufficiency of His blood, that one drop of His precious divine blood is enough to wash all your sins away, past, present, and future. It is once and for all, and it is available to you today.

Be Victorious: say for the sake of being His, I turn from my sin, I repent of them, and know they are an offense to God, but He has had victory over them, and I will to by His help.

Be Expectant: Expect God to come into your life, and begin to do a great and mighty work. Expect Him to do to you, all that He says He will do.

The Abomination of Desolation

Matthew 24:14-22

Studying Olivet's Discourse – Given from Location

We are studying what is known as the Olivet's Discourse and the naming is derived from where Jesus gives this series of teaching, it is there upon the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem.

Initiated by 3 Questions

The teaching was initiated by the disciples asking Jesus the following 3 questions concerning the End Times:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

(Matthew 24:14 NKJV) "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

Some taken means Preach before Jesus Comes / Bible Trivia – Col 1:23

Some Christians have taken this to mean that the gospel has to be preached to the whole world before Jesus Christ can return. That is an incorrect understanding of this Scripture. The second coming is not dependent upon us, Jesus will come back at a time already appointed by the Father. Surely the gospel is to be preached, and surely we are to participate in the process, but our/man's efforts will not be the determinant factor of Christ's return (thank God!). In fact, just a little Bible trivia, the gospel had already been preached to the entire world shortly after Christ's accession according to the Apostle Paul, only about 30 years later:

(Colossians 1:23 NKJV) if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Calvinistic Belief – Chosen / Irresistible Grace / Extremist at Crusades – Figure that one Out

While I am here I should note that there is a theological position called Calvinism that is widely accepted in Christian circles. In their doctrine and theology they believe that God before the foundations of the world predestined and choose who would go to heaven and who would go to hell (using passages like Romans 9:21 – taking them out of context). They don't believe that God loves everyone, only those that He chose (again Romans 9:13 – taken out of context). Their theology also states that man has no say in the matter regardless whether they want to or not (and that applies to both heaven and hell). If you are chosen for heaven, you will be saved, and they call it "irresistible grace". Now there are extremist amongst their ranks that will even go as far as standing outside of Crusades such as Billy Graham or Greg Laurie with signs and yelling out to discourage people from coming into the Crusade; they are fearful that someone who God had not chosen to be saved will hear the gospel, respond to it and get saved, even though they weren't chosen/elected by God. Now try to figure that one out logically and theologically.

(Rom 9:13 NKJV) As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

(Rom 9:21 NKJV) Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Lazy Evangelism – No need to get Aggressive / God thinks it is Important / Why? - 2 Peter 3:9

Now that is an example of the extreme side, but what happens to the general Calvinist is that they are lazy in evangelism because they figure God has chosen who He has chosen and it is going to happen no matter what because of irresistible grace, so no need to get worried about or aggressive about evangelism, because God is going to make sure it happens. Well they are right in a wrong sense, God does think it is important enough to preach the gospel to every tribe and every nation and every tongue that He will send an angel to proclaim the gospel during this time that we are studying. Why would God be so aggressive about it, because of 2 Peter 3:9:

Rev 14:6 (NKJV) ⁶Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

(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.

(2 Peter 3:10 NKJV) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

God Aggressive – So Loved World – None should Perish

God will be that aggressive because He loves the world, and wishes that none should perish. Last study we looked at who He considers the world, and we seen that it is the whole world, that is you and that is me. And today he choses something much more personal to proclaim His love, He uses people just like you and me:

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

Bible College Street Witnessing

When I was in Bible College I lead the Street Witness Ministry and we would go out and share the gospel on the streets every Saturday night. One of the students believed along these lines, and he approached me and said I would love to go street witnessing with you and the team but you may not want me to go because I don't believe that God loves everyone, therefore I couldn't tell everyone that. I told him, I tell you what, you come on out with us, and you just share with the people you feel that God loves, and don't worry about the others. So he came out with us, shared with only those who he felt that God loves, and we all had a great time for the team talked to everyone else he didn't and lots of people were saved. We would just turn aside when we prayed with the people to receive the Lord that he didn't think God loved (hahaha).

How does Calvinist know they Saved? / God Initiating – Man Responding

I don't know how Calvinist explain the whole Old Covenant, New Covenant thing. Old Covenant, based on man keeping the Law perfectly and then he can come before the Holy God (which man failed miserably at, which God showed purposely), so the New Covenant which would be man not coming before God by his righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ, and His work upon the cross. If God chose people, then why go through that whole thing because it didn't matter, because if you are chosen you are chosen – their theology contrast the Scriptures. I would love to ask the Calvinist, now just how exactly do you know that you were chosen, what makes you so sure that you are saved if God made the decision before the foundation of the world and you have no say in the matter? You can't know if you were chosen or not? Hence the balance, for God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (God's initiating) that whosoever shall believe in Him (mans response) shall not perish but have everlasting life.

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

Back to Study – Endure you'll be Saved

So back to our story, Jesus said back in verse 13 that I know how horrible it is going to be on this earth, but he that endures to the end shall be saved:

(Matthew 24:13 NKJV) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Verses 1-13 Not Good / Wars – Earthquakes / Love of Many Cold – Imagine world without Love

The things that are going on during this time are not good as we have studied up to this point in verses 1-13. On a global scale there are wars, famines, pestilence and earthquakes going on all over the world, Along with that there is lawlessness and the love of many has grown cold.....imagine a world without love. It will be a world of every man for himself:

(Matthew 24:6 NKJV) "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

(Matthew 24:7 NKJV) "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

(Matthew 24:12 NKJV) "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Jesus says real Bad – But not seen Anything / Abomination of Desolation – Head Hills

Jesus says things are going to be terrible on earth, but you ain't seen nothing yet until you see the "abomination of desolation", when you see that things are going to get real bad. What? Worse than wars, famines, pestilence, earthquakes, lawlessness, and the love of many growing cold? Yep. Jesus says in verse 16 when you see that, head for the hills – literally!

(Matthew 24:16 NKJV) "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Why Gospel Preached – Endure be Saved / Same word for us Today

Hence why the gospel will be preached to all the world, and hence why Jesus yells out to all, endure to the end and you shall be saved. No matter how bad it gets here on earth, endure and you will be saved. That word is true today, here and know for every person in this room, hence why the gospel is being preached by God today!

(Matthew 24:13 NKJV) "But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

(Matthew 24:14 NKJV) "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

So verse 15,

(Matthew 24:15 NKJV) "Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand),

(Matthew 24:16 NKJV) "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Holy Place – Temple / Abomination – Disgusting / Just as Daniel Prophesied / Get Out Town

The holy place is the Temple, therefore sometime in the future the Temple will be rebuilt, and right now as we speak there is a group in Israel called the Temple Institute and the Temple Mount Faithful who are gathering all the material and raising funds to rebuild the Temple in Israel, so there again in our lifetime one more prophetic picture coming in place before our eyes. So the holy place is the Temple.

Abomination means something disgusting, so God says when you see something totally disgusting in the Temple, just as Daniel had prophesied, get out of town immediately:

(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."

What is It? / 2 Parts – Historic & yet Prophetic

What is the abomination of desolation? There are two parts to this cataclysmic event—one historic, one prophetic. Jesus is making it clear that the abomination of desolation in 170BC wasn't the total fulfillment of the prophecy by Daniel, but there is still yet a future event to happen.

Daniel 11:31 – Historical / Antiochus Epiphanes – 170BC / 100K Slaughtered / Pig – Blood - Priests

Daniel 11:31 speaks of the historic aspect of the abomination of desolation in reference to a tragic event in Jewish history. Following the reign of Alexander the Great, a king named Antiochus Epiphanes ruled Syria. He was an egomaniacal madman who believed he was the embodiment of the Greek god Zeus. When Antiochus realized that the Jews in Israel were not acknowledging him as God, he became enraged and ordered the destruction of Jerusalem. Thus, on a single day in 170 B.C., one hundred thousand Jewish males were slaughtered, the women raped, the city looted. Then Antiochus himself entered the temple, butchered a pig on the altar, and forced the priests to drink its blood and eat the raw pork. Finally, he smeared the remainder of the blood on the temple walls. It was the abomination of desolation for it was abominable and it left the people desolate.

(Dan 11:31 NKJV) "And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the abomination of desolation.

2nd – Yet Future / 7yr Peace pact / Peace to Israel / Mid-Point demand Worship – 2 Thess

The second aspect, an event yet to happen, is prophesied in Daniel 9:27. In the last days, a man will come on the scene who will make a seven-year peace treaty with Israel (remember our past study on the 70-7's?). Appearing to be her friend and protector, this leader will seem to defuse all of the problems in the Middle East. He will be charismatic and persuasive, an impressive intellectual, and a skilled orator. Called Antichrist in Scripture, he will capture the attention of the entire world. He will arise out of the revived Roman Empire (see Revelation 13), which today is the European Union that is taking shape

before our very eyes. Although he will initially come across as a man of peace, in the middle of his seven-year peace treaty, 2 Thessalonians 2 tells us he will set up his image in the temple and demand to be worshipped as God. This man of peace may even help the Jews rebuild the Temple, and thus gain favor with them. This second abomination will result in desolation across this planet.

(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."

(2 Thessalonians 2:1 NKJV) Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,

(2 Thessalonians 2:2 NKJV) not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come.

(2 Thessalonians 2:3 NKJV) Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

(2 Thessalonians 2:4 NKJV) who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

(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.***

(2 Thessalonians 2:8 NKJV) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming.

(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,

Unless the Falling Away – Rapture of Church / Church Exposes – Church to be Looking for Jesus

Just a note, this man (the anti-Christ) can not come until after the restrainer is removed (2 Thessalonians 2). Who is the restrainer, the church. Some say it is the Holy Spirit, but that is not theologically correct because the Holy Spirit is everywhere (Psalm 139), He cannot be removed. I believe God is saying when the church is taken out (with all the Spirit-filled Believers) that is when the Anti-Christ (man of sin) is revealed. God is saying after the Rapture happens, that is when the antichrist will appear for he would never be able to deceive the world with millions of Believers pointing and exposing him as a fake). What is another reason it is after the rapture, so the church will always be looking for Jesus Christ, rather than the Anti-Christ, for He wants us to fix our eyes upon Him, always and forever.

(Psalms 139:7 NKJV) Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

(Psalms 139:8 NKJV) If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.

(Psalms 139:9 NKJV) If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

(Psalms 139:10 NKJV) Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.

Jesus says Run – Where?

Jesus said, "When you see this happen—Run!" Where?

(Matthew 24:16 NKJV) "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

Reminder – 70 Weeks of Daniel pertain to Israel

Now just a reminder the prophesy of the 70 seven year periods as prophesied in Daniel deals speaks with the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. So the things we are reading are most applicable to the Jewish people, and some the things we read next will make that very clear as these things really apply to the people of Israel and not the rest of the world. Jesus says when you see the abomination of desolation, flee!

Zech 13 – 2/3rd Jews will Die / Violence will be Staggering

Zechariah declares that following the abomination of desolation, the Jews will indeed flee. But only one-third of them will make it to safety (Zechariah 13:8, 9). Tragically, two-thirds of the Jewish nation will be caught in the flood of persecution that will follow Antichrist's declaration of war against them. The violence and bloodshed will be staggering—beyond anything this world has ever seen.

(Zechariah 13:8 NKJV) And it shall come to pass in all the land," Says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, But one-third shall be left in it:

(Zechariah 13:9 NKJV) I will bring the one-third through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"

Flee to Wilderness / God will mount Israel on Wings of Eagle

So as Jesus said, "When you see this abomination of desolation, flee to the wilderness" (Matthew 24:15). It tells us in Revelation 13, God's going to give her two wings of an eagle, to bear her to the wilderness. Some think the eagles are reference to the United States but I highly doubt it at this point in the Tribulation.

(Revelation 12:14 NKJV) But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

Bible Teachers think it is Petra / Zech 16

Most Bible teachers believe the remainder of the Jews will run to the ancient city of Petra. Located in present-day Jordan. Now there is an interesting prophecy in Isaiah chapter sixteen. The prophecy is for Edom to open up her gates and to receive the castaways. And verse four of chapter sixteen, "Let my outcast dwell with thee, Moab, be thou a covering for them in the face of the spoiler [or the enemy--the antiChrist]: for the extortioner is at an end, and the spoiler ceaseth, and the spoilers are consumed out of the land" (Isaiah 16:4). As your margin might say there in Isaiah 16:1, "Sela" means "Rock" or "Petra." Petra is truly an amazing city. Located in Moab, or present-day Jordan, this city carved of stone has stood for centuries, preserved largely because the sole entrance is a passageway only twelve feet wide, and the cliffs of the rocks range from 500 – 1000 feet high:

(Isaiah 16:1 NKJV) Send the lamb to the ruler of the land, From Sela to the wilderness, To the mount of the daughter of Zion.

(Isaiah 16:2 NKJV) For it shall be as a wandering bird thrown out of the nest; So shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the Arnon.

(Isaiah 16:3 NKJV) "Take counsel, execute judgment; Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day; Hide the outcasts, Do not betray him who escapes.

(Isaiah 16:4 NKJV) Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab; Be a shelter to them from the face of the spoiler. For the extortioner is at an end, Devastation ceases, The oppressors are consumed out of the land.

Esau – Volcanic Crater / 12 feet Entrance – Easy to Guard – Invincible / Architectural Wonder

Here is the history of this little city called Petra. In approximately 2000 B.C., Esau settled in a volcanic crater that was approximately a mile in length. It was an incredibly secure place, for to get into the crater, one had to go through a narrow canyon only twelve feet wide in many places with a rock face between two hundred feet and one thousand feet high on either side. The entire city could be easily guarded by only fifteen soldiers marching along the ridges above its narrow entrance. Thus, the descendants of Esau, called the Edomites, dwelt in this city of Petra for centuries, believing they were invincible. Over the years, they constructed an architectural phenomenon. Carved right into the rock are amphitheatres, banks, temples, and an aqueduct system that baffles scientists to this day. With a population of one million, no one can figure out how they got enough water into the city to sustain the inhabitants. The Edomites were a proud people who trusted in their fortress, rested in their cliff city, and had no need of Jehovah. So Obadiah came on the scene in the name of the Lord and said they would fall. And guess what. They did. The city began to weaken when it was struck with a plague. Eventually, the Edomites were wiped out entirely.

Many Years a lost City / 1812 – Johann Burckhart / Eagles at Entrance

For many years, people heard stories about the rock city of Petra. Bible teachers would talk about it, but in most people's minds, it had been relegated to the same status as the lost city of Atlantis—a mythological place that never really existed. In 1812, however, a Bible teacher/explorer/adventurer named Johann Burckhardt was determined to find Petra. This Swiss explorer was determined to find Petra; no Arab in those time would ever lead anyone to it, their lips were sealed, but Johann approached one of the guides and said I want to go there and make a sacrifice to Moses' brother Aaron (for he knew

according to their customs and traditions would do it because of their reverence for Aaron. And when he finally did, he couldn't believe what he saw, for although it had been abandoned for centuries and remains desolate to this day, he was amazed by its grandeur and splendor. Perhaps most arresting, however, were the two huge eagles' wings carved into the rock at the very entrance of the city, for the Book of Revelation declares that the remnant of Israel will be saved by the wings of an eagle (Revelation 12:14). *(Revelation 12:14 NKJV) But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

Blackstone & Bibles

A number of years ago, W. E. Blackstone, another Bible teacher, was so convinced that Petra will be the place in which the Jews are kept safe, he purchased thousands of Hebrew New Testaments, underlined passages like Matthew 24 and Revelation 12, and left them in earthen jars throughout Petra. When the Jews get there, the Bibles will be waiting for them. I love it!

City of Refuge / Until High Priest Dies – But Jesus the High Priest will Return

On another side note, it is interesting that in the Old Testament Cities of Refuge were established for people who involuntarily killed someone, they could flee there and the offended party could not come into the city and seek vengeance. They had to stay there until the death of the High Priest, and then they could return home and all debts were cancelled. Jesus when He hung there on the cross said forgive them for they know not what they do; and later it would be said what they (the Jews) did they did in ignorance. And here we see the Lord giving them a place of refuge, and they will not wait until the High Priest dies, but he returns:

(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.

Paul speaking to Jews - (Acts 3:17 NKJV) "Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers.

(Matthew 24:17 NKJV) "Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house.

Israel hangout on the Rooftop

You might be thinking, what is this about a housetop? How many times are we on our roofs? Remember, this section is speaking to the Jews, and in Israel even to this day, people relax on roof-top decks.

(Matthew 24:18 NKJV) "And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.

(Matthew 24:19 NKJV) "But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!

(Matthew 24:20 NKJV) "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

Sabbath city Shuts Down / Shabbat Elevator

Pray that the abomination of desolation doesn't come on the Sabbath day. Why? Because in Israel, transportation comes to a standstill on the Sabbath. This is another indication that Jesus is speaking to the Jews. You would be in real trouble if you lived in an apartment and had to take the elevator (if elderly or feeble); I was in Israel on the Sabbath and I had to use the Shabbat elevator which is programmed to stop on every floor, because they consider pushing the floor button work, and you can't do any work on the Sabbath. So for 12 floors I had to stop on every floor.

American Sabbath

It wouldn't matter if the abomination of desolation came on the Sabbath in our country. Sadly, our nation treats the Sabbath no differently than any other day.

The 4 Churches

There were four country churches in a small TEXAS town. The Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church, the Methodist Church, and the Catholic Church. Each Church was overrun with pesky squirrels. One day, **the Presbyterian Church** called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. After much prayer and consideration they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will. In **the Baptist Church** the squirrels had taken up habitation in the

baptistry. The deacons met and decided to put a cover on the baptistry and drown the squirrels in it. But, the squirrels escaped somehow and there were twice as many there the next week. **The Methodist Church** got together and decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creation. So, they humanely trapped the squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back. But, **the Catholic Church**, came up with the best and most effective solution. They baptized the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas and Easter.

(Matthew 24:21 NKJV) "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

(Matthew 24:22 NKJV) "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Horrible Time – at Mid-Trib Point Half World Dead

The final three -and -one-half years after Antichrist reveals his true nature in the temple and the Jews flee to the wilderness will be a time of disaster, destruction, and death unlike any other in history. Here, Jesus is saying that unless the days were shortened, no one would survive them. The entire world would be annihilated. But God will shorten those days for the elect's sake. It is my estimation based on studying the book of Revelation that up to this 3.5 yr point half of the world's population dies.

Cut Short – or Self Destroy / Here is the Controversy / 3 Elects

Jesus says he will cut it short for the elect's sake, else there would not be one person left alive. We have already studied that we are the first generation that has the ability to self-annihilate itself. Here it says for the "elect's" sake, and here is where controversy arises. There are those who say that since the church is called "the elect," the church must be in the Tribulation period. Mark this down, students of prophecy: In passages such as Isaiah 45:4; 65:9; and Romans 11:28, God specifically calls Israel "His elect." It's not just Christians who are called "the elect." In fact, there are three groups in the Bible who are called by that name: Israel, the church (Colossians 3:12), and those saved in the Tribulation (Matthew 24:21-22). Keep in mind that in verses 15–36—with references to Judaea, the Sabbath, and the temple—Jesus is still speaking to Israel.

(Colossians 3:12 NKJV) Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

(Isaiah 45:4 NKJV) For Jacob My servant's sake, And Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name; I have named you, though you have not known Me.

(Matthew 24:22 NKJV) "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Conclusion

How Apply / 1st Evangelism

Well we have studied some interesting things today, but really we are reading stories of other people. So what is the application for us? Well obviously as we started as we look at these things we should be involved in evangelism, and that goes without saying.

2nd – Comfort not Part / But no Guarantees / Good News We know Where Going / Billy Graham

Secondly we can read these things and take great comfort in knowing, we will not live them. However, as Jesus said these wars, famines, pestilence, and natural disasters will be increasing so we are not immune from tribulation and not guaranteed that we shall always live this life of comfort we are so blessed with in comparison to most of the world. The good news is, that we know where we are going. I am reminded of the story that I read in Christianity Today about Billy Graham who was being honored by leaders in Charlotte, North Carolina. After wonderful things were said about him, Graham stepped to the rostrum and said:

"I'm reminded today of Albert Einstein, the great physicist honored by Time magazine as the Man of the Century. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train when the conductor came down the aisle, punching the tickets of each passenger. When he came to Einstein, Einstein reached in his vest pocket.

He couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his other pocket. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat by him. He couldn't find it. The conductor said, 'Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it.' Einstein nodded appreciatively. "The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket. The conductor rushed back. 'Dr. Einstein, don't worry,' he said. "I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one.' "Einstein said, 'Young man, I too know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going.'" Dr. Graham continued, "See the suit I'm wearing? I bought it for this luncheon and one more occasion. This is the suit in which I'll be buried. But when you hear I'm dead, I don't want you to immediately remember the suit I'm wearing. I want you to remember this: I not only know who I am, I also know where I'm going."

So too can we enjoy that comfort and knowledge of who we are and where we are going. But if you are here today and maybe you know who you are, but you are not sure where you are going.....Today make your decision for Christ!

Love Grows Cold – Ever-present Danger

I close with this, we know we should evangelize, and we do. We are comforted and excited about knowing that our eternity is secure, but I know there is an ever present danger for us Believers, and that is that our love would grow cold:

(Matthew 24:12 NKJV) "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

We Plead w/Them / Jesus the Answer / Blank Stares – Grins – Hostility / Don't Grow Weary

We can grow cold because we have evangelized and no one is responding. We pour our hearts out and into people and they just look back at us with blank stares. We are pleading with them, you must prepare for meeting God now, you must make the decision while you are alive today. We tell them Jesus is the answer to your loneliness, your bitterness, your heartbreak, whatever that thing is He wants to come into your life and stand with you and walk you through it. Yet they only smile back politely, maybe chuckle at "your crutch", maybe even become hostile; and day after day, time after time, our love for the lost (or even the backslidden Christian) becomes cold, we figure it is all useless, hopeless, and never going to change. Can I encourage you in this, don't grow weary of doing good, for in due season you shall reap a harvest. Can you hear the voice of God saying to you, don't quit, never ever! Don't be looking at the people, for once you do you are doomed to grow weary and frustrated.

(Gal 6:9 NKJV) And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

Burning the Candle

I know I've told the story, but it is worth repeating; it is about a man who was protesting a very noble cause. Everyone had come to this certain location in the late evening and they had all lit candles and stood in unison. A reporter came to this man and said do you really think standing here is going to make them change? And the man answered, I am not doing this to change them, I am doing this so they don't change me. And that is what we must do, as the world seems to be becoming more and more cold towards the things of Christ, even many Believers who were once so on-fire now are so cold; may we not become discouraged in doing good and being excited about because of their response, may we not look at the people, but look at our God and come back to the place of how great and mighty He is, and how in love with us He is, and how He has a wonderful plan and purpose for our lives.

What do Practically / Add Something New

What can you do practically to not grow cold? Worship and the Word daily! The doors open here on Sunday at 10am, and that is every Sunday. Find somewhere to serve others. If you are serving, keep serving, but pray about adding something new. Come on out to Garrett Park, the soup kitchen, go on a mission trip, take a ride up to Baltimore City with a bag sandwiches and some tracts. Find something new to do that will bring a fresh breath of the Spirit into your life. Keep looking for that one, know that in the multitude there is one who is just waiting to hear and receive this awesome news of the God who loves Him.

Pray on It / God will Speak

Pray on it, God will speak to you about what to do to make sure that your love doesn't grow cold.

The Second Coming of Christ / Are you Ready? (24:23-44)

Studying Olivet's Discourse – Given from Location

We are studying what is known as the Olivet's Discourse and the naming is derived from where Jesus gives this series of teaching, it is there upon the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem.

Initiated by 3 Questions

The teaching was initiated by the disciples asking Jesus the following 3 questions concerning the End Times:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Ended Last Study – Completion 1st Question

We ended our last study with the completion of the first question, the signs of the Tribulation. Jesus ended that first question by saying that it will be so bad that if He didn't cut it short by His return their would not be one person left alive on the earth:

(Matthew 24:21 NKJV) "For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.

(Matthew 24:22 NKJV) "And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.

Understanding Matt 24-25 – Key to Understanding Eschatology

Understanding Matthew 24-25 is key to understanding "eschatology" which is just a fancy word for "End Times". However, it is just one piece of end times, and it must be tied together with all the other passages of Scriptures pertaining to the End Times or else we can get ourselves all twisted around and confused of when certain events happen, such as the rapture of the church, the coming of the anti-christ, the abomination of desolation in the Temple, and other such events. The Lord clearly doesn't want us to be confused, hence He gives us an outline in the Book of Revelation (1:19) so we can understand the sequence of events clearly; and here in Matthew 24 (verse 3) we have these 3 questions which is our outline for understanding these passages

(Revelation 1:19 NKJV) "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.

Matthew 24 Breakdown

We can even break chapter 24 down further for our study. When you listen to the news and see the tensions and troubles in today's world, keep in mind the warnings that the Lord gave.

- **Do not be deceived (24:4-11)** - people will make great claims and promises, claim to have some better way than Jesus Christ, but we are not to be deceived.
- **Do not be discouraged (24:6)** - there will be political and natural disasters growing in frequency, but we are not to get discouraged as we see them.
- **Do not be defeated (24:13)** - we are called to endure to the end, no matter how hard life may get, we are to endure to the end and we shall be saved.
- **Do not be doubtful (24:35)** – religious leaders will come and go, stand and fall, but the Word of God will not change, nor will it fail or fall. We are to believe it, obey it, live it, hold on to it no matter what others may say or do.
- **Do not be distracted (24:42)** – we are to remain watchful for the Lord's imminent return, we are to remind ourselves and live in such a way the Lord may return at any time. We are not to let our heart think that His return is delayed, for we then would begin to live contrary to the Word of God, and lose our salt and light in this dark world. We are to keep watching and keep working.

[Look here is the Christ](#)

(Matthew 24:23 NKJV) "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it.

(Matthew 24:24 NKJV) "For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

(Matthew 24:25 NKJV) "See, I have told you beforehand.

(Matthew 24:26 NKJV) "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it.

(Matthew 24:27 NKJV) "For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

False Spiritual Leaders – Don't be Deceived / Be Like Lightening – Can't Miss / JW - Mormons

False spiritual leaders will come on the scene, saying, "We have found Messiah. He's in the desert," or "He's over here," or "He's over there." Jesus said, "Don't believe any of them. When I truly come, it will be like lightning. It will be obvious to everyone." He didn't say, "I'm coming again to Brooklyn in 1921 to reveal Myself to the Watchtower Society." He didn't say, "I'm coming again in the late 1800s to reveal Myself through magic spectacles to Joseph Smith." No. He said, "When I come, it will be like lightning. Everyone will see Me."

If Possible – Even Elect

Verse 24 - if possible, even the elect - In the Greek, the class condition for this statement "if possible, even the elect"; means if it were possible, and it is not, even the elect could be deceived. So if people who are saved are tempted to follow the false Christ, how hard will it be for those who are not. Today is the day to call out to Jesus (2 Cor 6:2).

[Where Carcass Is – Eagles will Gather](#)

(Matthew 24:28 NKJV) "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

What Mean? – Birds Circling Above not Good

What does this mean, well we can just take what it means today; if you were in the desert and you saw birds circling above you, you know the end is near.

Allusion Battle Armageddon / World System will become Dead Carcasses / Only Return of Jesus

Here, Jesus makes an allusion to the battle of Armageddon that is further illuminated in Revelation 19. When the nations of the world come together for war in the Valley of Megiddo, carcasses will indeed abound and vultures will follow. So, too, the world system with all its pride, pomposity, and prowess will become nothing more than a dead carcass. No matter how much progress we might make politically, the system will always be corrupt because of depravity. Things are wrong in society, and the answer lies not in capitalism, socialism, or communism. The answer is not democracy, oligarchy, or anarchy. The only answer is the return of Jesus Christ. If you are putting your trust and hope in this world's system, this is its future, and thus yours.

(Revelation 19:17 NKJV) Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

(Revelation 19:18 NKJV) "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."

(Revelation 19:19 NKJV) And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

[Son of Man coming in the Clouds](#)

(Matthew 24:29 NKJV) "Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

(Matthew 24:30 NKJV) "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

(Matthew 24:31 NKJV) "And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Jesus to Sanhedrin – Coming in Glory

Jesus will say to the Sanhedrin that the next time you see Me I will be coming in glory:

(Matthew 26:64 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

All Eyes will See – No Confusion

Again no one needs to tell them there He is, for all eyes will see Him, there will be no mistaking His Second return. Immediately after the tribulation, there will be great catastrophic, cataclysmic events taking place within the universe. The spiritual powers (Satan and his henchman) shall be shaken, possibly referring to the final vial being broken, Revelation 16

Upon Return – Satan Bound – Millennial Kingdom Begins

Upon His return, Satan will be bound and thrown in the bottomless pit, then God will gather all His saints together, those that came with Him on His return, and all the saints that endured to the end. God will then establish His Millennial Kingdom and the saints will rule and reign with Him for 1,000 years. After Satan will be released and those who were not saved through the Tribulation Period, into the Millennial Kingdom, will have a final chance to decide who they want to follow, Satan or Christ.

Parable of Fig Tree (24:32-35)

Shift in Teaching – Be Ready / Be Ready for Rapture / Rebirth of Israel

Verse 32 begins a shift in Jesus' teaching. From verses 24:32 – 25:30, like any Bible study should have, Jesus brings personal application to the listener. Jesus is saying, the signs are all around you, you therefore be ready! I believe Jesus is giving commentary and application in the middle of the teaching and that application is for the Church to be ready for the Rapture. Jesus is saying hey the signs are all around you, you therefore be ready. For us today, He gives one of the most fascinating prophecies in the Bible that ties to the End Times, and it has come to pass in our lifetime; that prophecy is the re-birth of Israel as a Nation.

(Matthew 24:32 NKJV) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

(Matthew 24:33 NKJV) "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at the doors!

(Matthew 24:34 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

Parable – Para(alongside) – Ballo(to cast)

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.

Fig Trees – Summer Near (Halloween) / Israel Fig Tree – Re-gathered 1948 / Generation?

Jesus says when you see leaves on a fig tree, you know that summer is near. Kinda of like we say when you see the Christmas Displays up in the stores you know that Halloween is near. Because throughout the Scriptures Israel is referred to as a Fig Tree (Judges 9:10, Jeremiah 8:13, Hosea 9:10, and Joel 1:6), many believe Jesus is saying making a reference to the rebirth of the Nation Israel. That Jesus is saying Israel will be scattered, but when you see them re-gathered again as a Nation, then know that the generation who see it, be the last and final generation. Well that happened on May 14th, 1948, after 2,000 years without a homeland, on that day Israel was recognized as a Nation. So the question then is asked how long is a generation, if it is 40 years than Jesus is coming back in 1988, 50 years, 60 years (oh I like that for that would mean 2008), or 100 years as spelled out in Genesis 16 (which I don't like the idea of 2148).

More Conclusive is Luke 21 / June 10th 1967 / Final 7year Period of Daniel / Raptured First

I do believe this is the correction application of this passage, but to me the most conclusive passage is given in Luke 21 which we studied as our first study in this chapter several weeks ago. Luke 21 says that the Temple in Jerusalem will be destroyed, the Jewish people dispersed throughout the world, and for a period it will be the times of God dealing with the Gentiles. That period will come to an end once Israel has ownership of Jerusalem (which couldn't have happened until Israel was rebirth as a Nation), and as we studied that on June 10th, 1967 Israel took complete control of the Jerusalem in the 6 Day War, and therefore the times of the Gentiles trodden Jerusalem under foot is over, and God can now begin the final 7 week period of the 70 weeks of Daniel, which deals specifically with the Jewish people. So before that begins, the Church has to be Raptured, Oh Calgone take me away!

Luke 21:20 - 24 (NKJV) ²⁰*But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. ²¹Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. ²²For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. ²³But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. **And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.***

Simplest Application – Summer Near / Wars and Earthquakes

So this is the application, but the simplest application for us is that when you see leaves on a fig tree know that summer is near, and when you see an increase in wars, rumors of war (terrorism), famine, pestilence, and earthquakes, and lawlessness abounding, and the love of many growing cold, then know you are living in the last days. And oh yea, when you see Jerusalem back in the hands of Israel.

Heaven & Earth will Pass – His Words will Not

(Matthew 24:35 NKJV) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

Verse 35 – Exclamation Point!

In verse 35, Jesus is putting a huge exclamation point of His Word; hey all you Bible critics and naysayer's, those who critic and challenge the Bible, see here and know that every word I proclaim will come to pass, and the world will fold-up and collapse but My Word will still be standing. Good point to remember on a personal note, if you think you can live contrary to the Word, that you are a special case, or you are smarter than God's Word, heed these words, for your world will fold-up and collapse, but God's word will stand forever.

Day and Hour nobody Knows (24:36)

(Matthew 24:36 NKJV) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Based on Fig Tree – Date Setting Began / Round Trip Ticket

Based on what we just read about Israel being re-birthed and the generation that saw it will be Raptured. Back 20 some years ago this guy wrote a book called "88 reasons Jesus is coming in 1988". Bunch of people got all excited; this author (Wisennut – which should have been a clue) put together a trip for all who believed this, to go to Israel during the Feast of Trumpets and be raptured from Jerusalem. It didn't happen of course but here is an interesting note, Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa called the travel agent that this guy used and found out that he had booked round trip airfare!

1 Thess 5 / Time and Season

1 Thessalonians 5, the Apostle Paul says we know the time and season, but not day and hour. Well it is clear to us we are now in the season, but the day an hour we don't know.

1 Thessalonians 5:1 - 2 (NKJV) ¹*But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.*

²*For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

Our Response – Be Ready

Our response rather than date setting, should be – "being ready". And Jesus goes on to bring that point home of being ready.

Days of Noah 24:37

(Matthew 24:37 NKJV) "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

(Matthew 24:38 NKJV) "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

(Matthew 24:39 NKJV) "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Life as Usual / 2nd Application – More Signs

Jesus gives us more signs here by saying as it was in the days of Noah. From the first look we can take this to mean that life will be happening as life happenings when Jesus comes back. People will be going to work, coming home, having dinner, marrying and having kids who get married, not thinking that anything is wrong in their lives and that they need to be preparing for the coming of Christ. This is true and the first application, but Jesus is saying to the church, giving application to His teaching that we need to be ready, and he says to us here are some more signs, and as you look at them tell Me how close is My return? As we look back on the Days of Noah, we have to say, wow it is near!

4 things in Days of Noah

If you recall our study from Genesis 6, there were 4 things that were going on in the days of Noah, and we can see how they parallel in our day also:

- Population Explosion – 6:1
- Strange and Extreme Sexual Behavior – 6:2-4
- Evil Imaginations – 6:5-10
- The Earth Filled with Violence – 6:11-13

Genesis 6:1 - 14 (NKJV) *¹Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, ²that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ³And 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." ⁴There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. ⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. ⁶And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. ⁷So the LORD said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." ⁸But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. ¹⁰And Noah begot three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. ¹¹The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. ¹³And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. ¹⁴Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.*

1.) Population Explosion – (Genesis 6:1)

Long Lives

There was a population explosion, and easily so, people were living 900 years and more because of the water canopy that surrounded the earth at that time (Genesis 1:6-7). Because the birth rate was greater than the death rate, it was estimated that if they only lived to 400 years old, and had 3 sons and 3 daughters (or 800 years with just 3 kids), at the time of Noah there would have been 7 billion people on the planet, which we are closing in on very fast, sitting at 6.5 billion in the world today. See <http://www.worldometers.info> for a running calculation of the earth's population.

(Genesis 6:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them,

Today's Population

Today's population explosion: it took from Noah to the Civil War in 1867 to reach 1 billion on the earth. The reason being of plagues, wars, etc. From 1867 to 1935 to reach 2 billion (less than 100 years). 1935 to 1965 to reach 3 billion. 1965 to 1995 to double to 6 billion. They estimate that the world will double every 15 years. They estimate they world is growing faster than 250,000 people a day.

2.) Strange and Extreme Sexual Behavior – 6:2-4

Main Point - Bizarre Sexual Behavior

It is a long study to try to figure out what this means (son's of God came into the daughters of men and bore children), whatever the case, the main point for us today is that there was strange and bizarre sexual behavior happening in the days of Noah.

(Genesis 6:4 NKJV) There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.

How about today's sexual trends:

- 65% of girls 16 years old are not virgins
- Entertainment is the largest industry in America, and Pornography leads the pack.
- Pornography is the fastest growing industry in the world (by percentile growth).
- 300,000 children under the age of 9 are recruited or sold into Kiddy Porn for the producing of pornography magazines.
- A dateline special last week showed children in Cambodia being sold into sex slavery. For 600 dollars a man could have sex with a 5 year old virgin.
- 70% of American have seen pornography in the last month. For no longer do you need the trench coat and drive to the back of a seedy building to see porn, now it is only a click away.
- Snuff Video are available today. A snuff video is of people having sex and some dies either through bondage or suffocation.
- The Gay Movement – A survey this week now has 55% of Americans in favor of Gay Civil Marriages.

My response is:

(Matthew 24:35 NKJV) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

3.) Evil Imaginations – 6:5-10

Always thinking Evil / Romans 1

The thoughts of the heart were continually evil. This is speaking of the thoughts in the mind, they were never on the things of God, but of evil and wicked things. Every here means every. Their minds never considered good, but for ever waking moment, it was thinking evil ungodly things. Ever meet someone like that today, all they want to talk about is filth, telling this filthy story, always looking for or talking about the next evil adventure. Their minds are vile, Romans 1 gives us the deeper description of these types of people: God calls their mind reprobate or debased depending on your translation:

(Genesis 6:5 NKJV) Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Romans 1:28 - 2:1 (NKJV) ²⁸And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, ³⁰backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³²who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. ¹Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

Today We are Flooded / People Minds Continually Filled

We already talked about pornography, but look at television today. Look at the images that come across the screen and into our minds. The commercials during football games have nothing to do with the game but the lust of the flesh. The reality shows: Fear Factor loaded with the flesh, Surreal Life, the Apprentice, Survivor, all these shows douse the mind with all these fleshly images. One person in entertainment who would sum it up is Howard Stern, he has the most debased mind I've ever seen. You may say he is only one man, but the point is that he has million of viewers and listeners.

4.) The Earth Filled with Violence – 6:11-13

Most Violent Generation

The earth was filled with violence. We live in the most violent generation in the history of mankind. The average child will see 35,000 violent acts on TV by the age of 18. 1.2 million couples used a gun or knife on each other last year. Woman's rate of crime is growing at a rate 6 times faster than men. This year in the USA there will be 15,000 murders, and they think the killing in Iraq is out of control.

(Genesis 6:13 NKJV) And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Mafia 10 Commandments

Got to read you this story from the news yesterday:

Mafia '10 Commandments' Found in Italy After Arrests - Friday, November 09, 2007

ROME — Thou shalt be faithful to the Mafia. - Italian police said Thursday they have found a list of 10 commandments for mobsters in a house near Palermo, where a top Mafia boss was arrested this week. Salvatore Lo Piccolo, who had been on the run since 1993, was vying to become the next "boss of bosses" of the Sicilian Mafia, according to Italian investigators. He was apprehended Monday by police raiding a house in the countryside outside Palermo, the Sicilian capital. The list was found among his coded notes about the administration of Cosa Nostra that were delivered by Lo Piccolo's aides. Police in Palermo said that the list opened with a preamble that said: "I swear to be faithful to Cosa Nostra. Should I betray, my flesh will burn." Under the category "Rights and Duty" were the 10 entries, meant to be a sort of users' manual for the good mobster. The list was typewritten in uppercase letters, police said. Italian newspaper La Repubblica published a photo of what it said was the list, under the headline: "The Godfather's Ten Commandments." The list bars mobsters from hanging out in bars, from befriending police and being late for appointments. It also bars them from "taking possession of money that belong to others or other families." How to treat women also features in the decalogue. "You shall not look at wives of our friends," says one entry. "You shall respect your wife," says another. However, the Mafia comes first, as the fifth "commandment" orders a mobster to "be available for Cosa Nostra at any moment, even if your wife is about to give birth." The last part of the list sets out application rules, saying that those who have a very bad behavior and no moral values cannot join.

Mafia Morals / Those were Days of Noah – These are the Days of Noah

It comforts me to know that the Mafia only wants men of high moral character. Those were the Days of Noah, and precious saints these too are the Days of Noah.

- Population Explosion – 6:1
- Strange and Extreme Sexual Behavior – 6:2-4
- Evil Imaginations – 6:5-10
- The Earth Filled with Violence – 6:11-13

Noah Pounded and Preached / God's Precious 8 / Wishes None should Perish

Noah pounded and preached for 120 years. For 120 years God was giving the opportunity for man to escape the coming judgment, but they thought Noah was just all wet. But, there were 8 who responded, not only eight, but a precious eight, as God provides a way of escape for them for they were precious to Him. God's heart called out for all 6-7 billion, His heart broke for those who rejected, for we know His word, that He wishes that none should perish but that all should seek repentance.

(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.

(2 Peter 3:10 NKJV) But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.

Woman at CC – Heart of God

A woman at one of the Calvary Chapel's tells the story of how she asked the Lord in her Morning Prayer time to give her a heart and burden for the lost, to reveal to her how He feels about the lost people of the world. That day while she was in the mall, a rather large mall, she lost her child. Her heart immediately began pound as she frantically searched for her child, her mind was filled with the thoughts that her child was kidnapped, could be sold into slave labor, or a pedophile had her child. If you have a child it is easy to imagine your precious one being in this situation. The police got involved, and thankful the child had just wandered off. Later in the day the Lord spoke to her and said, that is how I feel about the lost, just as you did, all I want is to get them back in my arms so that I might hold them. My heart breaks for them. God is not a distant God, He is a God that is intimately involved in every detail of your life, and He can't stop thinking about you, and if you are anywhere outside of His arms His heart breaks and longs to have you in His arms. Just as in the Days of Noah His Spirit is moving and calling out to all man, come into the Ark (My Only Begotten Son) and come home to Me.

One Taken – the Other Left

(Matthew 24:40 NKJV) "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

(Matthew 24:41 NKJV) "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

(Matthew 24:42 NKJV) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

Controversial Passage / V39 – airo / V40-41 – paralombano /

This is a controversial passage. Many say Jesus is speaking of the judgment that will take place when He comes back to rule and reign in Jerusalem. That very well may be correct. However, the word used here in the Greek for the word translated "took" in verse 39 is airo. But in verses 40 and 41, the word translated "taken" is paralombano. Why? Looking through my concordance, I find three other times paralombano is used. In Matthew 1:20, the angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his bride: In Matthew 17:1, Jesus took Peter, James, and John with Him up the Mount of Transfiguration. In John 14:3, Jesus said, "I will come again and take you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." And I begin to see a pattern. Using paralombano, Jesus is not talking about judgment, punishment, and damnation. He's talking about a bride, glory, and Heaven. In other words, He's talking about the Rapture.

Matthew 1:20 (NKJV) ²⁰But 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.

Matthew 17:1 (NKJV) ¹Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves;

John 14:3 (NKJV) ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

Your Lord – Not the Lord

I think this is true also because, verse 42 says (you do not know what hour your Lord – not the Lord, is coming); He is taking to believers (and reminder the context is for the believers to be ready).

Master watching the House

(Matthew 24:43 NKJV) "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

(Matthew 24:44 NKJV) "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

If you knew the Hour / Say Tomorrow – What would you Do?

Verse 44 - at an hour you do not expect. - If you knew the Rapture was tomorrow, what would you do today with that knowledge? Would you eat at Ruth Chris Steakhouse after church? Would you run up your charge card? Maybe, but more so, would you call that someone and ask for forgiveness for the way your relationship has been between you over the last few years. Would you make sure your kids knew Christ? Would you call your spouse and say you know we really haven't been living the way we said we would live for Christ when we got saved. Would you call that friend, that family member, and see that they were ready? These things (barring the credit card thing) are the things we should be doing daily, for that is the point Jesus is making here, that the homeowner would be ready for the thief, and we should be ready for His coming.

In that Hour **(24:37 – 25:13)**

Studying Olivet's Discourse – Given from Location

We are studying what is known as the Olivet's Discourse and the naming is derived from where Jesus gives this series of teaching, it is there upon the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem.

Initiated by 3 Questions

The teaching was initiated by the disciples asking Jesus the following 3 questions concerning the End Times:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Last Study – Second Coming / Application to Hearer - Matthew 24 Breakdown

We ended our last study with Jesus speaking on His Second Coming, and how it will be at the end of the 7 year Tribulation Period, and how that when He comes again to this world there will be no mistaking it, He said it will be a clear as lightening in the sky and no one needs to be confused or deceived of who is the true Christ, for at this time there will be many false prophets trying to point the people to a false-Christ. Well that warning is for those people who miss the raptured because they didn't take the word of God serious enough to search out who Jesus Christ is, and their need to know Him now in a personal and intimate way. But, as every Bible Study should have, Jesus gives the readers personal application on how to personally apply to their lives these words He is speaking. In chapter 24 He gives application to us that we should not be:

- **Do not be deceived (24:4-11)** - people will make great claims and promises, claim to have some better way than Jesus Christ, but we are not to be deceived.
- **Do not be discouraged (24:6)** - there will be political and natural disasters growing in frequency, but we are not to get discouraged as we see them.
- **Do not be defeated (24:13)** - we are called to endure to the end, no matter how hard life may get, we are to endure to the end and we shall be saved.
- **Do not be doubtful (24:35)** – religious leaders will come and go, stand and fall, but the Word of God will not change, nor will it fail or fall. We are to believe it, obey it, live it, hold on to it no matter what others may say or do.
- **Do not be distracted (24:42)** – we are to remain watchful for the Lord's imminent return, we are to remind ourselves and live in such a way the Lord may return at any time. We are not to let our heart think that His return is delayed, for we then would begin to live contrary to the Word of God, and lose our salt and light in this dark world. We are to keep watching and keep working.

Prophecy Fascinating – Motivating / Early Church – Upside Down / Signs Then – Signs Now

Matthew 24 and 25 are some of the richest chapters in all the Bible on prophecy, but again remember the purpose of prophecy isn't just to be fascinating (as fascinating as it is), but it is to motivate us into a response and action. Can I ask you this, why did the early church turn the world upside down, and not any church period since then? We may immediately saw it is because they saw Jesus, but the Word of God doesn't agree with that theology, the Word says we are to walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7); but in all actuality there was only several hundred people that had actually see the risen Lord, everyone else had to believe by faith. So really if you get down it, and talk of the seeing thing, as we have studied over the last few weeks, we have more signs then they did! We can see the rebirth of Israel, we see the revived Roman Empire (the new European Union), we see the Days of Noah as no other generation since Noah (population explosion, strange sexual behaviors, earth filled with violence), we see the highest amount of wars, famines, pestilence, and earthquakes than any generation that has ever lived, and the are all the signs that Jesus said you will see leading up to my return. We see more signs than the early church did, yet it was the early church that turned the world upside down.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV) ⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Acts 17:6 (NKJV) ⁶But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."

Turned World – Believed they Interrupted / Interrupted – Insider Info – Faithful – Lamps w/Oil

Proportionally I do not believe there were more believers back then as compared to today. I suggest to you that the reason they turned the world upside down (or better said – right-side up) was because they truly believed and applied the application Jesus gives in our study today, that Jesus could return at any moment, they believed and understood these (4 stories each ending with the exhortation to be ready when that "hour comes" – hence the title of this message, "In that Hour". Jesus said there will be a generation that will be interrupted (as in the Days of Noah) and those believers really believed it would be theirs. Jesus gives insider information (these signs) and those hearers applied it to their life and they lived in a state of continual expectation that Jesus was returning at any given moment. Rather than being an unfaithful and evil servant who was drawn to brutality and carnality, they like the faithful servant in today's study were busy tending to the Father's household. I believe it was the belief that Jesus could come back at any given moment that fueled those believers to turn the world upside down, they had their lamps filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit, and they burned brightly, and the whole world was turned upside down.

The Hour will Come, and we find that:

- Some Generation will be Interrupted (the story of the Days of Noah).
- Some people will respond to Insider Information and be ready! (the master watching his house).
- Some will be found Faithful, some will be found Bad (the contrast of the 2 Servants)
- For all, it comes down to 1 Door (the story of the 10 Maidens).

The Hour will come and - Some Generation will be Interrupted (the story of the Days of Noah).

One Taken – the Other Left

(Matthew 24:37 NKJV) "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

(Matthew 24:38 NKJV) "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

(Matthew 24:39 NKJV) "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

(Matthew 24:40 NKJV) "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

(Matthew 24:41 NKJV) "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

(Matthew 24:42 NKJV) "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

As Noah – Some Generation Interrupted / School – Wedding - Home

Just as in the Days of Noah, some generation will be interrupted. The rapture will come at a moment no one knows, and that generation will be interrupted. Someone will be in college, someone will be in high school, there will be someone at the altar, someone driving to their honeymoon, someone will be building a home, someone will be in a retirement home, but there will be a generation that will be interrupted.

Many Christians Say – After I / Early Church expected to be Interrupted / I've seen Enough

Many a times I have heard Christians say "I hope the Lord returns" after I get married, or after I have a child, or after my children grow up, or after my ministry grows, or after something, but not right now. I believe the early church expected to be interrupted, therefore they lived in such a way that they were planning on being interrupted so I best live in such a way. As for me, I hope and pray we are interrupted; I've prayed enough times with people or their families with cancer. I've seen enough of what split families can do to our kids. My heart has broken enough times as I watch a youth lose their purity, I've seen enough of the fall to know it is fallen (empty and vain) and I am ready to get my family home, home as to be with the Lord. I have no goals on this earth, except to escape it with my loved ones.

The Hour will come, and - Some people will respond to Insider Information and be ready! (the master watching his house).

Master watching the House

(Matthew 24:43 NKJV) "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.

(Matthew 24:44 NKJV) "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Some Totally Ready – Based Insider Info / See Signs – Powerfully Prepared

When that hour comes, there will be some who are totally ready based on this insider information they have received. They heard Jesus loud and clear saying here are the signs of My soon return, when you see them, know My return is near. So there will be those people who see the signs, and respond powerfully preparing themselves, and trying to grab others along the way.

If Witnessing - Grab 2 by Collar

If you are witnessing when the rapture happens grab 2 sinners by the collar and on the way up ask them if they believe or do I let go.

The One in the know – Told Us Insider Info / Buy MSC Stock – Zero Risk / 5 D's

We have received insider information; the One in the know has told when it is going to happen. If you had today's information just 15 years ago, tell me how much stock would have bought in that little company called Microsoft 15 years ago. Based on today's information then you could have invested every last penny you had to your name, and still call it a zero risk investment. We have been given all this insider information and we need not be:

- **Do not be deceived (24:4-11)** - people will make great claims and promises, claim to have some better way than Jesus Christ, but we are not to be deceived.
- **Do not be discouraged (24:6)** - there will be political and natural disasters growing in frequency, but we are not to get discouraged as we see them.
- **Do not be defeated (24:13)** - we are called to endure to the end, no matter how hard life may get, we are to endure to the end and we shall be saved. Don't worry about holding on for tomorrow, just hold on, get through today, and you can deal with tomorrow when it comes.
- **Do not be doubtful (24:35)** – religious leaders will come and go, stand and fall, but the Word of God will not change, nor will it fail or fall. We are to believe it, obey it, live it, hold on to it no matter what others may say or do.
- **Do not be distracted (24:42)** – we are to remain watchful for the Lord's imminent return, we are to remind ourselves and live in such a way the Lord may return at any time. We are not to let our heart think that His return is delayed, for we then would begin to live contrary to the Word of God, and lose our salt and light in this dark world. We are to keep watching and keep working.

The Hour will come, and - Some will be found Faithful, some will be found Bad (the contrast of the 2 Servants)

The Faithful Servant – The Evil Servant

(Matthew 24:45 NKJV) "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?"

(Matthew 24:46 NKJV) "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

(Matthew 24:47 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

(Matthew 24:48 NKJV) "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'

(Matthew 24:49 NKJV) "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,

**(Matthew 24:50 NKJV) "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,
(Matthew 24:51 NKJV) "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Rapture Theology / Pre or Post can't say any Moment / Reality saying Lord Delays – Bad Comp

First let us apply some doctrine and theology here in terms of when the rapture happens, as some say it could happen right now, others say no it is at the Mid-Tribulation point, others say at the end of the Tribulation period. As for when the Rapture happens, a person who believes Mid-Tribulation Rapture, a Post-Tribulation Rapture cannot say that Jesus could come at any moment for they believe certain things have to happen before He can, in reality they are really saying my Master is delaying His coming because these certain things have to happen before He comes, and that puts them in some bad company. God wants us to live in such a way that we believe He could come at any moment, and because He can, we will live accordingly.

Hope Produces Purity / Only no Compromise – Can Say Come

1 John 3 – those who have this hope will live a life of purity (holiness before a holy God). Only those people who are living their life without compromise can say come quickly Lord Jesus. If you are living in compromise (sexual sin, mistreating others, drunkenness), and you can say come quickly Lord Jesus while you live in compromise, I would be concerned if I was you.

1 John 3:2 - 3 (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. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

2 Servants Comparison – No Grey Area

Two servants in this story, a faithful and wise servant, compared to an evil servant. There is no in between, and so will it be in our next story about the 10 maidens. Jesus gives no middle ground, and I believe that is a call on how to live as Believers.

The Faithful Servant

(Matthew 24:45 NKJV) "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?

(Matthew 24:46 NKJV) "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing.

(Matthew 24:47 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods.

45-47, Jesus' Definition of Faithful & Wise

In verses 45-47, Jesus defines the definition of what He considers a faithful and wise person, and that is simply that they are busy doing the Master's business. What all does that entail doing, well here it is, 31,102 verses layout for us.

Household = Therapy / Acts Early Church / Imagine if we Considered This / Video

I do find it interesting here that the word here for household is "therapy" and I can get a better understanding of what my Master wants me to be, for us to be, and that is that we are all called to be someone's therapy, healing, and special touch. As with the early church which turned the world upside down, we see that every man was concerned about the other mans well-being, it is that kind of living that turns worlds upside down. When people are living lives being someone's therapy; I am not talking the lay on the couch therapy, but the medicinal ointment kind; rub this therapy on your burn and let it bring relief, enjoy the warm drink and let soothe you aching body, put this ice on your bruise and let the swelling go down. Imagine if we would approach everyone in our lives, everyone that stands before us today, and we consider ourselves therapy to be applied to bring them comfort and relief from the pains of the world. Married couples, imagine you doing that to your wife, and she to yours, wow what a marriage. Imagine looking at the young girl behind the cash register at 7/11, what words can I say to comfort her today, or will a smile and a thank you do.

Acts 4:32 (NKJV) ³²Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.

[The Evil Servant](#)

(Matthew 24:48 NKJV) "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,'

(Matthew 24:49 NKJV) "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards,

(Matthew 24:50 NKJV) "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of,

(Matthew 24:51 NKJV) "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Evil – Kakos / Instrument out of Tune – Fruit gone Bad / How go Bad – Said Master Delayed

Verses 48-51 Jesus speaks of the contrasting servant, the evil servant. The word “evil” here is interesting, it is “*kakos*” in Greek, it means “something that was once good but has gone bad.” It’s a word used to describe an instrument out of tune or a piece of fruit gone bad. How did this servant go bad? He simply tired of waiting for his master’s return. His sense of urgency and expectancy was replaced with brutality and carnality. Some try to debate and reason out if the evil servant is saved, and it is once saved always saved, as always I say I do not know about once saved always saved, but I do know this, in this passage this person is not saved nor are they going to heaven, for in expositional constancy (can’t make it mean something in one place, and another in another, must stay consistent), weeping and gnashing of teeth isn’t heaven, it is a reference to hell:

Matthew 13:47 - 50 (KJV) ⁴⁷Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: ⁴⁸Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. ⁴⁹So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Can Tell if Falling into Evil Servant Mentality – Beat up People / Talk Differently – Put Down

First, brutality – Verse 49 - and begins to beat his fellow servants. You can tell when you are falling into the “evil servant” mentality when you begin to “smite your fellow servants,” when you begin to beat up on people verbally and treat them unkindly. You see, if I am truly looking for the Lord’s coming today, it will affect how I treat every person with whom I come in contact. I will treat my wife differently if I believe Jesus is coming back within the hour. I’ll talk to the guys at work differently if I believe Jesus will show up there any moment. You won’t push people around; you won’t put people down; you won’t beat people up if you believe Jesus is coming back soon.

Goes to Carnality / 1/3 Bible Prophecy – Can’t Over-Emphasize / 1 John 3- Purity

Second, carnality – Verse 49 - and to eat and drink with the drunkards. The evil servant began to “eat and drink with the drunken.” That’s why almost one-third of the Bible deals with prophecy and why prophecy can never be over-emphasized. Speaking of the coming of Jesus, the apostle John said, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself” (1 John 3:3a). Truly, I am blessed as I look at our church and see the process of purification taking place in so many of you. The Lord is changing the congregation there. Why? Because they are looking for His coming. They may have had setbacks. They might yet have struggles. But year after year, we who are looking for His coming find ourselves saying, “Lord, I want to be ready. I want to put away those things with which I once flirted. I want to keep looking for You.”

1 John 3:2 - 3 (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. ³And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Matthew 25

The Hour will come, and - For all, it comes down to 1 Door (the story of the 10 Maidens).

[Parable of 10 Virgins \(25:1-13\)](#)

(Matthew 25:1 NKJV) "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

(Matthew 25:2 NKJV) "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
 (Matthew 25:3 NKJV) "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,
 (Matthew 25:4 NKJV) "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
 (Matthew 25:5 NKJV) "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.
 (Matthew 25:6 NKJV) "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'
 (Matthew 25:7 NKJV) "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
 (Matthew 25:8 NKJV) "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
 (Matthew 25:9 NKJV) "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'
 (Matthew 25:10 NKJV) "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.
 (Matthew 25:11 NKJV) "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'
 (Matthew 25:12 NKJV) "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'
 (Matthew 25:13 NKJV) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Weddings in Jesus Day / Day Known – Hour Not

In Jesus' day, although the day of a wedding was known in a community, the exact hour was unknown. The bridegroom could show up at his bride's house any time during the day or night. He could come in the morning, at noon, even at midnight, but most usually in the evening right after sunset. But as soon as he arrived at the house of the bride, word passed quickly that the bridegroom had come and the marriage was about to begin. The community would then accompany the bride and the bridegroom as they made their way to the ceremony.

5 and 5 / Some ready – Some Not / Oil symbol of Holy Spirit

In this parable, there were ten maidens. But of the ten maidens, only five had oil for their lamps. And when the bridegroom came at midnight, the other five were left out of the procession. What is Jesus saying? He's saying that when He, the Bridegroom, comes for His bride at an unknown hour, some will be ready to join the procession but others will not because they lack oil in their lamps. Scripturally, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, very specifically illustrated in Zechariah 4:6. Thus, those not born of the Spirit will be left behind.

Zechariah 4:1 - 6 (NKJV) ¹Now the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. ²And he said to me, "What do you see?" So I said, "I am looking, and there is a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, and on the stand seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. ³Two olive trees are by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." ⁴So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What are these, my lord?" ⁵Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?" And I said, "No, my lord." ⁶So 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.

From Surface – Can't Tell Difference / From Outside each had Gown & Lamps / Only Oil on Inside

Notice that from the surface we can't tell the difference between these two groups of five. It appears they all looked like a bridesmaid would look, everyone who looked recognized they were bridesmaids, they each had their own lamps, the only discriminating factor between them was the oil, 5 had it, 5 didn't. But from the outside view, no one could tell who had the oil and who didn't.

The Church Today – Bibles, Bumper, Tshirts, Cd's – All Same / No Oil on Inside /

How that is in the church, how many people look the same in the church; people carrying their bibles, Christian bumper-stickers, all 15 of the WOW Cd's, a closet full of Christian T-shirts, everyone looking the same from the outside, for it is impossible to look inside the vessel and see if the Holy Spirit is living within that person. Jesus says unless a man be born-again he can not enter the kingdom of God.

John 3:3 (NKJV) ³Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Every Person – Should Know a Moment

Every person in this room should be able to put their finger on a time that they understood that Jesus was the Savior and they needed a Savior. Yes there are those who received Jesus at a young age of 3 or 4

as they were raised in godly homes and all their lives they lived it out. But I mean that every person should remember a moment (even if you don't remember the date) that you were fully conscience that you gave your life to Jesus. Not started to go to church, but knew that you were saved.

(Matthew 25:7 NKJV) "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

(Matthew 25:8 NKJV) "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

(Matthew 25:9 NKJV) "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

All had Wicks – Only half had Oil / Wicks will burn without Oil – Just very Short / Sower and Seed

They all had wicks, but only half had the oil necessary to have the lamp burn and produce light. The wick will burn for a time, but it will only be a short time without the oil. Reminds me of the parable of the sower and the seed, how some seed springs up quickly and seems to grow so wonderfully, but when the heat of the day comes they quickly whither away. How we see that in the church today, people hearing the Bridegroom is coming, they fire up the wick, but only burn a short while and they fade away or flame out.

Matthew 13:3 - 9 (NKJV) ³Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: ⁴"Behold, a sower went out to sow. ⁵And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. ⁶Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. ⁷But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. ⁸And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. ⁹But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ¹⁰He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Want to Waste Evening Debate Once Saved Always / Verse 12 – I Don't Know You

If you ever want to waste an evening, get together and try to figure out if these 5 virgins were ever saved, and if they are once saved always saved, or did they (and can a person) give up their salvation. I won't be able to make it because I can just tell you I don't know the answers to those questions. I do know this, these 5 maidens with no oil are not saved, for Jesus says to them, "I do not know you", so end of argument. For those He knows, He says that He does and that they hear His voice.

(Matthew 25:12 NKJV) "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

John 10:3 - 4 (NKJV) ³To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

Give us Oil – Not Selfish but Honest / Man can only give Light – not Oil / Can't Buy – Receive It

These maiden in this story say give us some of your oil, but the others respond by saying we can't. They aren't being selfish, they are being honest. Men can only give light, they can't give oil, the oil has to come from God, the Holy Spirit, the 3rd Person of the Trinity. It says run and buy some for yourself, hey this is just a parable, you cannot buy it, you can only receive it, for the purchase price has already been bought and purchased by and with the Blood of Jesus Christ.

If Rapture – Some of You Left / You Hanging out Wedding Party – but no Oil / Pray Counted Worth

If the Rapture occurred tonight, I fear some of you would still be sitting here while the rest of us went up. Yes, you've been hanging out with the wedding party—but there's no oil in your vessel. We must realize that many who think they are going up in the wedding party will be left behind for lack of oil. I believe the heartbeat of Jesus revealed in this parable is one which should sober every person. In Luke 21:36, Jesus said, "Pray that you might be found worthy to be kept from the hour of tribulation"—the implication being that some who mistakenly thought they were part of the procession will go through that terrible time of tribulation.

Luke 21:34 - 36 (NKJV) ³⁴"But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. ³⁵For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

(Matthew 25:10 NKJV) "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

(Matthew 25:11 NKJV) "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'

(Matthew 25:12 NKJV) "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

(Matthew 25:13 NKJV) "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Door will be Shut / Pray you hear the Slamming Door / (Slam the Door)

The door will be shut, just as God shut the door of the ark, and all the pounding couldn't open that door. I pray if you do not know Jesus Christ today that you can hear the slamming of the door, and it shocks you out of your slumber, out of you sleep.

Genesis 7:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

Satan's plan for Eternal Damnation / No God – No Hell – No Hurry

The story is told of a meeting Satan held with his demons, trying to figure out how to trick people into eternal damnation...

One demon said, "I've got a plan. Let's whisper in people's ears that there is no God." "No," Satan said, "creation declares the reality of God. People are too smart to deny His existence. A few idiots might be sucked in, but not the masses." "I've got it," a second demon said. "We'll say there's no hell." "No," said Satan. "People innately understand the need for retribution and judgment. People won't buy that." A third demon said, "Let me suggest how we might trick them. Instead of saying 'No God' or 'No Hell,' we'll just say 'No Hurry.'" "That's it!" Satan said gleefully. And he commissioned his demons to go throughout the world whispering, "No hurry."

Many Lost Sense Urgency / Give Diligence make Call Sure

Many have lost their sense of urgency. But the cry will soon go forth: behold the bridegroom cometh! Brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10). Don't miss the party, the whole heart of this passage taught by Jesus is the believer will be ready and living according, and those who are just going through the motions of church will truly and deeply examine themselves to know whether they are saved (filled with oil), or have just been going through the motions, hanging out with the wedding party but will not make it into the wedding celebration with the Lord.

2 Peter 1:10 - 14 (NKJV) ¹⁰Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; ¹¹for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ¹²For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. ¹³Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, ¹⁴knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me.

Early Church turned World Upside Down

Why did the early church turn the world upside down, live radically and in purity for Jesus Christ:

The Hour will Come, and we find that:

- Some Generation will be Interrupted (the story of the Days of Noah).
- Some people will respond to Insider Information and be ready! (the master watching his house).
- Some will be found Faithful, some will be found Bad (the contrast of the 2 Servants)
- For all, it comes down to 1 Door (the story of the 10 Maidens).

The End of the Age

Matthew 25:14-46

Studying Olivet's Discourse – Given from Location

We are studying what is known as the Olivet's Discourse and the naming is derived from where Jesus gives this series of teaching, it is there upon the Mount of Olives which overlooks Jerusalem.

Initiated by 3 Questions

The teaching was initiated by the disciples asking Jesus the following 3 questions concerning the End Times:

- When will these things be (Tribulation) – 24:4-22
- What will be the signs of Your Coming (2nd Coming) – 24:23 – 25:30
- What happens at the End of the Age – 25:31-46

(Matthew 24:3 NKJV) Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

End 24 – Be Ready / Chp 25 – What do while Waiting

We ended our last study with Jesus giving us an exhortation to be ready, to remain watchful, to be actively waiting for His imminent return. Chapter 25 when we look at it in a whole, gives us an outline of what we should be doing while we wait, we need to be busy about our:

- Personal Salvation (Story of the 10 Virgins – 25:1-13)
- Responsible Stewardship (Story of the Talents – 25:14-30)
- Practical Servanthood (Story of the Sheep and Goats – 25:31-46)

Personal Salvation (Story of the 10 Virgins – 25:1-13)

Only 1 Door / No one Knows the Day – Be Ready Today / Door will Close

We cover this story in our last study, and we saw that there is only one door, one way to heaven, and that is through Jesus Christ, and that the Lord says that no man knows when they will stand before God, therefore today is the day to make sure that they have a personal relationship with Him, for as in the Days of Noah, when the door is closed, no man will have a second chance.

Matthew 25:1 - 13 (NKJV) ¹"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' ⁷Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' ¹²But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Responsible Stewardship (Story of the Talents – 25:14-30)

End of be Ready – Beginning of Ages / Serving Today – Roles in Millennial / Perfect Envirn

Now we come to the story of the talents. This passage of Scripture (as with the passage on the 10 virgins) can be part of the application to be ready, or it can be the beginning of the last question, what happens at the end of the age. I think it is both. The parable of the talent speaks of working while we wait, never knowing when our Master returns thus the need to be serving Him faithfully everyday with the gifting and calling He has put upon us. Along with that, it is the service we give unto the Lord in response to the call He has put upon, that will determine our role in the Millennial Kingdom, that thousand year period where the earth is under the theocracy of God, and the earth is in a perfect state with no wars, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, evil, or violence. It will be a period spoken of in Isaiah (chapter 65) where the lion will lay down with the lamb, where children can play in the streets and not be in fear of evil coming against or upon them. It will be a perfect environment:

Isaiah 65:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, The lion shall eat straw like the ox, And dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," Says the LORD.

History of World

Here is the high level outline flow of the history of the world:

- God creates the heavens and earth.
- The Fall of Man (Adam in the Garden)
- The Law (Man keeping the Law perfectly)
- The Cross (Jesus fulfilling the Law perfectly)
- The Dispensation of Grace
- The Rapture
- The 7 year Tribulation Period
- The Millennial Kingdom
- The New Heaven and Earth

We will Rule with Him / Role based on Today / Serve Him – Serve with Him

So we will rule and reign with Jesus for this 1,000 year period; and again what our role and responsibility will be during this time will be based on how we served with Him today. Once a person commits their life to Christ we often say we serve Him, and that is true, but what is equally true is that we also serve with Him as we join in with the work He is presently doing in the world around us.

(Revelation 20:4 NKJV) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Talents given to Reflect Him – To become His Hands and Feet

God gives us talents and abilities today, and He expects us to use them for His glory, to reflect Him in us, as we become His hands and feet:

Matthew 5:14 - 16 (NKJV) ¹⁴You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Nor 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. ¹⁶Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Parable of the Talents (Well done good and faithful Servant) (25:14-30)

(Matthew 25:14 NKJV) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

(Matthew 25:15 NKJV) "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

Word Picture – Jesus prepares Place – We serve on Earth / Business no Different Then/Today

So the word picture is obvious to us, the man traveling to a far country is Jesus (as He goes and prepares a place for us), and the servants are the people of this earth. In those days it is no different than these days, business owners would go on business travel and entrust their workers to keep the business going and profitable. I work for a company that has 135,000 employees, and only one of them is the President. He has never come to my desk personally, however he does expect me to perform and execute to what he hired me to do, and he expects me to bring the company a profit.

Talent – Measure of Weight / Value dependant on Material

A talent is a measure of weight and depending on what it was made of would determine its value. If it was measure of gold, it would be worth more than a measure of silver, which was worth more than a measure of bronze.

Please Note - Given each According to Abilities / Less not Expected of More / Nor More - Less

Also we need to note that God gives to each one according to his abilities. God doesn't expect the man with less talents to perform the same as the person with more talents, and equally as important is that God doesn't expect the person with more talents to perform at the same level as the person with less talents. He expects every man to perform at the gifting and talents that He has given. Please note here that every man had at least one talent. There are many people who say I have no talents therefore I don't do anything for the Lord, and for anyone that does say that they are clearly in contradiction to the word of God.

All at Least 1 Talent / Music or Preach – No Talent / Change Diaper – Listen - Feed

The person who realizes he has a great musical gift will more often than not develop his gift and seek to use it. But the person who says, "I can't sing. I can't preach. I can't do miracles," often buries his one talent, whatever it might be. Precious people, we all have been given at least one talent. "Not me," you say. "I have no talents and no abilities. I can't do anything." Can you change a diaper? Sign up to help in the nursery. Can you listen? Call on people at the rest home. Can you feed a child? Spend an hour up at the Feeding Center. You can do so much. The problem is, the one-talent person has a tendency to bury it. Here, Jesus is telling us that we will give an account for that which has been entrusted to us. If you are one who doesn't think you have been given much, you are one who needs to be especially careful that you don't bury that which you do have.

Just a Mother - G. Campbell Morgan

How about the mother who says, "I am just a mother"; the preacher G. Campbell Morgan had four sons, all of whom were preachers. The youngest son, Howard, considered a fine preacher, once took his father's place on this side of the Atlantic while Dr. Morgan preached in London. Someone came into the drawing room when the family was there and, thinking to find out what Howard was made of, asked this question: "Howard, who is the greatest preacher in your family?" Without a moment's hesitation he answered, "My mother." Sometimes men and women who never stand at a pulpit preach the greatest sermons through living out the Word in their daily lives.

(Matthew 25:16 NKJV) "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

(Matthew 25:17 NKJV) "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

(Matthew 25:18 NKJV) "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

(Matthew 25:19 NKJV) "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

Business Principles still the Same / Earned Value / Give 100 – Expect 100 Widgets / Profit

Now business principles have not changed in the 6,000 years of business. The business principles spoken of here are the same ones still applied today, we just give them fancier names. The principle spoken of here is what we call today "Earned Value". The principle is simply I give you a certain amount of money, and I expect a certain amount of return on that money. So if I give you 100 dollars, I expect at least 100 dollars of work in return, if not more for in business it is all about the profit. I give you 100 dollars to make me 100 dollars worth of widgets, which in turn the business owner will sell for 110 dollars and make his 10% profit.

Formula – Work = Resources X Duration / Resources = Laborer/Equipment/Money / Dur = Time

The formula for determining how much work needs to get done is: $Work = Resources \times Duration$.

Resources break into three categories, "labor" which are people, secondly "equipment" which are anything from forklifts to computers, whatever is need to get the job done, and then thirdly "money" as money may be needed to pay for a permit, and building inspector, lease a building to work in. Then you take all three of those and you multiple them by the amount of time (duration) that you need them. After you add all that up, you come up with the amount of work that needs to get done.

Our Service is to Include All Them / Not Money Talk - Easier write Check

Maybe you followed all that through, maybe not, but here is the point I make, the work we do as we serve the Lord and serve with the Lord includes all those elements, we are to be giving of our self (we are the labor), we are to give of our possessions (equipment) (can you use your car to take someone to church or a doctors visit, can you share a meal with someone), we are to give of our money, and lastly we are to give of our time (duration. Now for some people they say oh boy here is a talk on getting money, we as the word says, God came for you, not your stuff (2 Cor 12:14), but equally I find that many people would rather just write the check and leave it at that. Work is resource times duration, the Lord is looking at what we do not just with our money, but our time, energy, and possessions.

2 Corinthians 12:14 - 15 (NKJV) ¹⁴Now 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. ¹⁵And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

Peter Marshall – Tithing

On that subject of giving though, I reminded D. James Kennedy tells a story of a man who came to Peter Marshall, former chaplain of the United States Senate, with a concern about tithing. He said: "I have a problem. I have been tithing for some time. It wasn't too bad when I was making \$20,000 a year (please don't ask me if the is net or gross). I could afford to give the \$2,000. But you see, now I am making \$500,000, and there is just no way I can afford to give away \$50,000 a year." Dr. Marshall reflected on this wealthy man's dilemma but gave no advice. He simply said: "Yes, sir. I see that you do have a problem. I think we ought to pray about it. Is that alright?" The man agreed, so Dr. Marshall bowed his head and prayed with boldness and authority. "Dear Lord, this man has a problem, and I pray that you will help him. Lord, reduce his salary back to the place where he can afford to tithe." You see, the Lord gives us our talents, all that we have is from Him.

Luke 6:38 (NKJV) ³⁸*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."*

(Matthew 25:20 NKJV) "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

(Matthew 25:21 NKJV) "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

(Matthew 25:22 NKJV) "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'

(Matthew 25:23 NKJV) "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Answering 3rd Question / We Reign in Millennial Kingdom – Rev 20:4

Verse 21 & 23 - I will make you ruler over many things – Again Jesus is answering the third question, tell us about the end of the age. He is talking the Millennial Kingdom, because we know that is the only time that we will reign with Him:

(Revelation 20:4 NKJV) And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

Return 100% - Measuring by Efficiency not Quantity

Notice this math here, the man with 5 talents made 5 talents, his return was 100%. The man with 2 talents made 2 talents, his return was 100%. God isn't measuring man by the quantity of his return, but the efficiency. What I gave you, you used fully, you didn't leave any on the table unused and wasted, you fully used what I gave you.

Glad He said Faithful and not Successful / We use "ALL" our Talents – God take care of Results

How thankful I am that he said "well done thy good and faithful servant", not "thy good and successful". I need not stress myself out with results, but I can just take the gifts and talents he has given me, use "all" of them, and leave the results to God.

Live in World Gauges Success by Quantity / Pastor to Pastor – Freeing / First Mission Trip

We live in a world that gauges success by quantity. The more you have the more successful you are. It is a sad fact, but the majority of the pastors don't return my phone calls or emails, because I pastor a church that doesn't meet the numeric value for success. I have just learned to not waste my time trying to reach them. But I have come to a freeing place of living for faithfulness, and I am not a slave to the pressures of having to be successful, as many of them now are. May you not be under that burden or pressure of man's definition of success, you just serve faithfully wherever God has called you to serve. I am reminded of my first mission trip to Russia, it was glorious, and my heart longs to return to Russia. But little did I know my trip was determined nearly 50 years earlier. Before I got to Russia the Russian Orthodox Church had started a movement to oust all the evangelical churches and missionaries, stirring it up with the Russia government that these 'new' evangelicals are a threat to the Russian government. They were able to convince the government to pass a law that said any church that couldn't prove its

existence of 50 years or longer had to close-up and throw-out all its missionaries. Well Calvary Chapels only had a history of 30 years in the USA let alone 50 in Russia. But God was working long before that, as the Calvary Chapels were working with another evangelical church in Russia whose Pastor was Russian. Now that Pastor's fellowship was only 10 years old, so they were at the threat of having to close also, but again God had gone on way ahead of them. You see this Pastor in Russia grew up in a believing family; he father and grandfather were believers in the days of the communist darkness. So dark were those days that evangelicals were thrown in prison, and his father and grandfather were for their faith in Christ as the KGB (Russian Secret Police) spied on them as they shared their faith. What Satan meant for evil, God worked for good, in that because these men had written documentation from the KGB of their arrest for having a house church, they were able to prove that the church existed 50 years. It was under that church that the Calvary Chapels were able to come under, along with over 1,400 other evangelical churches. It is amazing to think of these 2 men suffering in a Russian gulag (prison) probably thinking their lives were not producing any fruit, feeling maybe even like failures, not knowing that all those years later that it was their suffering that saved all those churches from being closed.

Easy to get Wrapped up in Numbers / Faithful – not Successful / Let's take care of Faithful Part

I think it easy for us to get wrapped up in the American numbering for success, I see it in the churches, but God says well done thy good and faithful, not successful, so let us just be taking care of the faithful part for that is in our control, and leave the successful part up to the Lord, for how man responds in not up to us.

(Matthew 25:24 NKJV) "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

(Matthew 25:25 NKJV) 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

(Matthew 25:26 NKJV) "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

(Matthew 25:27 NKJV) 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

(Matthew 25:28 NKJV) 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

(Matthew 25:29 NKJV) 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

(Matthew 25:30 NKJV) 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Excuses offered on Basis of Misconception / You are hard – My Yoke is Easy / Call is Equipping

These were excuses that he was offering but offering on the basis of a misconception. I know you're a hard man. You're a hard taskmaster. You're a demanding master. Jesus said, "My yoke is easy." He didn't say I'm hard, He said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light." There are many people who shy away from serving the Lord because they fear that He is hard, that He is a driver. But God will never call you to do anything but what He doesn't equip you to do it, and enable you to do it.

Matthew 11:28 - 30 (NKJV) ²⁸*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* ²⁹*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.* ³⁰*For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

Dishonest to Reap where not Sown / If believed his Excuse – would have been Motivated by Fear

Along with that false conceptions is also that it would be totally dishonest to reap where you have not sown. He accuses the Lord of that. But the Lord is not dishonest. He gives his conception of the Lord, uses that for the basis of his excuse for having done nothing. I was afraid and therefore, I hid the talent in the earth. And here it is intact. Truly is the man really believed his excuse, he would not have hid the talent, but went and made sure that he brought in a return because he would not have wanted to stand before a harsh master without doing what was required of Him. The same is true today, as people say I can't follow Him, He is a mean God, He allows these wars, He is unjust as He allows people to suffer; they say He is a harsh God, but if they truly believed that excuse, then out of fear they would follow Him because they would know that His judgment would be coming upon them. They don't follow because

they want to do their own thing, they refuse to bow their knee to anyone, and refuse to turn from their sin of pride:

John 3:19 - 21 (NKJV) ¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. ²¹But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Verse 26 – Not Afraid – but Lazy

Verse 26 - But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. – Laziness, Jesus nails it. He said, I was afraid. Lord said, No you're lazy. Wicked because of your concept of the Lord, but lazy and it is the laziness that kept you from doing anything with what I entrusted to you.

Another Application / Everyone given Measure of Faith – Capacity to Believe / Expositional Const

I see another application in this account of the man with one talent, and that is the acceptance of the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. In the Book of Romans it says that God has given everyone a measure of faith. God has given everyone a measure of faith to have the capacity to see and believe the need for a Savior. Every man is without excuse to coming to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The man with one talent at least could have given himself (and doubled the talent), but he didn't, he gives the free gift back. I believe this is the application because in expositional constancy we can't have something mean something in one place in the Bible, and another in a different place, and all through the Scriptures we see that outer darkness and weeping and gnashing of teeth is a reference to hell. So this man is not saved and has been judged to hell by his own choice.

Romans 12:3 (NKJV) ³For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

Practical Servanthood (Story of the Sheep and Goats – 25:31-46)

Next – Did to Least of These / Judging of Nation / Application – Resp Stew to Pract Servanthood

This next passage is a well known passage where Jesus says when you did to the least of these you did it unto Me. Now many teachers call this passage the "judging of the nations", (because the word nations is the word used for Gentiles) and they say at the end of the Tribulation Period, before entering into the Millennial Kingdom, God will gather all the people who survived the Tribulation Period and He will judge them based on how they treated the Nation of Israel (as Jesus calls them His brethren) during the Tribulation. I personally am not sure if the Lord is specifically talking about the Nation Israel or just people in general; we will find out on that day, but the application is very obvious for us today, and that is that God is taking the instruction on responsible stewardship and giving us how to apply it into practical servanthood. The words really speak for themselves therefore we will let them speak for themselves.

The Judging of the Nations (Separating the Sheep from the Goats) (25:31-46)

(Matthew 25:31 NKJV) "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

ACLU – Critics say / Jesus returns in Glory

Doesn't matter what the ACLU declares Him to be, or the Bible critics, or the separation of Church and State; when Jesus returns He will return in glory, and He will be glorified.

Not of Works

Before we read on let me point out that no one is saved by performing. Some will take this passage out of context for a works salvation, that isn't correct doctrine, and thus we need to keep that in our minds as we read:

Titus 3:5 - 6 (NKJV) ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Ephesians 2:8 - 9 (NKJV) ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

(Matthew 25:32 NKJV) "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats.

(Matthew 25:33 NKJV) "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Graze same Pasture – Separate Hostile Goats

Interestingly sheep and goats grazed in the same pasture, but it was necessary to separate the herds because the male goat was often hostile toward the sheep. So we can see the Lord saying I must separate you from My precious sheep because you are hostile towards them.

(Matthew 25:34 NKJV) "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

(Matthew 25:35 NKJV) 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

(Matthew 25:36 NKJV) 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

(Matthew 25:37 NKJV) "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?

(Matthew 25:38 NKJV) 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?

(Matthew 25:39 NKJV) 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

(Matthew 25:40 NKJV) "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

Everyday Chance to Have Jesus Over / Take the Opportunities / He seems so Far Away - County

Everyday of our life we have a chance to have Jesus over for dinner, to give Him coat and blanket for the cold nights, to visit Him when He is lonely. I pray you will prayerfully consider all the ministry opportunities that we have here. We have inroads to the prisons, the Feeding Ministry, the Children's Church, and foreign missions. Let those words sink deep within you today, assuredly I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. People often say I want to see more of Jesus in my life, but He seem so far and distant to me, hey you need not even leave this county.

(Matthew 25:40 NKJV) "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

(Matthew 25:41 NKJV) "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

Hell made for Devil / Man forces way into Hell

For those who think that God pre-ordained people to hell, this verse dispels that misconception. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels, not man. Truly man isn't invited to hell, man has to chose and force his or her way into hell, for man was not invited to hell, man ahs to crash the gates to get in.

(Matthew 25:42 NKJV) 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink;

(Matthew 25:43 NKJV) 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

(Matthew 25:44 NKJV) "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?'

(Matthew 25:45 NKJV) "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

(Matthew 25:46 NKJV) "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Need not leave the County

We need not even leave the county to see Him.

Closes out – The Righteous not eternal Life /

He closes out verse 46 by saying the “righteous into eternal life”. Believer know this, you will never be more righteous than the day you were saved. The finished work of Christ on the cross has given you right-standing before God, your sins are washed away and you have right standing before Him based on that, and nothing we do or don’t do can improve or take away from the finished work of Christ on the cross. We serve because we are simply responding to His great love for us, not working or earning His love and acceptance.

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

Titus 3:5 - 6 (NKJV) ⁵not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

Ephesians 2:8 - 9 (NKJV) ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Work = Resources x Duration / Work = Redeeming Man / Resource= Laborer, Equip, Cost

As I had said, work equals resources times duration; and we look at that finished work of Christ, and we see the work is perfect and complete. The work, is the redeeming of man from our sin that separates us from the Holy God. The resources involved to do that, only one laborer, God’s only one, His only begotten Son. The equipment, a cross and some nails. The cost, priceless, the precious blood of Jesus. The duration, six hours on a Friday on a hill outside of Palestine. The Work, for all those who are willing to use their allotted measure of faith – eternal life.

Based on His Work – Hardly Work / Consider Least of These is Him – no Excuses

Based on His work, it hard to consider anything that do as work when you really get down to it; and then to consider that when you do it to the least of these you have done it on to Me, that leaves us without excuse.

Abundance Life Not how long Live – How well we Live

Everybody is looking for the abundant life. The abundance of our lives is not determined by how long we live, but by how well we live.

Ralph

A university professor tells of being invited to speak at a military base one December and there meeting an unforgettable soldier named Ralph. Ralph had been sent to meet him at the airport. After they had introduced themselves, they headed toward the baggage claim. As they walked down the concourse, Ralph kept disappearing. Once to help an older woman whose suitcase had fallen open, once to lift two toddlers up to where they could see dad getting off the plane, again to give directions to someone who was lost. Each time he came back with a smile on his face. "Where did you learn that?" the professor asked. "What?" Ralph said. "Where did you learn to live like that?" "Oh," Ralph said, "during the war, I guess." He then told the professor about his tour of duty in Vietnam, how it was his job to clear mine fields, how he watched his friends blow up before his eyes, one after another. "I learned to live between steps," he said. "I never knew whether the next one would be my last, so I learned to get everything I could out of the moment between when I picked up my foot and when I put it down again. Every step I took was a whole new world, a whole new life, and I guess I've been that way ever since."

Abundance Life Not how long Live – How well we Live

The abundance of our lives is not determined by how long we live, but by how well we live. We have been given a step by step instruction for life today, let us live well while we still have this time on earth.

While we Wait

While we wait, we need to be busy about our:

- Personal Salvation (Story of the 10 Virgins – 25:1-13)
- Responsible Stewardship (Story of the Talents – 25:14-30)
- Practical Servanthood (Story of the Sheep and Goats – 25:31-46)

Matthew 26

Worshipping the King (26:1-13)

Opportunity Dominican Republic

An opportunity has come for me to go to the Dominican Republic for mission work. The thought of going is very appealing to me, and I have spent considerable time thinking and praying about it. However, I have decided not to go on the upcoming trip next month. My son Camden is 16 months old; it is a wonderful time as many of you know from having your own. He is starting to say a word and point (duckie, daddie, mommie!), but he can't communicate. He can't express himself, nor understand me. You see after much prayer I decided that I wasn't going to leave Camden until he is old enough to understand my words. That I can say I love you Camden, and I will be gone for a little while, but I am coming home to you. And while I am away, everyday Renee can tell him, daddy loves you and he is coming back to you. Camden loves me, he drops what he is doing when I get home from work and runs to me as soon as I walk in the door, and if the baby gate is in the way he screams with arms stretched wide; in the morning while I am in my study and he just wakes up, he literally kicks my door in, come toddling in with a great big smile, saying hi, hi, hi. When I am away at work when he passes the door to my study while in Renee's arms he points to the room and says, hi, hi. After much prayer I feel that I do not want to leave him until he can understand that I am coming back to him, therefore I have to wait until he is old enough to understand my words. Well Jesus has done the same, He has left us this message we have been studying the past months, this Word, His word that tells us I love, and I am coming back for you, you are precious and dear to Me. In today's passage we begin our journey through the Scriptures, non-stop to the cross. As we have studied though, Jesus never spoke of the cross without also speaking of His resurrection, and though I am leaving you, I am coming back to you, for I love you.

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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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. The title of today's message is "Worshipping the King".

(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."

It's Still Tuesday / See Map of Bethany (2miles)

It is Tuesday in the life of the King, His final week. Just 2 days earlier (on Sunday) was His Triumphant entry into Jerusalem, to the exact day as prophesied in the Book of Daniel chapter 9. Monday He cleansed the Temple, and now it is Tuesday and in 2 more days Jesus will go to the cross as the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world (and again exactly on the day and time that the Passover lamb were to be sacrificed according to the Scriptures). This day has been a long day for Jesus, earlier in the day he denounced the religious leaders for their hard and evil hearts, then He taught His second longest recorded sermon (the Olivet's Discourse – discussing the things of the end times – and that He is coming back for His loved ones) and now He is leaving the area of Jerusalem and heading to Bethany for what turns out to be very special dinner, as a woman will come anoint His body with expensive perfume.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:

Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)

Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)

Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)

11th – Monday

Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)

Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)

Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)

12th – Tuesday
Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)

13th – Wednesday
The Gospels are Silent

14th – Thursday –
Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)

15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
16th – Saturday - Sabbath
17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

Jerusalem Buzzing – Not all Loving Him

Although all of Jerusalem is in a buzz about the miracle maker, there are those who have been plotting to kill Him, and we pick up our study here.

[Passover in 2 Days](#)

(Matthew 26:1 NKJV) Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples,

(Matthew 26:2 NKJV) "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Speak of Resurrection at Passover Meal

During the Passover meal Jesus will speak of the resurrection.

Passover Commemorating Deliverance from Egypt / All Picture of Jesus the Lamb

The Passover feast was a yearly event in Jerusalem commemorating the delivery of God's people from Egypt, that final plague sent by God, that whoever would apply the blood of the lamb over the door of their home, then the angel of death would pass over it, all a picture of the day Jesus would become the final lamb, the final covering so that death would pass over all who would apply the blood over the door of their heart.

Josephus – 250,000 lambs / Brook Kidron

Josephus tells us that in Jesus' day, 256,000 lambs were slaughtered in commemoration of Passover, and he estimates the crowds in Jerusalem to be 2.7 million people in Jerusalem for this festival. Jerusalem is packed; there is a buzz and energy in the air. On the day of preparing the Passover lamb, those lambs would be slaughtered between the hours of three and five o'clock (twilight hours), so the 250,000 lambs would be slaughtered in the temple in preparation for Passover. Blood would have flowed freely from the temple into the Kidron Valley below the temple mount, causing the Kidron brook to actually turn blood-red. Later in this chapter, we will see Jesus leaving Gethsemane and crossing over this creek and no doubt that creek must have been a graphic reminder to Him of what was to come as He, the Lamb of God, would shed His own blood for our sin.

Title: *The Works of Josephus (chapter 9)*

So these high priests, upon the coming of that feast which is called the Passover, when they slay their sacrifices, from the ninth hour till the eleventh, but so that a company not less than ten (Wars-6-33) belong to every sacrifice, (for it is not lawful for them to feast singly by themselves), and many of us are twenty in a company, found the number of sacrifices was two hundred and fifty-six thousand five hundred; which, upon the allowance of no more than ten that feast together, amounts to two millions seven hundred thousand and two hundred persons that were pure and holy; for as to those that have the leprosy, or the gonorrhoea, or women that have their monthly courses, or such as are otherwise polluted, it is not lawful for them to be partakers of this sacrifice; nor indeed for any foreigners neither, who come hither to worship.

Exodus 12:6 (NKJV) ⁶Now 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.

John 18:1 (NKJV) ¹When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

Chief Priest Plot

(Matthew 26:3 NKJV) Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

(Matthew 26:4 NKJV) and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

(Matthew 26:5 NKJV) But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."

High Priest – Family Line / Became Family Business – Jesus messing up Family Business

Originally, the position of high priest was passed from father to son through the Levitical line. But when the Romans came into the area and seized control of the nation, they began appointing the high priest and he became their political puppet. Caiaphas was the son-in-law of Annas. Annas chose to remove himself from the office of high priest, allowing Caiaphas to serve in his place. This was because Annas had four other sons who were making money from temple concessions, and he didn't want to jeopardize their thriving business. Think back with me. What did Jesus do with their concession tables? He overturned them (Matthew 21:12). Consequently, Caiaphas and Annas were determined to destroy Jesus. Not only were they jealous of His widespread fame and following among the people, but they were angry that He was upsetting their money-making operation and cutting into their profit margin.

Opportunities – Missed (Pilate), Misused (Religious Leaders), Mastered (Woman and Jesus)

All through these next chapters we will see "opportunities", and what people do with the opportunity that is placed before them. Some will have an opportunity to do something great, and they will totally miss it, as Pilate will miss his opportunity to bow before the true King of kings. Others will total misuse their opportunity, as we will see with these religious leaders misusing their position to turn people against Jesus, rather than to Jesus as God had established the priesthood to do. In today's passage we will see a woman take full advantage (master) the opportunity that was before her as she anoints and worship Jesus with oil. And, of course, we will see ultimate opportunity mastered, as Jesus will allow all of these to redeem man back from sin and darkness.

Today – God gives various Opportunities / What do – Fall in 3 Categories

I suggest to you today that everyday God gives you abundance of various opportunities, and what we do with them will fall into one of those three categories, missed, misused, or glory be – mastered! Well in verses 6-13, we see a woman who didn't miss her opportunity, misuse it either, but as a memorial for the whole world for all time, she mastered it.

(Matthew 26:13 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Woman Anoints of Jesus at Bethany

(Matthew 26:6 NKJV) And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper,

(Matthew 26:7 NKJV) a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table.

(Matthew 26:8 NKJV) But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste?"

(Matthew 26:9 NKJV) "For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

(Matthew 26:10 NKJV) But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.

(Matthew 26:11 NKJV) "For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.

(Matthew 26:12 NKJV) "For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial.

(Matthew 26:13 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Contrast of Hatred and Love / Sandwiched between Pharisees and Judas

Here is the contrast, as there are people who hated Jesus, but there were those who loved Him greatly and gave of themselves to be with Him and love on Him. In verse 14 we will see Judas agree to betray the Lord; so here sandwiched between these two hearts of hatred, is this story of love and self-sacrifice.

Mark - Spikenard Expensive / 300 – 40K / Made in Himalayas / Luxury / Chanel a Wal-Mart Special

Mark's gospel says this was spikenard oil (which was very expensive) and it was worth 300 denarius, which was equivalent to almost 1 year's wages (a denarius a day was the average wage – Sabbath days off equal about 300 days). So if that was today, that would be around 40,000 dollars. If she was single, it could have been her dowry (the money that a bride was to bring into the marriage). This spikenard is a flowering plant that grows in the Himalayas of China, India and Nepal (so it was imported). The plant grows to about 1 m in height and has pink, bell-shaped flowers. Spikenard rhizomes (underground stems) can be crushed and distilled into an intensely aromatic amber-colored essential oil, which is very thick in consistency. It was obtained as a luxury in ancient Egypt, the Near East region. Even the container (alabaster was expensive). The expensive perfume spoken of here would make Chanel look like a Wal-Mart special.

Mark 14:3 - 9 (NKJV) ³And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. ⁴But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? ⁵For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply. ⁶But Jesus said, "**Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me.** ⁷For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always. ⁸She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. ⁹Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Reclining / Pretty Smart – Start where we End

It says they are sitting, but the definition as it applies in those days was that they would really be reclining on the table. Pretty smart for when you really load up with the food, about halfway through the meal you wish you were laying on your side; so they pretty much start where we end up. So Jesus is at the table and this woman comes in with this costly oil and pours it over his head.

Who is this Unnamed Woman / Bible Heading of Mary / Not Mary in Luke 7 – Diff Time and Place

The question is, who was this unnamed woman? Maybe your Bibles have headings over each section of Scripture, and maybe yours says "Mary anoints Jesus". Well first let's not confuse this account with a similar account in Luke where a woman washes Jesus' feet with her tears. In that account the woman is Mary Magdalene, the prostitute who became a follower of Christ. That story happened several months earlier than this one, and in a different home (a Pharisees home).

Luke 7:36 - 39 (NKJV) ³⁶Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. ³⁷And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, ³⁸and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

John's Account – Mary sister of Lazarus

The Mary that is referred to maybe in your Bible heading, or a commentary you pick up, is Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. John records that account, and clearly identifies this woman as Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus.

John 12:1 - 11 (NKJV) ¹Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. ²There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. ³Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. ⁴But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it. ⁷But Jesus said, "**Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial.** ⁸For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always." ⁹Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. ¹⁰But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, ¹¹because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

3 Gospels Comparison 3

In Matthew, Mark, and John the story told in those passages are very similar. Here the contrasts and parallels of the stories:

- John – 6 days before the Passover / Matthew & Mark – no mention of the day.
- All 3 – happened in the town of Bethany
- John & Mark – say it was spikenard (which was very costly) / Matthew – just says it was costly oil.
- John – worth 300 denarius / Matthew – no price / Mark – 300 denarius

- John – Jesus' feet anointed / Matthew & Mark – Jesus' head is anointed
- John – dinner at home in Bethany – Mary & Martha serving / Matthew and Mark – dinner is at Simon the Leper's home (who obviously was healed by Jesus or would be living in a leper colony, not a house.)
- All 3 – Woman criticized
- John – Judas criticized / Matthew – Disciples plural / Mark – some
- All 3 – Jesus defends here
- All 3 – Jesus says have the poor with you always
- All 3 – Jesus says is anointing for His burial
- Matt & Mark – Memorial for all time / John – not added

Why the Time – Not same Account / 9th Nisan in John / Commentators say Divine / Chrono 12th

Why spend so much time in this exercise you may ask; the reason, I personally do not believe the account given in John, is the same account given here in Matthew (and Mark which parallels Matthew's account and vice-versa). The accounts are so close that I could see why they say Matthew, Mark, and John are all the same story being told just by different observation. In John's account it clearly says that Mary came and anointed Jesus 6 days before the Passover, which would make it the 9th of Nisan, the day before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Commentators will say that by Divine design this account is inserted here in Matthew to show the contrast between those that hated Jesus (Pharisees and Judas), and those that loved Jesus (this woman); and that Matthew and Mark necessarily weren't written in chronological order. Personally I don't think so, I think Matthew and Mark recording of this story is in chronological order, just as all the events that have happened from Sunday (the triumphal entry) all the way up to the resurrection are, why change now. I believe it is Tuesday, the 12th of Nisan, just 3 days after Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus anointed the feet of Jesus.

Different Woman – there 3 days Earlier / Something Stirred – Longed in Heart to do Same

I believe it is a different woman, she may have been there 3 days earlier when Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus anointed Jesus' feet, or maybe she just heard the story being retold as people were talking about that night. Maybe she saw it, maybe she heard it, but something was stirred in her heart and she longed to do the same; and then she heard the news, Jesus is over at Simon the leper's home, and immediately her heart was moved into action and nothing was going to stop her from getting to Jesus.

Mary Released Fragrance – Filled Room / Mary's Fragrance reached this Woman – She was Moved

Mary released a fragrance in that room 3 days earlier, and John's account said that it filled the whole room. The fragrance that Mary released in a home 3 days earlier had reached this woman, and she was now moved by fragrance that was released.

John 12:3 (NKJV) ³Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

This Mary Amazing / Found 3 times in Gospels – Listening to Word, Death of Lazarus, Anointing

This Mary that had released the fragrance is an amazing woman; I look forward to meeting her in heaven, asking her what's like to enjoy supper with Jesus in Bethany, and supper with Jesus at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Interestingly, she is found three times in the Gospels, and in these instances she is at the feet of Jesus. She sat at His feet and listened to the Word (Luke 10:38-42); she came to His feet in sorrow after the death of Lazarus (John 11:28-32); and she worshiped at His feet when she anointed Him with the ointment (John 12:1-11).

Luke 10:39 (NKJV) ³⁹And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.

John 11:32 (NKJV) ³²Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

John 12:3 (NKJV) ³Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Mary found Blessing, brought Burden, gave her Best

Mary, found at His feet her blessing, she brought to His feet her burdens, and she gave at His feet her best.

Her life a Fragrance to Others / Ministry unto Jesus / How long has it Been for Us / Receive

This life that Mary lived, became a fragrance that others enjoyed and were blessing by. Jesus was blessed by the anointing for His burial. Jesus was all man, and He was all God, the God-Man; and as man we know the heaviness that was upon His heart as the cross grew nearer and nearer. The agony of the cross, the suffering of being separated from His Father for the first time ever. What a ministry of love this would be to Him as His heart weighed heavy, as the next day He would enter Jerusalem in His triumphal entry, allow public exaltation of Him being the King, and thus delivering the final blow to the religious leaders. Yet before that march, He is afforded this time of being ministered to. We continually read of Jesus teaching, confronting, being confronted, healing the sick and battling the Evil One, and for a brief moment, He is ministered to by this woman, who comes neither asking or seeking anything from Him, except to serve and love on Him. Christian, how long has it been that you have done the same? The same in that you just come unto the Lord to love on Him, to not complain, question, challenge, or seek, but to just love on Him and pour yourself out upon Him. I think it hard for us to imagine this, but this story is example for us, Jesus doesn't say stop it, I don't want anyone to think I am soft, but He freely and gladly receives it. Why, because He loves you, and He loves being loved by you, He loves to receive love as much as He loves to give it, because it is the very reason you and I were created, for His good pleasure:

Revelation 4:11 (KJV) ¹¹*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

Mary Releases Fragrance – Fills whole Room / This Woman gets deep Whiff – Nothing Stopping

Mary released a fragrance the filled the whole room, and I believe this woman in our story, now 3 days later got a deep whiff of it herself and her heart was moved to do the same, to pour herself out upon Jesus. She wasn't going to read or hear about someone else's devotion, she was going to live it and experience it for herself personally.

Dictionary Definition of Devotion

I went to the Dictionary to get the definition of devotion and it read, "Devotion: ardent affection towards something". Ardent means "a warmth and passion glowing hot as fire". The something part for us is easy, that's Jesus. For the Believer, here is what devotion means: A Warmth and Passion glowing hot as fire for our Lord Jesus Christ. I like that.

Devotions Great – Only if Translate into Personal Experience

Beloved I think devotional books are great, I think hearing other people's testimony is great, but only if they do to us like they did to this woman, that we say we are going to go live it and experience it for ourselves personally.

Moved into Action / I Wonder – 12oz of Powerful Fragrance / Garden – Cross / Heb 12:2

This woman in our story was moved into action, she had to pour herself out for the Lord, and I wonder, being that in those days you didn't take a bath daily, I wonder how long the fragrance of this perfume lingered upon Jesus. They say this perfume was so strong that only a drop needed to be supplied, but here this woman is applying an estimated 12 ounces upon Jesus; seeping into His hair, beard, pores, and clothing. I wonder how long this fragrance stayed with Jesus. I wonder if when He prayed in Gethsemane if He could smell that fragrance. I wonder if when He beat Him with the 40 lashes he could smell it, and I wonder if when He hung on the cross and sweat poured from His head that He could smell it. This account is said to be a memorial for her, and I believe as the fragrance lingered on, it was a memory of her, and a memory of you and me, as the fragrance come up before the Lord, He remembered us, and it moved Him on, for the joy that was set before Him He endured the shame and the pain to redeem man:

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ²*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.*

Imagine Everyone He Passed / Trial, Pilate, Soldier, Via Delarosa / 2 Cor 2

Imagine everyone that Jesus came in contact with during the crucifixion, and all would smell this fragrance. Judas didn't need to say the one I guess, but the one who smells so clean. As they have the mock trial all in the room would continually be asking themselves, what is that wonderful smell. How about Pilate. I wonder if the soldier that nailed Him to the cross had some of the fragrance rub off on him,

and then all night he would be smelling that sweet fragrance as a reminder of the one he had nailed to the cross. I wonder if those who were closer enough as Jesus made His way to the cross could smell the beautiful fragrance coming from Him. To some He would be the fragrance of new life, to other, the aroma of death, just as the scriptures say (and I might add, it speaks the same of our life.

2 Corinthians 2:14 - 3:1 (NKJV) ¹⁴Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? ¹⁷For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. ¹Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

Beautiful Example of Responsible Stewardship / W=RxD

This woman, these woman, are beautiful and perfect example of our last study (Matt 25); we see the ultimate fulfillment of the parable of the talents (Responsible Stewardship) as they use their talents for His glory. They maximize the formula we studied of “work equals resources times duration”, as they give of themselves, they give of their possession, and they give of their time, all for His glory and not their own.

They will hear those words:

Matthew 25:21 (NKJV) ²¹His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

Practical Stewardship

We also see the ultimate fulfillment of the story of the separating the sheep from the goats (Practical Stewardship). And they will hear those words:

Matthew 25:37 - 40 (NKJV) ³⁷“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink?’ ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You?’ ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

Application simple today = Fragrance Released through Communion

For our application today, it is real simple, the fragrance of Christ was released through communing with Him. It is the most base application of the Christian faith, but the most missed. As we said, throughout this chapter we will see opportunities presented, some will be missed, some misused, and others such as this one – mastered!

Entire house Filled / What does your House Smell Like / Communion / Opportunities

The entire house was filled with the aroma of the ointment (John 12:3). Christian, what does your house smell like? Does it emanate the fragrance of Christ? It is really easy to change that if it doesn't, break open your communion with Christ. I will challenge all of us today, God presents the opportunity (to be missed or mastered), and that is to slow down and come sit at His feet. For how long? Ask Him, He will tell you. I'll tell you this, if you do, there will be sweet fragrance released from you, and all around you will smell it, it will be in the air around you.

Beautiful example of Worship - Communion

This woman is a beautiful example and application of worship, come next study and we will pick it up there, and celebrate Communion together as a family.

Communion Instituted

Matthew 26:14-29

J. W. Tucker – Bomokande River

A true story is told, that in November 1964, anarchy broke out in the Belgian Congo. Assemblies of God missionary J. W. Tucker knew he was at risk, but he stayed where God had placed him. One day, a mob attacked and killed him with sticks, clubs, fists, and broken bottles. They took his body, threw it in the back of a truck, drove a good distance, and then tossed his corpse to the crocodiles in the Bomokande River in what is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. J. W. Tucker had risked everything, yet he seemingly had nothing to show for it. But 30 years later, John Weidman, a close friend of Tucker's, was in the country (by then known as Zaire) and learned how God used that missionary's sacrifice.

The Bomokande River flows through the middle of the Mangbeto tribe, a people virtually without the gospel. During a time of civil war, the Mangbeto king became distressed with the violence and appealed to the central government in Kinshasa for help. The central government responded by sending a man called the Brigadier, a well-known policeman of strong stature and reputation who came from the region of Isiro. J. W. Tucker had won the Brigadier to the Lord just two months before he was killed. The Brigadier determined to reach the Mangbetos with the gospel, the only way to peace. Being a relatively new Christian, he did his best to witness, but he was met with no response. Then one day he heard of a Mangbeto tradition that said: "If the blood of any man flows in the Bomokande River, you must listen to his message." This saying had been with the Mangbetos from time immemorial.

The Brigadier called for the king and all the village elders. They gathered in full assembly to hear his address. "Some time ago a man was killed, and his body was thrown into your Bomokande River," the Brigadier began. "The crocodiles in this river ate him up. His blood flowed in your river. But before he died, he left me a message. "This message concerns God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to this world to save people who were sinners. He died for the sins of the world; He died for my sins. I received this message, and it changed my life." As the Brigadier preached, the Spirit of God descended and people began to fall on their knees and cry out to the Lord. Many were converted. Since that day, thousands of Mangbetos have come to Christ and dozens of Assemblies of God churches have opened as a result of the message from the man whose blood flowed in the Bomokande River.

Passage Today – Instituting Communion / Remember Me – Remember it was for You / Listen

In our passage today Jesus will be instituting the celebration and remembrance of communion. He will say to do this in remembrance of Me; remember my broken body that was broken for you, remember my blood that was poured out for you. Remember this message, the message that I left it all, I overcame it all, I verified it all, and I expressed it all, that "I Love You". Remember that I counted it all worth it, the cross and the shame, to have you, to call you My own. The price to say that was the precious blood of God's only Son, and for that very fact it declares and demands that every man must listen to His message.

1 Corinthians 11:23 - 26 (NKJV) ²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, *Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.* ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."* ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ²looking 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 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:

The theme of the Book of Matthew is Jesus is the King, and if you were to give the book 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."

Jerusalem Buzzing – Not all Loving Him

So let's pick up where we left off last week, verse 14; although all of Jerusalem is in a buzz about the miracle maker, there are those who have been plotting to kill Him, and we pick it up here our study.

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

(Matthew 26:14 NKJV) Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests (Matthew 26:15 NKJV) and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.

(Matthew 26:16 NKJV) So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Judas Sells Out / Context of Story

Judas offers to sell-out Jesus, the context is that he just saw this woman pour out a year's worth (\$40,000) precious perfume oil out upon Jesus (Matthew 26:6-13). John's gospel tells us Judas was upset about these situations because he was the keeper of the money and he was dipping his hand into the bag for his own personal use:

John 12:4 - 11 (NKJV). "But one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said, ⁵"Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

Sold Out – Selling Out / Fragrances fill the Air

A man or woman are either selling-out, or they are sold-out, there is no in-between with the Lord. The woman sold-out for Jesus, 300 denarius, her sacrifice filled the whole room with the fragrance of Jesus Christ. Judas sells-out for a measly 30 pieces of silver, and the fragrance he produces is foul to the senses.

What made Judas Sell-out / Business – Single – Marriage – Fill in the Blank / Memorialized

I don't know what it was that brought Judas to this point to be willing to betray Jesus. Maybe it was his disappointment with Jesus that prompted Judas to entertain a betrayal mentality. Maybe when Judas initially followed Jesus, he was excited about the prospect of a kingdom being set up on earth. But when Jesus began leaving the area every time the multitude wanted to make Him king, perhaps Judas felt his heart sink. So, too, I see a tendency in people today to sell out when they get disappointed in Jesus. "I thought Jesus would bless my business if I became a Christian," they say. "But what happened? I went bankrupt." Why is it that I am still single after all these years? Why isn't my marriage better? Why isn't,and you fill in the blank. If we're not careful, a Judas mentality will creep in and we'll sell out; for a measly 30 pieces of silver. Jesus hasn't delivered the way I think or thought that He would, therefore I'm going to sell-out.

How Pitiful we may Say – People selling-out for Less / All Broken Pottery / Dilute Fragrance

Judas selling-out for a measly 30 pieces of silver, how pitiful we say, how could he we ask, but I tell you there are Christians selling out for as less. Christians living in sexual sin, in compromise, Christians cheating on their taxes, Christians watching things that God detests, is it all the same; it is a measly 30 pieces of silver that in the end the best you get is field full of broken pottery. That is all that selling-out will get you is a bunch of broken pieces that will never add up to anything. All those things, whatever they may be, are diluting agents; they are things that dilute the fragrance of Christ in your life.

(Matthew 27:7 NKJV) And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

Satan looking for your Price / Be like the Woman – be Sold-out – Be a Memorial

I need to warn you, whatever that thing that will tempt you, lead you to sell-out, Satan will offer it to you. Satan is looking for the reward that you will take to turn your attention away from Jesus. Satan is always looking to see if you have a price. Once he sees it, he will bring it before you. Christian, don't do it, be

like this woman, it is worth it. This woman is memorialized in glory, and so too is Judas memorialized, but not in glory but shame.

People say Woman a Waste / Nothing done for Jesus is a Waste / Judas son of Perdition

People said what this woman did was waste, listen Christian nothing we do very Jesus is ever wasted.

Judas calls it waste, later Jesus will call Judas the son of perdition, which perdition means waste.

Matthew 26:8 - 9 (NKJV) ⁸But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? ⁹For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."

Side Note – Poor with you Always / Done it to the Least of These

By the way, I want to note that in verse 11 Jesus said, "**For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always**;" Jesus was by no means saying that we shouldn't minister to the poor, for in Mark's account of this same story, Jesus will say when you wish to bless them, they will be there to be blessed. He is giving the nod that man should be taking care of the poor when possible. Why? Because when you have done it to the least of these you have done it on to Me (Matthew 25)

Matthew 26:11 (NKJV) ¹¹For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.

Mark 14:7 (NKJV) ⁷For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.

Matthew 25:37 - 40 (NKJV) ³⁷"Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

Judas means Praise / Judas wasted his Name / Camden's Name

"Judas" means "praise." It's a beautiful name, but Judas wasted it and ruined it for future generations.

When we were thinking of a name for our son, I can tell you one name that never even entered our thoughts, was Judas. How many people named Judas have you met in your lifetime? Even though Judas means praise, Judas totally wasted his name.

Judas upset because he Money Keeper / What a Waste he Says

John's Gospel tells us exactly which disciple was the most indignant. It was Judas who said, "This is a waste. You could have done something much more practical with this ointment." "It's a waste," Judas said. Yet in a few hours, Jesus would call Judas himself the son of perdition, or literally, "the son of waste" (John 17:12). People who don't love God or understand His ways can often look see worship as a waste.

John 17:12 (NKJV) ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Worship Comes through breaking / Costly - Misunderstood

Please understand this about worship, fellow worshipers: As the woman broke the alabaster box and poured the ointment upon Jesus, Mary and this woman showed us that worship comes through breaking. When does worship begin? When you're broken! I am not talking about a woe is me I am crushed by my circumstances, rather I am talking broken open, when we break our hearts open before the Lord and we just pour ourselves out before and unto Him. Lord, it is the cry of my heart to worship you, I want to open my heart and pour it out unto you, I don't want conversation right now, I want exaltation, I want to let you know how you move my heart, and what is in my heart, I love you, I cherish you, I long for your presence in my life right here and right now. Secondly please note and remember, that worship can be costly, for this woman she gave her all; rarely are we faced with giving all, but to worship Him we may have to give our time, we may have to get up early, we may have to make the drive, we may have to pass on that extra overtime, or those tickets, worship is costly. Thirdly, worship may cause you to be criticized, people may not understand why you are willing to sacrifice, why you are willing to pour yourself out, they think you are foolish or weak; Jesus' response to them is:

Matthew 26:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me.

I hear it Often – Lord please Anoint Me – Use Me / She Communes – She a Memorial / Best Day

I hear it so often as a Pastor, and to be honest I say it often myself, Lord I want to be used by You, anoint me. Here we see in the story of these 2 woman, the key to the unlocking of the anointing. This woman is

moved in heart to respond to God's love for her, she pours herself out to Him, and God in turns pours His anointing out upon her as we see she becomes a memorial for all the world, for all time. She didn't have to preach, she didn't have to travel the globe, she didn't have to do any of those things for her to reach millions over 2,000 years, all she had to do was commune and worship the Lord, and He took care of the rest. I suggest to you Christian that when spend the best part of your day and life communion with the Lord, His fragrance will naturally (or better said, supernaturally) emanate from you unto the world around you. It is never a waste, you will always come out smelling like Jesus.

Judas wasted His Name

Sadly for Judas, he wasted his name; the tale of two people, this woman who was memorialized for all time as a picture of worship, and Judas who was memorialized for all time as a picture of waste.

The Passover Prepared

(Matthew 26:17 NKJV) Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"
(Matthew 26:18 NKJV) And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'" "
(Matthew 26:19 NKJV) So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

Day is now Thursday (Exodus 12) / Wednesday Silent (storm, family, exhaustion, prayer)

The day is now Thursday, the 14th of Nisan, it is the day according to Exodus 12 that the Passover Lamb was to be prepared. This passage began with Jesus saying in 2 days it would be the Passover, and we knew that day was Tuesday. So verse 17, it is Thursday; all the other gospel accounts do the same. Strangely (though Divinely I am sure) there is no mention in any of the gospels what happened on Wednesday. Why are the Scriptures silent on that Wednesday? Was it the calm before the storm? Was Jesus just spending time with family and friends? Was He just spending time with the disciples? Was He resting from the exhaustion of Tuesday, was He in prayer all day? The answer is probably all the above, but God by Divine design remains silent for a reason.

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.*

(Matthew 26:1 NKJV) *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, (Matthew 26:2 NKJV) "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."*

The Jewish calendar of Events:

- Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:
 - Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
 - Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
 - Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)
- 11th – Monday
 - Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
 - Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
- 12th – Tuesday
 - Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 - Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 - The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 - Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
- 13th – Wednesday
 - The Gospels are Silent
- 14th – Thursday –
 - Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 - Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 - The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 - The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 - Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
- 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
- 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
- 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

What I do Know – One more day to Decide / Religious Leaders – Judas - Encountered

So what I do know is that every person in every story we have read up to this point, had one more day to decide who Jesus was. All those religious leader just putting on the phony religious face, Judas with 30 pieces of silver in his pocket for a whole day chiming together to remind him of his decision, all the people who had ever encountered Jesus, they all had one more day to decide who He was.

The same for you Today / Another day to decide who He Is / 2 Cor 6

God has given you the same today, if you have not made a decision on Jesus Christ and who He is and what He means to you personally, God has given you one more day by His grace to decide that. As a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all I can guarantee you is this moment, right here and now, for no one knows what tomorrow holds, thus the Lord says today is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time.

2 Corinthians 6:1 - 2 (NKJV) ¹We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

²For 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.

Moving On / Woman's Work / Unnamed Servant / Special Place in Heaven

So moving on with our story, the other Gospels tell us that the man the disciples were to look for would be carrying a water jug. In those days, men didn't carry water jugs. That was "woman's work." Thus, a man carrying a water jug would have stood out. Evidently, the owner of this house was an unnamed friend of Jesus. He was one who worked behind the scenes, making the necessary preparations so Jesus could celebrate Passover with His disciples. I believe there is a special place in heaven for the unnamed servant. You might be one of those people no one applauds or even acknowledges. You simply serve behind the scenes, making things right for Jesus and His people. God bless you! I'm convinced that those who are serving secretly, those who are unnamed and unknown will be rewarded openly by our Father who sees in secret (Matthew 6:6). The key here is to just serve, don't worry about who sees.

Mark 14:13 - 15 (NKJV) ¹³And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. ¹⁴Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"' ¹⁵Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

Matthew 6:6 (NKJV) ⁶But 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.

(Matthew 26:20 NKJV) When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.

(Matthew 26:21 NKJV) Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me."

(Matthew 26:22 NKJV) And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

Judas in the Black Cape

When told one of their number would betray Jesus, did the disciples say, "It's the one with the black cape—it's Judas"? No. Everyone said, "Lord, is it I?"

Question Self – Safety in Sincerely asking "Is it I" / Woe to him who thinks he Stands

At first thought we may seem surprised that these faithful followers could even question themselves, they all asked is it I. There is safety in sincerely asking the Lord, "is it I". The sin nature is in all of us, and I know personally I am capable of every sin in the Bible, because the sin nature is in me, and my heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). Woe to that person that says there is absolutely no way I would ever do that, whatever that, "that", may be. He who thinks he stands take heed lest he falls. Christian there is safety in the asking, "Is it I".

Jeremiah 17:9 - 10 (NKJV) ⁹ "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? ¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NKJV) ¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

(Matthew 26:23 NKJV) He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me.

(Matthew 26:24 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 not been born."

(Matthew 26:25 NKJV) Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it."

Paste Dip – Egypt / L-shaped Table / Guest honor on Left / John on Right – Judas on Left

One element of the Passover meal was a paste-like dip made of ground dates, figs, and nuts that was eaten with bread. It was a reminder of the mud the Israelites used in Egypt to bake bricks before God sent Moses to deliver them. At the very moment Jesus said, "He who dips His hand with Me into the dish..." Judas had his hand right there. This is intriguing to me because in Jesus' day, the master of the home would sit in the center of a U-shaped table with the guest of honor to his left. We know from John's Gospel that John was seated to Jesus' right at this meal. Therefore, if Jesus and Judas were sharing the same bowl, Judas must have been seated to Jesus' left—at the place of honor. Thus, even at this point, we see Jesus affirming Judas, saying, "Son of perdition, I'm seating you in the place of honor because I still love you."

Ever felt gone too Far – Judas Example / Garden – Friend why Come / Jesus never Gave Up

Have you ever thought or felt like you have gone too far, crossed over a point of no return with the Lord for what you may have done (or not done) and feel like the Lord will never receive you back? Let Judas be an example to you, that even after all this, the Lord is still reaching out to him, calling him to Himself. Even in the garden when Judas comes with the detachment of guards, Jesus will say to him, "friend why have you come". Jesus, even all the way to this point is offering Judas friendship, offering him love, offering him acceptance. Friend, the Lord says to you today, Friend you have not gone too far, come to Me and I will receive you to Myself. Jesus, never gave up on Judas, even up to the garden He is reaching for him; Beloved know this, just as the Lord never gave up on Judas, nor will He ever give up on you, so you come, and come now, let not another night pass by, come unto Him today and be received by Him. You can start over, and you can start over today!

Matthew 26:48 - 50 (NKJV) ⁴⁸Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him."

⁴⁹Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him. ⁵⁰But Jesus said to him, "**Friend, why have you come?**" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

Sadly doesn't Come / God verses Teacher / Oswald Chambers / Judas didn't repent unto Salvation

But sadly Judas doesn't come. Notice when the disciples ask they address Jesus as God, but when Judas asks he addresses Jesus as a great teacher but not God. Oswald Chambers once said, "The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else". There are some that say and teach that Judas repented, that isn't true, for had he repented and been saved Jesus would have never said "**It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.**" Go through your whole life never meeting me, George Bush, Ray Lewis, you have missed nothing; go through your whole life never meeting Jesus Christ, you have missed it all.

Matthew 26:20 - 25 (NKJV) ²⁰When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. ²¹Now as they were eating, He said, "**Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.**" ²²And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "**Lord, is it I?**" ²³He answered and said, "**He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me.**" ²⁴**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 not been born.**" ²⁵Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "**Rabbi, is it I?**" He said to him, "**You have said it.**"

Instituting Communion

(Matthew 26:26 NKJV) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

(Matthew 26:27 NKJV) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

(Matthew 26:28 NKJV) "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

(Matthew 26:29 NKJV) "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

Speaks of Resurrection with Death / In the Father's Kingdom

Jesus speaks of His death, but not without speaking of His resurrection. My body will be broken, but it will be raised from the dead, because I will drink of this fruit of the vine with you again in My Father's kingdom. The resurrection is the power of the Gospel, for any man can die, but only God could rise from the dead.

Jesus institutes Communion – Do this in Remembrance

Jesus institutes here the Lord's Supper (Communion); and He says to do this in remembrance of me:

1 Corinthians 11:23 - 25 (NKJV) ²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Understand Jesus having Communion with Sinners / New vs. Old Covenant / Once for All

I want you to see and understand this, who it was that Jesus was breaking the bread with, He was breaking bread with sinners, with men who would scatter from Him, even from a man who later would deny Him. The word Communion, means to commune with, and that is why the Lord has come, so that He might commune with man, even those that will falter and fail. Jesus says this is the "new covenant", therefore it supersedes the old covenant. The old covenant was based on the 10 Commandments and it was predicated on man's ability to live to God's standard perfectly (which each and every one of have failed miserably at). But the new covenant was predicated on God's ability to perform, and Jesus performed by the giving of His body for us. The old covenant required an innocent sacrifice to take the place of the guilty. The old covenant required the guilty party to place their hands on the head of lamb and confess their sins and the laying on of the hand represented transferring the person's guilty and shame unto the innocent substitute. Under the old covenant the sins were only covered, they were not washed away, and thus the guilty would have to continually come back again and again for forgiveness. The new covenant was once and for all, for Jesus being God, was the perfect sacrifice, and once a man lays his hands upon the head of Jesus and confesses their guilt and shame, the blood of the lamb of God which is shed for many, for the remission of sins (plural) for it covers every sin past, present, and future. **Hebrews 7:26 - 28 (NKJV)** ²⁶For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. ²⁸For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever.

Communion for Sinner / Jesus gives Thanks / Thanks for the Opportunity / You inspire Joy

Communion is for the sinner, and in verse 27, Jesus gives thanks, Jesus says thank you Father for this moment in time to offer My body and blood for these people. Jesus says thank you Father for this opportunity for they are worth it (Believe it). And then He says but I won't drink the fruit of the vine until all My kids are home with Me in heaven. Beloved, you inspire joy in the Lord, and it is as if the Lord is saying I'll have joy again when I have you in heaven, with Me, where you belong and why I created you, for fellowship and intimacy with me.

Matthew 26:27 (NKJV) ²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you."

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) ²looking 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.

Communion Celebration:

The Bread

(Matthew 26:26 NKJV) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Isaiah 53:5 - 6 (NKJV) ⁵ 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. ⁶ 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.

Betrays for 30 pieces of Silver / Gored Slave

Judas agrees to betray the Lord for 30 pieces of silver, which was the exact amount a person had to pay if they killed another man's slave. It actually gets specific and says 30 pieces of silver for a gored (pierced) slave. Jesus Christ, became a slave, a gored (pierced) slave for our sins.

Exodus 21:32 (NKJV) ³²*If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.*

(Matthew 26:14 NKJV) Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests

(Matthew 26:15 NKJV) and said, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.

Passover a New Celebration / Body before the Blood – I'll come just as you Are / Mistake

The Passover became a new celebration—the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, and Communion. Now, if I were setting up the Lord's Supper, I would have reversed the order. I would have served the cup first. I would have said, "Before the Body of Christ can enter into us, the blood must first cleanse us." But Jesus didn't follow that pattern. He gave the bread first and followed it with the cup. And in so doing, He essentially said, "I will come into you just as you are. And then I will cleanse you with My blood." Most people have the mistaken idea that they must clean up their act and get it together before they ask Jesus into their heart. But just the opposite is true. The bread is first. He comes in and He cleans us up. It's not perspiration—our trying harder. It's impartation—Jesus in us, the hope of glory.

Let's take of the Bread

The Cup

(Matthew 26:27 NKJV) Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

(Matthew 26:28 NKJV) "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Just 1 Drop

With just one drop of the precious blood of the Lamb, we are washed clean, and made white as snow.

Dr. George Moore - Nepal

Dr. George Moore was a young public health worker who was among the first westerners sent to Nepal in 1952. He found a nation that was very backward. There was only one hospital, and that was for the royalty. Life expectancy was 35 years. Ninety-eight percent of the population never had any medical treatment in their short lives—no doctors or medicine, ever. Moore and his colleague began by attacking malaria, a devastating killer, by spraying the inside of huts with insecticide. But their second major challenge, smallpox, was more difficult. Smallpox vaccine must be refrigerated, and in the early 1950s, there was no way to get refrigerators to primitive villages. Then Moore struck on a plan. He finally got a small batch of vaccine from the U. S. and stored it in the small kerosene refrigerator at his base camp. Then, using that vaccine, he inoculated some small boys, and took those boys with him to the villages. When someone is inoculated with smallpox vaccine, they get a very mild case of the disease—too mild to make them sick, but strong enough to give them permanent immunity. They also develop a smallpox blister at the point of the injection. So, Dr. Moore brought the vaccinated boys with him to the villages. Then he would break their smallpox blister, dip the end of a string into the blister, and then touch that infected string to a small opening in the skin of the person he wanted to protect. And that was how the assault on the killer disease was begun.

Jesus' Pierced and Blistered Body – One Drop

So it is with Jesus, that through the blister of His pierced body, the drop of that blood is applied to us and we have immunity from death and the grave. So we take this cup, and we do it in remembrance of Him, and we look forward to when we will drink it face to face with our God in the Kingdom.

Let's drink the Cup

Before the Rooster Crows (Peter's Denial)

Matthew 26:30-75

Experience a Great Teacher – Even someone Else's' Experience / Peter's Denial

Experience is a great teacher, and best of all, it doesn't have to be our experience for us to learn from it. We can learn from other people's experiences (whether good experiences or failures). The Bible is chocked full of experiences for us to learn from, and in our passage today we have a rich life experience to learn from, the life of Peter and the day of his denial of Christ.

Context – Failed but Restored / Pillar in Church / Peter so Human – See Him every Morninging

Now before we get into this study looking at Peter's failure, I would like to put our study in the context that Peter failed, but by God's love and grace Peter became a pillar in the church, and went on to do great things for the kingdom of God. I love study the life of Peter because I can really relate to him, he is so human. His failures and faults I see so clearly every morning when I shave; yet I do not live in defeat or discouragement, but hope and expectation, that Peter's God and y God, are the same God, thus all things are possible for me too.

Beginning – Get behind Me, Never Leave You, Son of God – Never Knew / Roman Prison

We study Peter's beginning, loaded with many moments, such as "Get behind Me Satan", and "I'll never leave you Lord", plopping ears off, foot and mouth disease, a man who goes from Thou are the Son of God, to I never knew the Man; but let me give you Peter's end, as it is recorded in church history (not in the Bible). Peter ended his life in a prison in Rome, chained with arms extended above his heads, in a lightless stone wet dungeon that was below all the other prison cells, writings say that people died just from the stench of human waste (and for Peter it all flowed downhill). It was the cruelest form of punishment, and Peter spent somewhere between 6-9 months in the hole, basically never being able to sleep, malnourished, but even that church tradition says that he lead 41 Roman Soldiers to Christ before his death. In his last day they brought him out of the dungeon to watch them kill his wife, and he gave her the words as she was lead away to her death, "woman, remember thou the Lord". Peter then would be crucified, but he didn't fell worthy to die upright as Jesus did, and asked to be crucified upside-down.

Man we Study – Not a Failure – but Lived up to Name / Us Today – Called Children / Adjustment

This is the man we study today, not a failure, but a man who would live up to his name, "rocky". I pray that every person her today will live up to the name God has given them which is "child of God", and that we may study the experience of Peter and apply it to our lives, and if need be today, make a course adjustment from a path that is not a path God desires for your life, to make that adjustment before the rooster crows.

Phrase – Fell into Sin / Person walks into Sin – Step-by-Step

Maybe you've said or heard the phrase, "I fell into sin." In reality, there is no such thing. A person never "falls" into sin but rather walks into sin one step at a time. In chapter 26, we see five steps Peter took that led to his failure and sorrow.

Passover Over – Going to Garden

So they disciples have just finished celebrating the Passover meal with Jesus in the Upper Room, the supper has ended, and we pick it up here in verse 30.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure

(Matthew 26:30 NKJV) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

(Matthew 26:31 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

(Matthew 26:32 NKJV) "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

(Matthew 26:33 NKJV) Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

(Matthew 26:34 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

(Matthew 26:35 NKJV) Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh

Peter proclaims – I am the Rock / Dwells – Destruction – Take Heed

"I won't leave You, Lord," Peter boldly declared. "Others might be offended in You. Others might turn their backs on You. But not me." Peter said no way I'll fail you, remember I am the rock, you said. Everyone else may fail you, but not the rock! I am sure the Father in heaven said, "wow what would we do without Peter". The apostle Paul said in me dwells no good thing. Pride goes before destruction. Take heed he who stands lest he falls. Peter was overconfident in the flesh.

Romans 7:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

Proverbs 16:18 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12 - 13 (NKJV) ¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

2 Ducks & Frog in Farmer Browns Pond / As mouth opens – Fall Begins

Reminds me of the story of two ducks and a frog who hung out at the pond in Farmer Brown's field. One summer, however, a drought caused the pond to dry up. For the ducks, able to fly elsewhere, this was no problem. But the frog, knowing he would literally croak if he didn't find water soon, said to the ducks, "I'm in trouble here. But I've got a plan. You guys hold a stick in your bills, and I'll jump up and grab it with my mouth. Then you start flying. I'll hang on. And we'll keep going until we find another pond." The ducks said, "Sure. Sounds good." So they put a stick between their bills. The frog jumped up and grabbed it tightly in his mouth. The ducks began to flap their wings, and suddenly the trio was airborne. Taking in the whole scene, Farmer Brown watched in amazement below. "What a brilliant idea," he said. "I wonder who thought of it?"—to which the frog opened his mouth wide and proudly answered, "I di--." Pride comes before the fall. Pride says, "Look what I did!" It's an "I" problem. "Lord, I will never deny You," said Peter. But, like the frog, even as he opened his mouth, he started going down.

Exempt from Word / Zech 13 / Scriptures proves self Out / reproved by Chicken / God Reminds

Peter thinks he is a special exemption from the Word of God; Zechariah says that all the sheep will scatter, but here Peter is claiming himself to be the exemption, stating that the Scripture really should say all will be scattered but one. How many a people who think they are the exemption to the Scripture, that they have a special "situation". Like Peter, at some point the Scripture will prove itself true, so a person better to start with rather than end with the Scripture being true. Before this is all over, Peter will be reproved by a chicken, the great man of God reproved by a chicken, God has a way of reminding us His Word is true, better to start with the Word, than to end with it.

Zechariah 13:7 (NKJV) ⁷ "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion," Says the LORD of hosts. "Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh

Step 2 to Peter's Failure

(Matthew 26:36 NKJV) Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

(Matthew 26:37 NKJV) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

(Matthew 26:38 NKJV) Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

(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 26:40 NKJV) Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh

Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying

Full Pride – Flesh make Happen – No need Pray / Prayer – Petition & Protection

Once I am full of pride and feel like I can make things happen, I see no reason to pray. We have a saying here, "hey why pray when you can just work overtime", I think you get my point; we can rely on what we can do in the flesh, and see no need for prayer. Thus, pride and prayerlessness go hand in hand. We must never forget that prayer is not only for petition, but for protection.

Want – Don't Want / Become Vulnerable when stop Praying

Prayer not only gives us what we want but also protects us from what we don't want. I have seen things enter into my own life that otherwise wouldn't have whenever I have stopped praying and started sleeping. We become vulnerable to sin when we stop praying. How many times I have found myself in situations because I wasn't in-tune with God's will and plan for my life; said things, did things, or went places that put me in a bad situation, and that's what Peter discovered.

Do you Realize

Do you realize what is happening here though, and the application that is the same for us, Jesus (God in the flesh) is saying Peter (guys) join me in prayer. There is a lot before Me (betrayal, scourging, beating, crucifixion, and worse of all separation from My Father), and I am asking you to join Me in what is before Me. My how my prayer and devotional life changes when the night before, when I am deciding to stay up late and watch a football game, or go surf the web, and I say but that will impact the morning, for I GET to meet with the Lord, not I HAVE to. When I see it as, I get to JOIN Him (I get to be about what He is desiring to accomplish – and that something is always going to be a blessing for me, just as the cross was), than I can't wait for that time. Amazing, God says come join Me, I have a lot before Me and I want you to come join Me.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh

Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying

Step 3 to Peter's Failure

(Matthew 26:46 NKJV) "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

(Matthew 26:47 NKJV) And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

(Matthew 26:48 NKJV) Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him."

(Matthew 26:49 NKJV) Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

(Matthew 26:50 NKJV) But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

(Matthew 26:51 NKJV) And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

(Matthew 26:52 NKJV) But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

John's Gospel

John's gospel tells us the swinging swordsman was none other than Peter:

John 18:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Catch the Scene / Fisherman with Sword / Malchus' Ear / 4 Crosses / Jesus Fixes our Mistakes

Catch the scene: Judas comes into the Garden of Gethsemane with a cohort of Roman soldiers behind him. Peter wakes up, sees a need, and grabs his sword. A better fisherman than a swordsman, Peter manages only to lop off the ear of the high priest's servant. Another gospel tells us that Jesus puts the ear back on this servant; Jesus healed the severed ear as much for Peter as for Malchus, for if Jesus hadn't healed Malchus, there would have been four crosses on Calvary the next day instead of three as Peter would have been crucified for attempted murder. But just as the Lord does with us, He healed Peter's mistake, making it impossible for Malchus to press charges. The same thing happens in the heavenly courtroom. But Jesus has forgiven the very sins of which Satan accuses us. Therefore, there is no record of them because His blood has cleansed us from all sin (1 John 1:7). And, the good news is that Jesus still cleans up our mistakes; how often I have made a mess of things and thrown myself on this story and cried out to the Lord, Lord as you fixed Peter's mistake, please fix this one I have created.

Luke 22:50 - 51 (NKJV) ⁵⁰And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear. ⁵¹But Jesus answered and said, "**Permit even this.**" And He touched his ear and healed him.

1 John 1:7 (NKJV) ⁷But 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.

But we do see here Step 3 of Peter's Path to failure:

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh

Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying

Step 3 to Peter's Failure - Replacing Devotion with Action

Plunge Action – Skip Devotion / All in Flesh when Devotion Skipped / Makes Bloody Mess

Peter plunged into action, but had skipped his devotion. Peter, like so many of us at times, jumps into action, trying to get something done, make something happen, all in the name of the Lord and for the Lord, but the action is all in the flesh because the devotion part had been skipped, the recognition of the necessity of prayer was missed (because of personal pride). Peter jumps into action, got to help out the Lord, and he makes a bloody mess of things.

No time to Sit – Got to be Practical / If I touch it – Progress / Martin Luther

How that can be us, I'm going to do this or do that for the Lord, and we don't have time to sit at His feet and get direction from Him, because we are in such a hurry to do something practical, do something we can see and feel, for if you can see it or put your hands on it, then we fill we are getting something down. Prayer, it can seem to us that prayer is nonproductive time, we aren't getting anything done. I like what Martin Luther said, he said I have so much to do that if I don't spend the first 3 hours in prayer each day I'll never get anything done. Now my point isn't that without 3 hours of prayer each day we'll get nothing down, but the point that without prayer first we may be unproductive, or less productive, or worse, counter-productive.

Even if Good Results – Missing Point / Interested in Conforming / Woman with Perfume

Even if what you are doing is producing great results for the Lord, if you are replacing devotion with action, you are missing the point, God is more interested in what you are becoming (becoming more like Him), that what you are doing. God is always more interested in the minister rather than the ministry. Peter missed the lesson taught by the woman with the perfume.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh

Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying

Step 3 to Peter's Failure - Replacing Devotion with Action

Step 4 to Peter's Failure

(Matthew 26:57 NKJV) And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

(Matthew 26:58 NKJV) But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh
Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying
Step 3 to Peter's Failure - Replacing Devotion with Action
Step 4 to Peter's Failure - Following Afar Off

Desire was there – then Something Happened / No Devotion – Autopilot – Follow Afar

I have known so many people who have slowly but surely drifted away because they began to follow Jesus from afar. At one time, the desire of their heart was to know the Lord and to walk with Him. But then something happened. When our fellowship with the Lord is no longer born out of our devotional life, our intimate times of fellowship with the Lord, and our Christian walk becomes actions, things we just do because that is what we do as Christians, we go to church on Sunday, we help the needy, we read the Bible, but we are no longer doing those things as intimacy with the Lord, but kind of like we just do them on autopilot, we will start to follow Him from afar.

Still See but Can't Hear

Oh I can still see Him, but I can't hear Him from the distance I am at. Peter could still see the Lord where he was at, but he couldn't hear Him.

Hebrews 2:1

That is why Hebrews says:

Hebrews 2:1 (NKJV) ¹Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Drift – Not Bombed / How Happen – Not giving Heed to Word / No longer Compass

Maybe your translation says slip, the word “slip” means “drift.” As we sail along spiritually, the danger is not that a bomb will sink us, but that we will slowly drift away. How does that happen? It happens when we fail to “give heed to the things which we have heard.” In other words, we drift when we fail to read the compass of God's Word.

Time Perhaps Enjoyed Getting Bearing / Word no longer Important / Anchored Deep / Vulnerable

There was a time, perhaps, when you needed, desired, and enjoyed getting your bearings by reading the Scriptures. But eventually you began following Jesus afar off, and the Word was no longer important. When that happens to me, I find myself drifting slowly and imperceptibly until suddenly I wonder, Where am I? How in the world did I get here? My faith didn't sink. I just started drifting away. You and I need to set our anchor deeply in the “things which we have heard”—the truths, doctrines, and principles of Scripture. Otherwise we too will be vulnerable to drifting away and following Jesus afar off.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh
Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying
Step 3 to Peter's Failure - Replacing Devotion with Action
Step 4 to Peter's Failure - Following Afar Off

Step 5 to Peter's Failure

(Matthew 26:58 NKJV) But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

Luke – Peter at Fire

Luke gives us a little more detail of this account (in that it was cold and Peter is warming himself by the fire):

Luke 22:54 - 55 (NKJV) ⁵⁴Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But Peter followed at a distance. ⁵⁵Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh
Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying

Step 3 to Peter's Failure - Replacing Devotion with Action

Step 4 to Peter's Failure - Following Afar Off

Step 5 to Peter's Failure - Getting Warm by the World's Fire

Seems Natural Result – Drawn to Worldly Flames / Maybe Old life not so Bad / Even Witness

It seems to be the natural result for people who follow Jesus from afar, and that is they find themselves being drawn back to worldly flames and fires. People often think, maybe my old life wasn't so bad after all. I'll go back to the old places, the old ways, the old things and sometimes kidding themselves that they could even be a witness there.

Christian find Misery in World / Too Much Lord

The Christian trying to warm himself by the fires of the enemy will always find misery in the world because, although he may have too much of the world to enjoy the Lord, he also has too much of the Lord to enjoy the world.

(Matthew 26:69 NKJV) Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

(Matthew 26:70 NKJV) But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

Denial 1

(Matthew 26:71 NKJV) And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

(Matthew 26:72 NKJV) But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

Denial 2

(Matthew 26:73 NKJV) And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."

Galilean Accent vs Jerusalem Accent / Pray same for You

Verse 73 - for your speech betrays you. - Peter being from Galilee had the Galilean accent that was noticeable there in Jerusalem, and people knowing that Jesus was from that region said hey your accent gives you away. I pray that is the same for you, anytime you are mixed in with the world (whether you are backslidden or witnessing) that your words will seem as a foreign accent to them, that they know there is something different about you. If your speech doesn't betray you, if your speech isn't foreign to the world in that it fits right in, you still have today to do something about it.

(Matthew 26:74 NKJV) Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

Denial 3

(Matthew 26:75 NKJV) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter Curses – Cock Crows / Greek Word Wept – From the Intestines

Feeling estranged from the Lord, yet a stranger to the world, Peter began to swear and curse vehemently—until he heard the cock crow. Then he wept bitterly. The Greek phrase, "wept bitterly," speaks of an emotion stemming from the intestines. In other words, it refers to a deep, gut-wrenching weeping.

What Caused to Weep – Jesus Looked at Him / Look not of Anger but Sympathy

What caused Peter to weep so bitterly? According to Luke's Gospel, at the moment Peter said, "Blankety blank, I don't know the man," the doors of Caiaphas' house suddenly swung open and Jesus was led out to the courtyard where He saw Peter sitting by the fire. "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter," writes Luke (see Luke 22:61). Jesus looked on Peter and Peter was broken. The look was not one of anger, but of understanding; not one of condemnation but one of sympathy. It was a look that touched Peter's heart deeply.

Luke 22:61 - 62 (NKJV) ⁶¹And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, *"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* ⁶²So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus knew Peter Would / When Return – Not If Return

Jesus knew Peter would go through this, for He had told him only hours earlier, "Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you and sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you and when you return (not "if you return" but "when"), strengthen the brethren" (Luke 22:32).

Luke 22:31 - 32 (NKJV) ³¹And the Lord said, *"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat."* ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

Jesus didn't just look Upon – But For / Go tell Peter – Appeared – 3 times to say I Love You

But Jesus didn't just look upon Peter, He later looked for Peter. Three days later, when Jesus rose from the dead, the angel in the tomb told Mary Magdalene, "Go tell His disciples and Peter" (Mark 16:7). In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul tells us that when Jesus rose from the dead, before He appeared to the other disciples, He sought out Peter. In John 21, Jesus ministered to Peter specifically when He gave him the opportunity to say, "I love You, Lord," three times—just as Peter had denied Him three times.

Mark 16:7 (NKJV) ⁷But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

1 Corinthians 15:3 - 5 (NIV) ³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.

John 21:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"* He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, *"Feed My lambs."*

Day of Pentecost – Display of Restoration / Disciples stood with Peter / Historical Mocking

On the Day of Pentecost, it says Peter stood up and preached and 3,000 got saved. Powerful display of restoration as God still chooses to use Peter despite his failure. But can I also point out to you, it says that the on that day it says that the disciples stood beside Peter. May we learn from that example, that as God restores a man or woman, we are to stand next to them. Historical writings say that some people would mock Peter as he walked by making the sound of a rooster crowing, that would be enough for most people to crawl into a hole and just wait it out till death or the rapture, but Peter knows restoration, and he knows the freedom and forgiveness in it, and he goes on to walk on, regardless of the darts of the world, for Peter knows that the Lord comes looking for His own.

Acts 2:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, *"Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words."*

Video – "Does Anyone Hear Her"

Maybe you've been Weeping / Drifted – Walked into Sin / Know Jesus comes Looking for You

Maybe you've been weeping bitterly today. Maybe you've ignored the Word, drifted away, and like Peter, walked into sin. Know this, precious friend: Jesus comes by you at your lowest point, and He looks upon you not in anger but in understanding. "I have prayed for you," He says, "and when you're converted—when you get through this time of pain and sorrow—strengthen your brethren as I anoint you and continue to use you."

Return to Jesus – Watch Him Work / God uses Broken Things (Soil, Clouds, Grain, Bread, Box)

Return to Jesus, and watch what our loving Lord will do with the mess you've made. He'll turn it around for His glory. Listen precious saint, God uses broken things. Broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to give rain, broken grain to give bread, broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns to greater power than ever. You watch. You'll see.

Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh
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The Garden of Gethsemane (Christmas Service 2007)

Matthew 26:30-46

Holiday Hype / Multi-Events / Building to Climatic Day / Doesn't meet Expectation - Disappoint

There is a lot of hype to the holidays. We buy presents; we attend countless parties and holiday events. We travel to see relatives. We stress ourselves out building up for that one climactic day each year, and then it is over. If we were honest, we would admit that, most of the time, Christmas never lives up to our expectations. For many, the season will leave us disappointed.

Young Mother

I heard about a young mother who was having a bad day. Her phone rang and a kindly voice on the other end said, "How are you, sweetheart? What kind of day are you having?" "Oh, Mother," said the woman, "I'm having such a bad day. The baby won't eat, the washing machine broke down, the house is a mess, I haven't had a chance to go Christmas shopping, and we're having two couples over for dinner tonight." The mother was overwhelmed with sympathy. "Oh, honey," she said, "sit down, relax, and close your eyes. I'll be over in half an hour. You can go shopping. I'll clean the house and cook your dinner for you. I'll feed the baby, and I'll call a repairman to fix the washing machine. Now stop crying. I'll do everything. In fact, I'll even call John for you at the office and ask him to come home early and help out." "John?" said the housewife. "Who's John?" "Why, John! Your husband!... Isn't this 555-1212?" "No, it's 555-2121." "Oh" said the kindly person, "I must have the wrong number." There was pause. Then the helpless woman asked, "Well, are you still coming over?"

Divine Design – Here today in this Passage / Jesus in the Garden / Christmas story only Beginning

No doubt we are here in our passage of Scripture today by Divine design, for what a great place to be in our through the Bible study only two days away from Christmas than right here looking at Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Christmas story is only the beginning of the story, as awesome as that story is about God taking on the form of man, leaving His throne, to be born in a manger in a town of no respect called Bethlehem. If God decided to come today, rather than 2000 years ago the equivalent story of the manger would have been that God was laid in a cardboard box next to a dumpster behind the supermarket.

Dirty Ole Manger way to the Cross / but Before Cross was the Garden

That dirty ole manger was the way to the cross; but before the cross was the Garden, the Garden of Gethsemane.

Victory completed at Cross – Won in the Garden / First Adam – Last Adam

As I have always said, I feel the victory wasn't won on the cross, but in garden as Jesus said not Thy will but Your will be done, and His mind was steeled that nothing would keep Him from going to the cross to redeem (buy back you and I) from our sins. The cross was the completion of the victory that had already been won in the Garden. How amazing it is that the first Adam made a decision in a Garden (called Eden) to sell man into sin; and the Last Adam (Jesus Christ) made a decision in a Garden (called Gethsemane) to purchase man back from sin (even at the cost of His own body).

Want a rich Christmas – Look at it in Light of Garden / Keep from Disappointment / Drops for You

Do you want to richen the meaning of Christmas? Consider it in light of the Garden. How can we keep from being disappointed this Holiday season? How can we ensure that this Christmas season will live up to our great expectations? By putting it into the perspective of the Garden, the Holy God sweating drops of blood for you and for me, becoming steeled in His will that He would lay it all out, pour it all out, for you and for me.

Start in Verse 30 / Passover Complete

Let's pick it up in verse 30 for context. They are in the Upper Room, the Passover meal has been eaten, Jesus instituted Communion, and we pick up there.

All will be Scattered / Peter's Promise

(Matthew 26:30 NKJV) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Make a Powerful Point / So Wonderful – So Releasing / Simply Sing / Distant – Anxiety / Mary

They sing a hymn, and start to make their way to the Mount of Olives to pray. May I make a powerful point before we move on, especially for this time of the year, especially for the fast and hectic paced lives that we live in this modern age, and that is to sing unto the Lord. How I love to come here for corporate worship, it is a wonderful time, especially considering the fact that Jesus is our worship leader, that He worships in our midst (Hebrews 2). But I have found it so wonderful, so releasing (and I am speaking of the release of the Spirit of God in my life) when I get alone in a quiet place, and I simply sing unto the Lord. No music player, no whistling while I work, but undivided attention to the Lord and the words I sing unto Him. I have found it to be one of the most powerful spiritual applications in my life. I simply sing unto Him, one song several times or several songs one time, but as I do I feel a change come over me. I have purposed that when I feel irritated, when I feel distant, when I feel loaded with anxiety, that I am going to go into a quiet place and sing unto the Lord until I feel the release of that fleshly grip, and then the sweet presence of the Lord. Sometimes I need to sit there for 20 minutes, 30 minutes, even an hour, but I have never not had the victory, never! It really is like Mary with her alabaster box, just broken open and poured out to the Lord, and then the fragrance if Christ is release through the room. I'll close my eyes, lift my voice, "let my lifesong sing to you, let my lifesong sing to you, I want to sign your name to the end of this day, that my heart was true, let my lifesong sing to You, halleluiah, halleluiah, halleluiah! It has never failed me, for He never fails.

(Hebrew 2:11-12) ¹¹For 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, ¹²saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

(Psalm 40:3) ³ He has put a new song in my mouth— Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the LORD.

(Psalm 42:8) ⁸ The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song shall be with me— A prayer to the God of my life.

(Matthew 26:31 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

(Matthew 26:32 NKJV) "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

Quoting Zechariah / Love this Aspect of Jesus – Even when we Flee – He Searches us Out

Jesus quoted a prophecy from Zechariah that referred to Him personally (Zechariah 13:7). "Even though you will be offended in Me, even though you will scatter from Me, I will rise again," Jesus said. "And when I do, I will go before you into Galilee and meet with you there." I love Jesus Christ for this aspect of His character. You see, even when we are flaky, even when we flee, even when we are fickle, Jesus the Good Shepherd never leaves or forsakes us. Instead, He says, "I will search you out. When I rise again, I will see you and go before you into Galilee."

Christian Settle that Today – Not hear the Whisper of Enemy or Flesh / Holiday – Holy Day

Christian, will you settle that today, will you not allow anything to keep you from enjoying Him this Holiday season. Holiday means "holy day", and the Holy One of Israel has come for you, and He comes looking for you, and nothing will keep Him from coming to you. Let nothing or no one whisper in your ear, that God doesn't care, that you have blown it, rather know today and this "holy day" (holiday) that the Lord is coming for you, going before you, and is for you!

(Matthew 26:33 NKJV) Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

(Matthew 26:34 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

(Matthew 26:35 NKJV) Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

Last Study – Step 1 / But even Knowing Failure says Come Pray / Lord always wanting Fellowship

I refer you back to our study last week on the steps Peter took that led him to his place of denying the Lord, and it all begins here with overconfidence in the flesh.. But even though Jesus knows Peter is going to deny Him, the Lord still says come on and pray with Me Peter. The Lord is always ready and wanting us to join in Him in fellowship and intimacy, it is the whole reason He came, and it why Christmas is “merry” (joyous), because the King says “come”.

Jesus Prays at Gethsemane

(Matthew 26:36 NKJV) Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

(Matthew 26:37 NKJV) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

(Matthew 26:38 NKJV) Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

Gethsemane” means “oil press” / Olives Crushed – Oil Holy Spirit / Clear Picture / Crushed - Sin

The word “gethsemane” means “oil press.” In an oil press, olives were crushed, broken, and ground up so that oil might be produced. Scripturally, oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4:6). The picture is clear: before the Holy Spirit could be given (so man could be born again), Someone had to be crushed and broken. And that Someone was Jesus Christ. It is not coincidental that it was in the Garden of Gethsemane where He felt the crushing, the heaviness, and the burden of what was about to happen when He who knew no sin would become sin for us, and be separated from the Father (2 Corinthians 5:21).

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

Jesus met there often with Disciples /

The garden of Gethsemane, in John 18:2 says that Jesus went there often. Luke says that Jesus would often spend the night there after a day of ministry.

(John 18:2) ²And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.

Corinthians Jesus last Adam / Garden – Relationship Broken, Sin Covered, Sword Unsheathed

Corinthians calls Jesus the Last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45):

- In the Garden of Eden, man’s relationship with the Father was broken because of rebellion. Now in the Garden of Gethsemane, man’s relationship with the Father was restored through submission (thy will be done)
- In the Garden of Eden, the first Adam tried to hide from God to cover His sin (with fig leaves). In the Garden of Gethsemane, the last Adam bared His soul to God, (Father is there be any other way).
- In the Garden of Eden, a sword was unsheathed by an angel and man was driven out so man would not have to live for eternity in his fallen and corrupt state. In the Garden of Gethsemane, a sword was put away and a man was healed as Jesus would heal the ear of the High Priest’s servant named Malchus.

The comparison and contrast is intriguing. Adam, who represented man, the best of man, and Man blew it in the Garden of Eden, but Jesus triumphed for us in the garden of Gethsemane.

(1 Corinthians 15:45) ⁴⁵And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

Jesus Sorrowful –Knew what lies Ahead / Wrath, Suffering, Pain / Worse - Separation

Verse 38 - Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." Jesus began to feel sorrowful and very heavy. Why? Because He knew what lay ahead.

Should He go through with this plan to pay for our sins, He would not only feel the wrath of God poured upon Him as He died in our place, but His suffering would go much farther and longer than what we could possibly imagine. Jesus didn’t only suffer extreme physical pain as His body would be beaten, as His body would be whipped and scourged, as His body would be nailed to a rugged cross (and living within the Roman empire Jesus would have passed many a crosses with convicts hanging from them, all the reminder that someday His day would come as He would become a convict Himself as He bore the sins of man), but Jesus on top of all the pain and suffering, would above all face separation from His Father for the first time ever. As He would take on the sins of the world for those 6 hours on that Thursday, He

would suffer and experience separation from His Heavenly Father for God is too holy, His eyes too pure to look upon sin, and for those 6 hours God the Father would turn His back on His Son.

(Isaiah 59:1-2) ¹ Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

(Habakkuk 1:13) ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

Thought of Separation – break Heart to Death / Drops of Blood / Father turns Back / Father or Ray

The thought of that separation was enough to break Jesus' heart, His soul was exceedingly sorrowful, even to the point of death (verse 38 says). The thought of it so intense that Jesus sweat drops of blood (Luke 22:44), a medical condition known as hematohidrosis, where the capillaries in the sweat glands bust. Maybe 6 hours doesn't sound like much to us, but we are talking Holy God, perfect Son, since eternity began (if you will) never, ever, ever, experiencing separation from one another, and now on a Thursday in Jerusalem they will not only be separated, but separated in a most horrible way, as the Father turns His back on His only Begotten Son who is laden and overflowing the sins of man. This is the battle, this is the decision that is before Jesus, separation from My Father for 6 hours, or separation from Ray Bollas for eternity. And He chose me, He chose you, and I am not sure we will ever fully grasp what that meant or what that cost Him, but when we grasp just a glimpse of what that means, the Christmas story takes on a whole new meaning, this moment in the Garden takes on a whole new meaning, and the cross is more than 6 hours of physical pain. Six hours separated from the Father, or all eternity separated from Ray Bollas.....and He choose me.

(Luke 22:44) ⁴⁴And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

My 17 month Old / Wish could never End / Wonder what Like for Jesus and Father / Hard on Father

My little 17 month old isn't the tummy cuddle type (couple minutes at the most), he is pure boy, a go, go, go until there isn't a drop of energy left, then it is put me to sleep with my bottle in my crib so I can rest up to do it all over again tomorrow. Well Monday night he woke up in the middle of the night (I tried to do the ole nudge Renee thing, but it didn't work), so I made him a new bottle and came into his room to give it to him, and as soon as I walked into the room, his arms go up, so I take him in my arms, sit on the rocker and start to rock and he immediately falls asleep in my arms, with his face right before my face. I stared at his face, so beautiful, so sweet, so peaceful; I kissed him over and over, I rested my face against his warm face, I whispered in his ears, I love you Camden Graham, with all my heart, with all my being I love you. I remember saying to myself, I wish this night would never end, I wish it could last forever, I love him so much. I wonder what it was like for Jesus and the Father as they looked at each other that last time before the Immaculate Conception. I wonder in my finite mind when did they begin the departing embrace, was it days, months, millenniums (again in our human terms). How they would have looked at each other, rested face against face, whispered I love you, wishing this night would never end. But Jesus steps out of eternity into mans time domain. Again I don't know how the whole time domain thing works for God, but I wonder what it must have been like as God the Father would anxiously wait those 9 months for that Christmas Day, Unto us a Child is Born, unto us a Son is given! God the Father watching and waiting, and then saying, "there He is, My Son" oh He is so beautiful. Though never separated Spiritually while in the womb, and never separated Spiritually for those 33 years that Jesus walked this earth, now before Jesus is the decision to separate from His Father for 6 hours, or to be separated from Ray Bollas for all eternity, and He chose me. My what this Garden means to me. And, let it be recognized, in the Garden Jesus is talking to His Father, and the Father is in concurrence with Jesus, yes I love him enough to go through this, to watch My love, My beautiful Son endure this extreme physical abuse, while I have to turn My back on Him, and hear Him cry out to His Father, My God, My God, why have thou forsaken Me; oh the heartbreak that must have caused the Father as those words ascended before Him in heaven

(Isaiah 9:6-7) ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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.

Free – Not Cheap

Salvation is free, but it is not cheap.

(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."

Always going Farther – All the way to Cross

That's Jesus—always going a little further. He didn't stop at Gethsemane. He went all the way to Calvary for you and for me.

Any other Way / Join Church, do Good Deeds, be Nice Person / Nothing less than Death

"Is there any other way people can be saved, Father? Can they join a church? Can they give canned goods at Christmas time? Can they treat their pets nice?" People think that if they're just a "good person" or a "nice guy" they'll be saved. In reality, it took nothing less than the death of Jesus Christ to save anyone from any one sin. *Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world:*

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

(Matthew 26:40 NKJV) Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

(Matthew 26:41 NKJV) "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

(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."

First Time is it Possible – Second since it is Not / Prayer is also Confirmation / Be people of Prayer

Notice the first time Jesus says "if it is possible", this second time He says "if the cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done". Through prayer confirmation is given, there is no other way. Prayer brings us into confirmation of what the will of the Father is for our life, Prayer goes beyond petition (asking) it brings us into the confirmation of God's will for our lives, so precious saints let us be a people who pray.

(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.

(Matthew 26:45 NKJV) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

(Matthew 26:46 NKJV) "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Jesus through Communion – Steeled to the Cross

Jesus through this time of prayer and communion with the Father has steeled His will that nothing will keep Him from the cross.

Play on Words – Delivered into Hands / At Altar laying of Hands Symbolic / Jesus into Hands Sin

Verse 45 - the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners - I think this is a play on words, it is more than the sinners who have come to betray Him and take Him, but that Jesus was being delivered into the hands of sinners, you and I. When it was time to sacrifice the Passover lamb, the head of the house would lay his hands upon the head of the lamb and confess his guilt, which in turn symbolically represent that he was transferring his sin unto that innocent substitute, and that the innocent lamb would take his punishment and shame. Jesus says here after this time in the Garden, I am putting Myself into the hands of sinners.

In the Garden – Put Himself into Hands of Sinner / Did it at the Last Supper

It was in the Garden that Jesus put Himself into the hands of sinner, any sinner would be willing to lay their hands upon Him and confess their sin and guilt upon Him, the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). He did it at the Last Supper, where He said take and eat this is My body broken for you, and take drink this is My blood poured out for you.

*1 Corinthians 11:23 - 26 (NKJV) ²³For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, *Take, eat; this is My body which**

is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” ²⁵In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, *“This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”* ²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Communion Today – Enjoy Him / Christ – Mass / Willing to go Farther – to Cross / Wish not End

Today as we take Communion, Christians enjoy Him. For this is Christmas, the Christ-Mass, that he came to put Himself into the hands of sinner; that He would be willing to separate Himself from His heavenly Father, for you and for me. That He would be willing to go further, all the way to the cross for you and for me. Because He envisioned that day when we would say, “I do”, I do receive you as my Lord and Savior. He would envision the day when we would lay our head on His shoulder, rest so sweetly in Him and on Him, and that He would rest His face against our face, that He would whisper words of love in our ears, and we would whisper them back. That He could stare at us for all of eternity, and never have to wish that this night would never end, because by His sacrifice, it never would, for we would be His, and he would be ours.

Maybe Today you are Here / Looking for Hope / Simeon in Luke 2

But maybe today you are here and you are because you are searching out these things of Christ, maybe you have drifted far from Him, and maybe you have been looking for hope in what seems like a hopeless world, let me share the story of a man that literally held Jesus in his hands, his name was Simeon and his story can be found in Luke 2:

(Luke 2:25-32) ²⁵And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ²⁹ “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

He Waiting / Israel waited 400 years – Dark Days / Consolation - Comfort

Simeon’s most striking description is that he was “waiting for the Consolation of Israel.” For 400 years, since the closing of the Old Testament period, heaven had been silent. God had not spoken. Those were dark days. However, Simeon was holding on to God’s promise of a deliverer, a redeemer, the Messiah who would come to bring peace. “Consolation” means, “to come alongside, to comfort.” It comes from the same word that describes the Spirit as our Comforter. The NCV translates this phrase, “He was waiting for the time when God would take away Israel’s sorrow.”

Spirit Revealed he not see Death / Imagine every Face he Looked Into / People stopped Hoping

The Spirit revealed to him “that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” God had said to him, “You will not die until your old eyes have beheld my Son, your Savior, in the flesh.” I imagine that old man walking the streets of Jerusalem, looking intently in the faces of strangers, asking the Lord, “Will I see him today? Could this be the one?” Everyone knew the prophecy, but there had been no word from God in so long. People had stopped hoping. They were consumed with the drudgery of their lives... but not Simeon!

One day Spirit Guided him to Temple / Took Jesus in Arms / Looked into His Eyes / Now Peace

One day, “the Spirit” guided Simeon to the temple at the same time Mary and Joseph had come to offer their sacrifice and present Jesus to the Lord. When Simeon’s old eyes fell on the baby, he knew who he was. We don’t know what he said to Mary or if he said anything at all. We know “he took him in his arms.” Imagine the emotions that must have flown through Simeon at that moment! He held the Anointed One “in his arms.” He held God “in his arms!” I wonder what the baby did? Did he cry, kick, sleep, or just coo softly? I think they looked into each other’s eyes. Note, at that moment Simeon “blessed God.” He said that he could now “depart in peace.” He was ready to die. God’s promise had been fulfilled “according to [His] word.” He says, “I have seen your salvation.” He knew that month-and-a-half-old baby was his “salvation.” The same is true for you, you need not look any further for He is right before you today.

Give Yourself a Gift

Give yourself not a gift this Christmas, but the gift. You have bought everyone else a gift, give yourself a gift, the gift of hope and Eternal Life, the Comforter, Jesus Christ.

In the Garden of Prayer **(26:30-46)**

Day is Thursday / Just finished the Passover Meal – On way to Garden

It is Thursday; it is the last day of Jesus' life. Jesus and the disciples have just finished the Passover Supper where Jesus instituted Communion, and they leave the Upper Room, and start the walk to the Garden of Gethsemane, so let's pick it up here in verse 30.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

- Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:
 - Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
 - Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
 - Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)
- 11th – Monday
 - Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
 - Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
- 12th – Tuesday
 - Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 - Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 - The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 - Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
- 13th – Wednesday
 - The Gospels are Silent
- 14th – Thursday –
 - Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 - Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 - The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 - The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 - Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
- 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
- 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
- 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

(Matthew 26:30 NKJV) And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

(Matthew 26:31 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

(Matthew 26:32 NKJV) "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."

(Matthew 26:33 NKJV) Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

(Matthew 26:34 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

(Matthew 26:35 NKJV) Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And so said all the disciples.

Focus on Peter – But All Disciples / Soon Establishing Human Leadership / Reminded of Aaron

Verse 35 - And so said all the disciples – We all focus in on Peter, but notice here that all the disciples jump in there to say us too, we won't deny you. We are only days away from God establishing His human leadership, as He will establish the apostolic ministry and these men will be the groundbreakers and makers of the establishment of the Church; I am reminded the last time God did this, and that was several hundred years ago after the Exodus from Egypt; God, only days away from establishing His human leadership for the Nation of Israel has Moses up on the Mount with Him as He delivers the Commandments (the Standards) of God to the people, also at that time God is giving Moses instruction on the building of the Tabernacle and the establishing of the Priesthood that would come through Aaron. You remember the story, for as God was establishing the High Priesthood through Aaron, Aaron the High Priest to be is making the "Golden Calf" for the people to worship; and who can forget Aaron's answer when Moses says what is up with the "calf", and Aaron said it just popped out of the fire.

God chooses Leaders – even knowing they Weak / Does Same for You – Settle that Today

Christian, God chooses His leaders (and His people), even knowing their weakness and frailty, and He does the same for you. Christian, listen, lets settle that today, lets settle that right now, what past is passed, God knew your failure before you did, and like Aaron, like the disciples, He still says to you, “alright, lets get going”.

The Pearl a Little Irritant / Must be Broken Open – Die - to get to Treasure / You are Treasured

Some time ago, we studied about pearl harvesting -- how, like the oyster, God takes us in, an irritating grain of sand, and over time covers us with His beautiful covering that we may become more precious and more valuable for His Kingdom. But here is another interesting thought. Once the pearl is ready, a great price must be paid to see its beauty -- the oyster must die. It must be torn open in order to find the treasure within. So our Messiah was bruised and He was afflicted. He was torn for us, that we could become the beautiful treasure God intended from the very beginning. Each one of us is a treasure in the Lord's sight. We are highly privileged to be covered and cleansed and bought with a price! It is a great honor -- even the greatest honor -- to be called sons and daughters of the King! Through His sacrificial work, we have become the head and not the tail! We have become more than conquerors!

The Disciples promise not to Fail – Fail Miserable / Learning who they Are – Who sustains / Grace

So here are these disciples (Aaron too) all promising not to fail, but failing miserably, but you see these disciples here are learning their humanity, they are learning their limitation, they are learning who they are and who sustains them. These disciples, Aaron, all had to learn grace before they could offer grace, for it is all about grace. Could you imagine if none of them did deny Jesus, could you imagine if none of them scattered when the 600 soldiers came marching into the Garden? How much grace, how much patience would they have had for the Christian who was weak? What would they say to the Christian who said (choking back tears), I shared the gospel with my friend yesterday at work and he laughed at me, I'm never going to share again. They would be like you wimp, we stood up to 600 soldiers for Christ, and you cower in the presence of your coworker, depart from us you have no right to call yourself Christian. In the shadows of the Garden they would say, “I understand, but fear not for God stands with you, and He will bring you boldness”.

Grace only given to Failures / 55 in a 55

Grace can only be given to failure. If a police officer pulls me over for doing 55 in a 55 zone, and then says alright I'm gona cut you some slack today, give you some grace and not write you a ticket, we would say what did you pull me over for in the first place. But have me doing 70 in a 55 (or 85 in a 55 if my wife is driving) and the police officer say I'm going to cut you some slack, show you some grace and let you off, we would be celebrating and singing halleluiah all the way home (going 5 miles under the speed limit I might add). We would celebrate that grace can only be given to a failure. The disciples are learning about themselves, that they are failures, and that God is gracious and patient with man.

Jesus says to Peter – Satan wants to Sift / Peter faith didn't Fail – Peter Just failed before God

Jesus said to Peter (and applies to all the disciples), Satan has asked to sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail, and when you return to Me, strengthen your brethren. Peter's faith (and the other disciples, except Judas), did not fail. Peter's faith didn't fail, Peter just failed before His God. Peter failed before His God, but He didn't change God's. Peter didn't become a Buddhist or something, he simply failed before his God.

***Luke 22:31 - 32 (NKJV)**³¹And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”*

Important to Remember when we Fail / Like Peter we failed – but still Before / Peter - Judas

I think that is important as we look at ourselves when we fail, and we look at others when they fail, and we see that they/we failed before God, but we didn't fail in faith. Yes like Peter we failed before God but we are still before our God; we didn't change God's, we just didn't allow God to change us. Judas failed in faith, Peter failed in faithfulness. Peter blew it, Judas betrayed Him. Christian, you are saved, you are His, and yes you may have failed before Him, but you are still before Him. Amazingly Christians can be some of the most unforgiving people on the planet, and often mark somebody off because they failed God, and didn't remain perfect; Christian, don't listen to their whispers or the whispers of Satan.

Righteousness – Right Standing / George Dantzig / Be Bold – Quit Listening

Proverbs 28:1 says, The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion. Righteousness, means “right standing”, and Christian you have “right standing” before Christ because He didn’t fail, be bold in your righteousness. I am reminded of the story of a young man in college; during his first year of graduate study at the University of California at Berkeley, George B. Dantzig arrived late for a statistics class. He saw two problems on the blackboard. Assuming they were homework, he copied them and a few days later turned in his solutions. One Sunday morning six weeks afterward, the professor appeared at Dantzig’s door, waving a manuscript. It turned out that the professor had merely written two examples of unsolvable problems on the blackboard. The manuscript was Dantzig’s work readied for publication. George Dantzig later became known as the father of linear programming. Had this guy gotten to class little earlier to hear the professor say that these problems “couldn’t be solved”, sadly, he might have never even have tried to solve them — probably like all the other students in the class. We humans give up way too easily — someone says it can’t be done and we don’t give it a second thought! We need to be a bit more tenacious as believers. Is there something you feel God is calling you to do but others have been less than encouraging (maybe even judgmental)? Go for it! Be bold! Don’t let others dictate what you should or shouldn’t be doing — leave that to the Lord!

Proverbs 28:1 (NKJV) ¹The wicked flee when no one pursues, But the righteous are bold as a lion.

[Jesus Prays at Gethsemane](#)

Verses 36-45 / Focused in Jesus / This time Focus on Us / New Years – In the Garden of Prayer

In verses 36-45, Jesus will pray in the Garden, and we will read of 3 rounds of prayer that Jesus entered into. In our last study we focused primarily on Jesus in the 3 rounds of prayer, but with this being our first study of the New Year I wanted to come back to this point, the prayer in the Garden, and I wanted to start off our New Year speaking about prayer, and specifically us praying. Maybe you have even made a New Years Resolution to be more a person of prayer, to tap into the power source for life changing results. Well I think it good we start here this New Year. I have titled this message, “In the Garden of Prayer”, and I pray that is how we will begin to view prayer in our lives, as if we are entering into a beautiful Garden, made for us to walk in, to view, and to enjoy. I special place in the midst of this world.

[First Time - Jesus Prays at Gethsemane](#)

(Matthew 26:36 NKJV) Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there."

Gethsemane means “oil press”, and Jesus would be pressed and crushed here in the Garden.

(Matthew 26:37 NKJV) And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed.

(Matthew 26:38 NKJV) Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.

Jesus felt away from Home / Roberts – Homesick / Jesus was out of His Elements – Sin World

Verse 37 - and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed – I like that great bible scholar of old (Roberts) who produced the great text, “Word pictures in the New Testament”, and in his mastery of the Greek language, he says in the Greek the literal translation could have read, “that Jesus felt away from Home”. Jesus began to be homesick, for He was out of His element. He is God, the Son of God, and here He is leaving His heavenly throne, His Loving Father, and entering into this rabid-invested sin-sickened world. Jesus felt away from Home.

Prayer lots of Things – One thing is a Homecoming / Write it Down – Nightstand – Father Waits

Prayer is a lot of things, and one of the things that it is, is “coming home”, it is a family reunion. Don’t know if you ever considered that about your prayer time, but I hope you do from here on, and that is the first point I want you to write down, write it in your Bible, write it on a piece of paper, place next to your nightstand, so in your mind you will always have on the forefront of your mind what prayer is, “Prayer is a Homecoming”, and the Father is joyfully and anxiously waiting for you.

Norway

Two years ago I went to Norway for work, and I can't explain how homesick I was, how much I longed for and missed my wife and family. All day that is all I could think of; and I couldn't wait to get on the internet to shoot an email off, and the evening phone calls, regardless of the price. Those emails and phone calls were my connection back home, it was my linking back to my love. I was homesick, even though I flew to Norway via first class, even though I stayed in a five-star hotel (where the tile floor in the bathroom was heated), even though I ate at the finest restaurants in Norway, I was desperately homesick. Jesus felt away from home, He was out of His element, He was homesick, and prayer in the Garden was His linking back to Home, and as we will read, it was what got Him through what was before Him.

Prayer is a Homecoming – Your Father Waits for You

Prayer is a homecoming, I pray you have a homecoming tomorrow, for your Heavenly Father is joyously and anxiously waiting for you back Home.

(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."

Jesus always going a little Further

Jesus always going a little further for us; He says if it is possible, let it pass; but as we studied last time, it wasn't.

Consider this – Jesus takes on Sin of World / Pedophile / Want to Rile me Up

But consider this, Jesus will take on the sins of the world, He will become "if you will" a pedophile, a rapist, a Peeping Tom, a murderer, He will take on the sins of Adolf Hitler, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Ted Bundy. The perfect and pure Son takes it all on, and then He has to stand before His Father, and say Father behold your Son, knowing that His Father cannot look upon sin, and would turn His back on His Son. Boy if you want to get me riled up, bring me a person who says that Jesus Christ is judgmental and unloving. Are you kidding me, whoever says such things should imagine what it would be like for them if they took on the look and name of Jeffrey Dahmer, and everywhere they went people would go, look it is that pedophile who killed all those young boys, and yet you could never say, no it not true, that was some other man's sin, I didn't do those things. Jesus Christ when He hung on the cross never said they aren't mine! Anyone who thinks Jesus is judgmental and unloving, has no idea what it really meant for the perfect God to trade places with sinful, and become "if you will" a pedophile, a rapist, a Peeping Tom, a murderer, He will take on the sins of Adolf Hitler, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Ted Bundy.

What could you have Done – Depart from Me / Took it all – so we can have it All

But for you who do know, what could you or have you ever done that could make Him say, "depart from Me". He took it all, so you can have it all, and that all is all of Him. So take it!

(Matthew 26:40 NKJV) Then He came to the disciples and found them asleep, and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?"

(Matthew 26:41 NKJV) "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Easy watch 2 hr Movie – Struggle Pray 1 hr

Verse 40 - Could you not watch with Me one hour - Amazing how easy it is to watch a 2 hour movie, but the struggle to pray one hour.

What a Chapter this would have Been if not Sleeping – Only Record what Heard / Same for Us

What an amazing chapter this would have been, had the disciples not fallen asleep. They record what they heard, but only what they heard before they fell asleep. This is a picture of prayer, the way it is for all of us, when we choose sleep (or whatever it may be) over prayer, we miss out on what more we could have heard if we would have stayed awake and spoke with Him, and quieted ourselves to hear from Him.

What Jesus saying – Spirit willing, Flesh Weak / Spirit Groans to link back Home / Free-Will

Verse 41 - The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. – What is Jesus saying here when He says the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak? He is saying there is a free-will battle going on within every man and woman. You see the Spirit is always willing, the Spirit is always seeking to link back to the home front. Romans 8 says that the Spirit groans within us. The Spirit yearns to fellowship and be fed manna from heaven, so much so that it groans, it yearns, it desires. Although the Spirit groans, it can not violate man's free-will (which is our flesh); if man had no free-will, then the Spirit would supersede and override all obstacles to get to the fellowshiping there at and in the home front, the throne of God.

Romans 8:18-25 (NKJV) ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ¹⁹For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. ²³Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. ²⁴For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

2 Corinthians 5:1-11 (NKJV) ¹For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. ⁵Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. ⁹Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. ¹¹Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

How do we Overcome the Flesh / Determine it the Night Before / Is it a Calling or a Clock

How do we overcome the weakness of the flesh? I could say a lot of things, but right now I just want to say one thing, we need to put the flesh to bed. Sounds like a contradiction to our story, but I specifically am talking about our morning prayer time, getting equipped for the day before us, the example Jesus gave throughout the Scriptures as we see Him arising early to start His day in prayer, and then having that prayer time set the stage for the rest of the day, and the prayer He would have throughout the day. I find my morning prayer time is greatly dependant on the night before; as I set in my mind, hey tomorrow is Homecoming, I don't want to miss that, I remind myself that I will get to tap into the power source before I start my day, I get to fellowship with God Himself (and He can't wait to fellowship with me – amazingly) and how that will greatly affect my day, who will lead that day, what direction will I take based on His leading, and many other things. I have found that my morning prayer time is most greatly affected by what I determine it to be the night before, will I turnoff the television, look forward to the morning, or will I wake-up and start prayer off with the first box on my list of things to do. Can I ask you Christian, what is it that gets you up in the morning, is it an alarm clock or is it a calling. Prayer is a homecoming, I pray you have a homecoming tomorrow, for your Heavenly Father is joyously and anxiously waiting for you back Home.

Second Time - Jesus Prays at Gethsemane

(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.

Eyes Heavy / Satan knows Power in Prayer – Profit in Study / Mix it Up

Verse 43 - for their eyes were heavy - I can relate to this. I can read TIME Magazine and be fine. But when I open the Bible or start to pray, my eyes get heavy. Why? Because Satan knows there is power in prayer and profit in Bible study. He doesn't care if you're reading the newspaper. But read the Word or pray, and you can count on your eyes getting heavy, the telephone ringing, the baby crying, and your stomach rumbling. When I kneel by the couch in prayer and find myself "resting in the Lord" a little too literally, I go for a walk and pray along the way. It's much tougher to fall asleep when you're walking! Mix up your prayer so it doesn't become routine.

Corporate Prayer – Take the Opportunity

That is one of the reasons I love corporate prayer, I find it much more difficult to get distracted or fall asleep. When the opportunities for corporate prayer comes, I encourage you to seize hold of them.

Jesus prays the 2 time (will a 3rd) / Some say that is Lack of Faith

Jesus prays a second time (and will a third); some people say that it is a lack of faith to keep praying for something. Some teach that we should only ask once, and by faith believe. Well Jesus collapses that errant teaching.

Matthew 7 –Continual Tense / Isaiah 62 – Give Him no Rest

Matthew 7:7 is in the continual tense in the original language, it is keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking, the continually tense, we are to keep praying. Some think that we shouldn't ask twice because that is lack of faith. Isaiah 62 says we are to give God no rest, we are not to keep silent, but to give Him no rest until He establishes what He has laid upon our hearts. I like that:

Matthew 7:7-8 (NKJV) ⁷"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

(Isaiah 62:6-7 NKJV) I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Pray has no set End Date / Let me Add – Look to the Fellowship First

Secondly, may you add after prayer is Homecoming, add underneath that that prayer has no set end date – it is a battle zone. God doesn't grow weary of us asking, so let us keep asking until it comes to pass; and it will come to pass, God will bring it to pass, or God will bring us in line with His will. This is the battle zone of life, and we must approach it as such. I think we all would like things to be comfortable, but that just isn't the way it is in the spiritual real, in spiritual warfare. In Iraq the greatest military in the world is battle a very depleted insurgence, but there is still nothing easy about the battle, just ask any soldier. We need to put it in our minds, this is a battle zone, and when we do that, we won't grow weary in the battles when they come. We said get bold, so lets get bold! And very importantly let me add here before moving on, look to the fellowship with God first, for if we make the petitioning foremost we can find ourselves discouraged before we even pray because there is so much to petition the Lord about (my job, my finances, my kids, illnesses, ministry, friends, unsaved friends and family); we can get anxiety just thinking about those things and be discouraged about praying before we even start because we feel overloaded. Look forward to the fellowship first, and then the petitions will naturally take care of themselves because we will have peace and confidence because we know who is with us and for us. Prayer has no end date thankfully, and we have the wonderful privilege of coming before God continually.

Third Time - Jesus Prays at Gethsemane

(Matthew 26:44 NKJV) So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

(Matthew 26:45 NKJV) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

(Matthew 26:46 NKJV) "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Sleep On – OKJV / Jesus understand Humanity

I like the KJV of this verse, it say "sleep on". Understanding their humanity and frailty, Jesus looked at His disciples and said, "Sleep on."

Matthew 26:45 (KJV) ⁴⁵Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, *Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

They could Sleep – Even though Face covered with Blood / Enemy Plotting – Family, Marriage

Amazingly, Jesus says sleep on, even though His face was covered with blood; amazingly the disciples could see Jesus with His face covered with blood, His garment no doubt sprinkled with blood, and the disciple could look at Him and keep sleeping. You would think the disciples would see the blood and jump up and say what is it, this must be serious, but they sleep on. But while His disciples were sleeping,

His enemies were plotting. You can always be sure of that. There are meetings in hell to cause havoc in your family, your ministry, your occupation, and your marriage.

(Luke 22:44) *44* And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

Keep that in Mind next time Opt Out / Not Condemned / Petition and Protection / Disciples Collapsed – Not Jesus

Keep that in mind next time you opt for sleep over prayer. It's not that the Lord condemns you for lack of prayer. It's that the Enemy will exploit the situation. You see, prayer is not only for petition. It's also for protection. When you pray, there is a wall of protection round about you, your family, your ministry, and your marriage that is absent when you fail to pray. Jesus didn't collapse in this moment of temptation. The disciples did. He was praying. They were sleeping.

Why So – Free-will / It is our Free-will to Align Ourselves for Battle / Behind Him – By Ourselves

How is that so, why doesn't God just protect you? Because He still has to honor your free-will, and it is in your free-will, that you say go ahead, take it Lord. It is in our free-will that we align ourselves for battle, and we will align ourselves behind Him, or out there on the flank by ourselves.

Jesus could Rise – Because been Kneeling / If Knees Knocking – Get on Knee

Verse 46 - Rise, let us be going - Jesus could rise because He had been kneeling. He could stand before His enemies because He had been kneeling before His Father. If your knees are knocking, then kneel on them, they can't knock when your weight is upon them. What is the doctor going to say, what did the boss mean by that, the news isn't good; get on your knees for your knees can't knock when your weight is upon them.

Thirdly

So thirdly, add to your list underneath that prayer is homecoming, prayer has no set end date, add underneath those two, "prayer will bring you to you feet". Prayer will allow you to stand regardless of what is coming before you.

Conclusion

I pray that tomorrow you have a wonderful Homecoming!

The Night of Betrayal, Lies, and Denials **(Matthew 26:44-75)**

Day is Thursday / Just finished the Passover Meal – On way to Garden

It is Thursday; it is the last day of Jesus' life. Jesus and the disciples have just finished the Passover Supper where Jesus instituted Communion, and they have left the Upper Room and gone to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus has just finished praying to the Father three times, and we pick it up there in verse 44 as Jesus will say, "rise up, My betrayer is at hand".

The Jewish calendar of Events:

- Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:
 - Jesus Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
 - Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
 - Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)
- 11th – Monday
 - Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
 - Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
- 12th – Tuesday
 - Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 - Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 - The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 - Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
- 13th – Wednesday
 - The Gospels are Silent
- 14th – Thursday –
 - Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 - Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 - The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 - The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 - Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
- 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
- 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
- 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

Third Time - Jesus Prays at Gethsemane

(Matthew 26:44 NKJV) So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

(Matthew 26:45 NKJV) Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners.

(Matthew 26:46 NKJV) "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Sleep On – Tone of Voice / Time Gap / Watching them Sleep – Watching Camden / Before Them

So now the third time Jesus comes back to them and they are sleeping, which surprises not Jesus. We can read this and read it as Jesus being upset, the tone of His voice being harsh and judgmental, but as we read this in the OKJV, Jesus says to them sleep on (which doesn't sound too condemning when you think of it). So there is a gap in time between Jesus saying sleep on, and Jesus saying behold the hour is at hand. How long we do not know (because the disciples were sleeping and couldn't tell us), was it 5 minutes or 50 minutes, we do not know; but in that time period Jesus would be looking upon them as they slept, much like I do every night before I go to bed, I go into my 18 month old's room and I stand over and watch him sleep. As I do I pray for him, I adore him, and I give thanks for him. It is easy for me to believe Jesus would be doing the same; after 3 years with them men, 3 years of close personal relationships, long walks together from town to town, sleeping under the same stars, eating meals together, I can imagine Jesus looking at them as they slept, adoring them, thanking the Father for them, and praying for them. Jesus not only knew what was before Him (the cross), but He knew what was before these three men. Oh Father thank you for Peter, comfort Him while I am away, I know how big his heart is, and how crushing his denial will be to him, Papa wrap him in your arms of love while I am away. Oh John, you will grow old, exiled to Patmos, feeling forgotten, but you will see things that will blow you away on that Island as I give you the Revelation of Myself. James, seems it was only a few days ago you wanted to rain fire

down from heaven on the stubborn heart, my how the cross will change your heart; so much so you'll be the first of these Apostles to lay your life down for My namesake; Father thank you for him, Father thank you for these men. Father I count them worth it to go to the cross, to send this message of love to them. **Matthew 26:45 (KJV)** ⁴⁵*Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

LA Train Wreck

A Los Angeles Metrolink train wreck that killed 11 individuals and injured several others on January 27, 2005, left an indelible impression on Firefighter Captain Rosario. Hours after the rescue began, hope for finding other survivors was diminishing. Then one passenger indicated that another man was trapped under the debris. Using the jaws of life, rescuers were able to extricate a man named John from the wreckage. That's when Rosario saw the message. While John was pinned under a train seat and other debris from the crash, he wrote a message to his wife and children using his own blood. John was having trouble breathing and feared he would die. "With whatever energy he could summon and a heartbreaking economy of words, he scrawled a farewell in blood on the seat. 'I ♥ my kids. I ♥ Leslie,' he printed. The blood ink seemed to be running out as he got to the second sentence." Captain Rosario discovered that message, and as he later related the story for TV cameras, the firefighter choked with emotion. "The fact that this guy in this situation had the amount of love he had for his family, and for him to realize 'I'm possibly going to die here,' how could any words explain it?" In a similar way, God communicated his love for the world with the blood of his Son.

Jesus the Same / Disciples unaware Jesus standing over Them / He lies to Make Intercession

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever; and He is seated at the right-hand of the Father living to make intercession for us. These disciples were totally unaware that Jesus was standing over top of them, watching them, praying for them. I think we sometimes feel that way, that He is far away, but He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and He is not only living to make intercession for us, but He is watching over us, adoring us, and giving thanks for us, and that is each and everyone of us, for His grace is for failures, and nothing can ever keep us from that grace.

Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV) ⁸*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

Romans 8:34-35 (NKJV) ³⁴*Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* ³⁵*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

Jesus is Betrayed

(Matthew 26:46 NKJV) "Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

(Matthew 26:47 NKJV) And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

(Matthew 26:48 NKJV) Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him."

(Matthew 26:49 NKJV) Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

Cohort

John tells us this "great multitude" was a detachment a "cohort," or literally six hundred Roman soldiers according to Roman Military historical writings. Six hundred Roman soldiers came to apprehend the meekest Man on the face of the earth and a handful of sleepy disciples.

John 18:3 (NKJV) ³*Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.*

Kissed Repeatedly / Not – Handel's, Levitating, Glowing, Footprints / Ordinary Appearance

The Greek language indicates that Judas kissed Jesus repeatedly. Why? probably it was as a sign of identification. Jesus' appearance was so ordinary that neither the soldiers nor the company of religious leaders could pick Him out of the small crowd of twelve men. We tend to think of Jesus as glowing, huge in stature, or somehow standing out. Not so. Judas said, "He's so ordinary I'll have to identify Him with a kiss, not the One with Handel's Messiah playing around Him, or the One that leaves no footprints, or the One that is levitating 6 inches off the ground.

Isaiah 53:2 (NKJV) ² *For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,*

*And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

(Matthew 26:50 NKJV) But Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come?" Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him.

Friend / 1 Cor 10 – A way Out / 2 Rents – Taxes - Friends

Jesus called Judas "Friend" even at the moment of betrayal. Even here, Jesus gave Judas the opportunity to turn away and to change his mind. Jesus calls him friend to say that you haven't gone too far, you can come back and be received by Me, but sadly Judas doesn't and for many Christians they buy the lie that what they have done has gone too far, and that they can't come back to the Lord. Jesus also is providing Judas a way out, First Corinthians 10:13 makes it clear that in every temptation there's always a way out provided by God Himself. Here, Jesus is giving Judas a way out as He asks, "Friend, why are you here?" In other words, Jesus was giving Judas one last chance to change his mind. If God provided a way out for Judas, how could we ever say that in every situation before us that God hasn't provided a way out. Some may say we have to live together before marriage for we can't afford two rents (Jesus said to Judas, friend why have you come), some say I have to cheat on my taxes or in my business or else I'll never make ends meet (Jesus said to Judas, friend why have you come), if I don't hang out with those people I will be all alone (Jesus said to Judas, friend why have you come); in all those things Jesus will offer, and provide a better, it will then come down to our personal choice of who we want to follow.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV) ¹³*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

(Matthew 26:51 NKJV) And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

(Matthew 26:52 NKJV) But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

(Matthew 26:53 NKJV) "Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

Peter the Swordsman / God Cleans up our Messes

John tells us the one who drew his sword was Peter. In an attempt to protect Jesus, Peter—a better fisherman than a swordsman—lopped off the ear of Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Luke writes that following Peter's show of force, Jesus touched Malchus' ear and healed him, and we spoke in a past study how the Lord often is cleaning up the messes that His children make.

Legion = 6K / 72K total / God needs no Defending

A legion being six thousand, Jesus was talking about seventy-two thousand angels at His disposal—quite a force, considering it took only one to wipe out 185,000 Babylonians (2 Kings 19:35). What a glorious day it is when you learn you don't have to defend Jesus Christ, when you realize that He is perfectly capable of defending Himself. Our job is not to protect, defend, or avenge. Jesus calls us to do one thing: to love. So when people bash our God, it is a condition of their heart, and we need not get mad or angry at them and start to defend God; God is more than able to defend Himself if He so wanted, but He doesn't because He is extending grace and love, and so too should we.

(Matthew 26:54 NKJV) "How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

(Matthew 26:55 NKJV) In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me.

(Matthew 26:56 NKJV) "But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

The Weakness of the Great Wall

Judas betrays the Lord. Whenever there is a separation between values and practice, things break down. In ancient China, the people desired security from the barbaric, invading hordes to the north. To get this protection, they built the Great Wall of China. It's 30 feet high, 18 feet thick, and more than 1500 miles long! The Chinese goal was to build an absolutely impenetrable defense—too high to climb over, too thick to break down, and too long to go around. But during the first hundred years of the wall's existence China was successfully invaded three times. It wasn't the wall's fault. During all three invasions, the barbaric hordes never climbed over the wall, broke it down, or went around it; they simply bribed a gatekeeper and then marched right in through an open door. The purpose of the wall failed because of a breakdown in values; watch out who you surround yourself with you young people.

Jesus makes Clear – it is All Prophesied

Jesus made it clear that He didn't need Peter's protection and that what was happening was in accordance with prophecy in Scripture as well as with the heart of His Father. Judas' betrayal of Jesus is as prophesied several hundred years ago. Jesus is not reacting to man, the cross was God's plan, not man's plan. For only God could provide a way for man to be redeemed, not the other way around.

***Psalms 41:9 (NKJV)**⁹ Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me.*

***Zechariah 11:12 (NKJV)**¹²Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.*

Disciples can Scatter because of Jesus / Jesus always looking out for Us

The disciples are able to scatter because Jesus protected them. Here is Jesus standing before 600 soldiers and says I am the One you are looking for, let the rest go, and they amazingly say, "ok". Jesus is always looking out for His loved ones.

***John 18:8-9 (NKJV)**⁸Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,"⁹that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."*

Beginning of the OT Type – The Passover Lamb

The disciples split and Jesus was led alone from the Garden of Gethsemane to stand before Caiaphas. Jesus was not dragged before Caiaphas unwillingly. Rather, He was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter," just as Isaiah had prophesied (53:7). Here begins the fulfillment of the Old Testament type, that Jesus will be the Passover Lamb. Every lamb that was sacrificed had to be inspected, they would be led before the priest and he would examine them for spot and blemish, and only the perfect and spotless lamb could be sacrificed and here we begin 5 rounds of examination, and Jesus the final Passover Lamb will be found spotless (John 19:4), and be deemed worthy for sacrifice:

***Isaiah 53:7 (NKJV)**⁷ 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.*

***John 19:4 (NKJV)**⁴Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him."*

Jesus taken before Caiaphas

5 Rounds of Trial

Jesus now will be lead away for His so-called trial, and it will have 5 phases to it, and we will need all the Gospels to piece it together, for only 3 of them are covered in Matthew's account. We pick it up here in verse 57 with Jesus being brought before Caiaphas (as John accounts for us that prior top that Jesus was brought before Annas who was the Father-in-Law of Caiaphas, and they were kinda co-sharing the role of High Priest. Annas was probably the spiritual leader, while the son-in-law was the marketer who was in tight with Rome, and no doubt giving his father-in-law a percentage).

The Trial

- **Jesus before Annas – Jn 18:12-14**
- **Jesus before Caiaphas – Mt 26:57-66**

- Jesus questioned by Pilate 1st Time – Mt 27:11-14
- Herod Tries Christ – Lk 23:8-12
- 2nd trial before Pilate / Barabbas is freed by Pilate – Mt 27:15-25
 - Pilate Presents Jesus – Behold your King – Jn 19:4-16

(Matthew 26:57 NKJV) And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

(Matthew 26:58 NKJV) But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

Recap of Peter's Failure

It is worth a refresher on the path to Peter's failure, and the pitfall's for us to avoid.

- [Step 1 to Peter's Failure - Overconfidence in the Flesh](#)
- [Step 2 to Peter's Failure - Sleeping Instead of Praying](#)
- [Step 3 to Peter's Failure - Replacing Devotion with Action](#)
- [Step 4 to Peter's Failure - Following Afar Off](#)
- [Step 5 to Peter's Failure - Getting Warm by the World's Fire](#)

(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

(Matthew 26:61 NKJV) and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'"

(Matthew 26:62 NKJV) And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?"

(Matthew 26:63 NKJV) But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

Sanhedrin – 71 Jewish Supreme Court / Night – Feast – Death Penalty / Interrogation

A meeting of the Sanhedrin was immediately called, or more likely it had already been called before Judas went to the Garden.. The Sanhedrin was the seventy-one-member Jewish Supreme Court. From the very outset, however, the trial was illegal, since Jewish Law forbade evening meetings of the Sanhedrin (according to the Talmud – see note below). The tradition was that if the trial could result in the death penalty it could not go on during the Celebration of a Feast. If the death penalty was passed down, the person could not be put to death until the a day and a night had passed (in other words they were to sleep on it) – to see if mercy would come into their hearts and the person would be spared the death penalty. If 2 witnesses did appear, they would be interviewed and interrogated separately to assure that they both told the same story without any flaws, even under cross-examination. So here we see a totally illegal and beyond tradition trial.

Talmud (Hebrew: תלמוד) is a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs, and history. The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and the Gemara (c. 500 CE), a discussion of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Tanakh. (Ray's Added Note: Originally, Jewish scholarship was oral. Rabbis expounded and debated the law (that is, the Hebrew Bible) and discussed the Tanakh without the benefit of written works (other than the Biblical books themselves), though some may have made private notes (megillot setarim), for example of court decisions. This situation changed drastically, however, mainly as the result of the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth in the year 70 C.E. and the consequent upheaval of Jewish social and legal norms. As the Rabbis were required to face a new reality—mainly Judaism without a Temple (to serve as the center of teaching and study) and Judea without autonomy—there was a flurry of legal discourse and the old system of oral scholarship could not be maintained. It is during this period that Rabbinic discourse began to be recorded in writing.[1] [2] The earliest recorded oral law may have been of the midrashic form, in which halakhic discussion is structured as exegetical commentary on the Pentateuch. But an alternative form, organized by subject matter instead of by biblical verse, became dominant about the year 200 C.E., when Rabbi Judah haNasi redacted the Mishnah (משנה).

Talmud Quote pertaining to Trials:

"Criminal processes can neither commence nor terminate, but during the course of the day. If the person be acquitted, the sentence may be pronounced during that day; but, if he be condemned, the sentence cannot be pronounced till the next day. But no kind of judgment is to be executed, either on the eve of the Sabbath, or the eve of any festival." --Talmud Bavli, Tractate Sanhedrin Yochanon 18:

Hard to find 2 Liars / Misquoted the Temple Building Statement

They had a hard time finding 2 guys who had enough practice to tell the same story in unison, but eventually they found 2, who take the quote of Jesus totally out of context. They say Jesus is saying He is God for only God could build the temple in 3 days considering they had already been working on it for 46 years and it wasn't totally complete.

John 2:18-21 (NKJV) ¹⁸So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

¹⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.**" ²⁰Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

9th Commandment / False Witness - Trickery with the Truth

The Ninth Commandment forbids bearing false witness. We have the mistaken idea that "bearing false witness" means telling big lies. But this account makes it clear that bearing false witness consists of giving the right information with the wrong implication. A false witness is not one who makes up a big fib. A false witness is simply one who is tricky with the truth. A false witness gives the right information, knowing the wrong implication will be drawn. Jesus did indeed say, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up" (see John 2:19). But He was speaking of the temple of His own body.

Talmud Concurrs Jesus was Real Man

By the way I think it worth noting, as history concurs with the Bible and confirms the Bible, that even the Jewish History book (the Talmud) acknowledges that Jesus Christ walked this earth, and that He was killed for claiming to be the Messiah. I love reading stuff like this for it makes my faith exciting. The Tractate Sanhedrin (43a) contains this passage:

Jesus was hanged on Passover Eve. Forty days previously the herald had cried, "He is being led out for stoning, because he has practiced sorcery and led Israel astray and enticed them into apostasy. Whosoever has anything to say in his defense, let him come and declare it." As nothing was brought forward in his defense, he was hanged on Passover Eve.

(Matthew 26:64 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

(Matthew 26:65 NKJV) Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy!

(Matthew 26:66 NKJV) "What do you think?" They answered and said, "He is deserving of death."

Asked – Are you the One?

They were asking Him, are You the One who has been promised to us all the way back to Genesis 3, are you the One that was promised by Isaiah, Jesus in essence says yes!

Genesis 3:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ 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."*

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶ 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.*

⁷ *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.*

Jews Lose Right to Capital Punishment

Jesus says yes, and the high priest tears his clothes and says he is demanding of death; however there is one little problem for the Jews, and that is that they were not allowed to carry out the death penalty since they were under Roman rule. Around AD 30 Rome took away the Jews ability to pass and carry out the death penalty. So the Jews will have to get Rome to buy into the lie. The Roman's wouldn't put Jesus to

death for blasphemy, for they could care less about the Jewish religion, so the Jews will try to shift it to say that Jesus is not respecting Caesar (who says that he is God) therefore Jesus should be put to death for saying He was God over Caesar.

In the first quarter of the first century A.D., the Jews were under Roman domination when an unprecedented event occurred. According to Josephus (Antiquities 17:13) around the year A.D. 6-7, the son and successor to King Herod, a man named Herod Archelaus, was dethroned and banished to Vienna, a city of Gaul. But in the tenth year of Archelaus's government, both his brethren, and the principal men of Judea and Samaria, not being able to bear his barbarous and tyrannical usage of them, accused him before Caesar, and that especially because they knew he had broken the commands of Caesar, which obliged him to behave himself with moderation among them. Whereupon Caesar, when he heard it, was very angry, and called for Archelaus's steward, who took care of his affairs at Rome, and whose name was Archelaus also; and thinking it beneath him to write to Archelaus, he bid him sail away as soon as possible, and bring him to us: so the man made haste in his voyage, and when he came into Judea, he found Archelaus feasting with his friends; so he told him what Caesar had sent him about, and hastened him away. And when he was come [to Rome], Caesar, upon hearing what certain accusers of his had to say, and what reply he could make, both banished him, and appointed Vienna, a city of Gaul, to be the place of his habitation, and took his money away from him. Archelaus was the second son of Herod the Great. Herod's oldest son was Herod Antipater and he was murdered by Herod the Great along with a number of other family members (to retain power). Archelaus' mother was a Samaritan, giving Archelaus only a quarter or less Jewish blood... never the less, he is still Jewish. At the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC, Archelaus was placed over Judea as "Entharch" by Caesar Augustus. Archelaus was never accepted by the Jews and he was removed from office in 6 or 7 A.D.. Now... Archelaus was replaced, not by a Jewish king, but by a Roman Procurator named Caponius. According to Josephus, the legal power of the Sanhedrin was then immediately restricted: "And now Archelaus' part of Judea was reduced into a province, and Caponius, one of the equestrian order of the Romans, was sent as a procurator, having the power of life and death put into his hands by Caesar!"

With the ascension of Caponius, the Sanhedrin lost their ability to adjudicate capital cases. NOTE: The normal policy toward all the nations that were conquered by the Romans was to remove their legal power right away. HOWEVER, the province of Judea had been spared from this policy UP TO THIS POINT !!!!

Loss of Capital Punishment – Conclusive Proof Jesus the Messiah

By the way, the Jews not having the ability to carry out capital punishment is one of the most conclusive prophecies that the Jews should have recognized that the Messiah was walking the earth. The Talmud (the Jewish commentary on the Scriptures and history of the Jewish people) records that when Rome took away the Jews right to capital punishment, the high priest went out into the street weeping and howling, throwing dust in the air, tearing his garments, saying that the Word of God had been broken, because the Messiah had not appeared according to Genesis 49:

(Genesis 49:10 NKJV) The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor a lawgiver from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes; And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

(John 18:31 NKJV) Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,"

Shiloh / Track the Lineage / Lost in 70AD

Shiloh is another name for the Messiah. The "scepter - tribal staff" means the identity of the 12 tribes of Israel. The Jewish people took great pains to track the lineage of where every person came from. They did so because they knew that the Messiah had to come through the lineage of David. This passage says the Messiah will come before they lose the ability to track the lineage of which tribe the person comes from. In 70AD after the Titus Roman destruction of Jerusalem, the people were dispersed for 2000 years, and ask a Jewish person today, and they can not tell you which tribe they are from. Jesus came in 1BC, before the Scepter departed. If someone came today and said they are the Messiah, the Jewish people would have no proof of his lineage.

In the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b, Rabbi Johanan said:

"The world was created for the sake of the Messiah, what is this Messiah's name? The school of Rabbi Shila said 'his name is Shiloh, for it is written; until Shiloh come.'"

Lawgiver / Capital Punishment / 30AD

Genesis 49 speaks of a lawgiver. This speaks of the ability for the Jewish people to perform Capital Punishment upon anybody who breaks the Law of Moses, the 10 commandments. The Jewish writings (the Talmud) says that it was 40 years before the Destruction of the temple that the Roman Empire ceased allowing them to carry out capital punishment upon a person. 70AD minus 40 equal 30AD. Jesus came in 1BC/AD. He came 30 years before they lost this right.

"A little more than forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the power of pronouncing capital sentences was taken away from the Jews." --- Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin, folio 24.

Big Deal - Talmud

Did the Jews thought this was a "big deal" ??? You bet..... The reaction of the Jews to these monumental events is recorded in the Talmud. Augustin Lemann, in his book "Jesue before the Sanhedrin", records a statement by Rabbi Rachmon:

"When the members of the Sanhedrin found themselves deprived of their right over life and death, a general consternation took possession of them; they covered their heads with ashes, and their bodies with sackcloth, exclaiming: Woe unto us, for the scepter has departed from Judah, and the Messiah has not come!" (Babylonian Talmud, San. Chpt. 4, Fol. 37, recto.)

Thought God Abandoned Them / Didn't know in Carpenter Shop in Nazareth

The high priest was ripping his clothing because he thought God had abandoned the people, but little did they know that in a carpenter shop just miles away in Nazareth, the King of the Universe was fitting out a door frame, building a table, finishing a yoke, and shortly will come into His public ministry. The Jewish people missed their Messiah, all the signs were given them, yet they still missed Him. They didn't study their own Scriptures which they were so diligent to preserve. Yet, the same can be true for us!

Jesus Beaten

(Matthew 26:67 NKJV) Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands,

(Matthew 26:68 NKJV) saying, "Prophecy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

Brutally Beaten

So brutal was the beating Jesus endured, Isaiah prophesied He would be more disfigured than any man who ever lived (Isaiah 52:14). His beard was plucked; His face was swollen. The spit of His accusers ran down His cheeks. He could have called ten thousand times ten thousand angels. But He didn't, for the price was too high for Jesus, the cost of not having each of us to call His own, He had already settled that back in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Isaiah 52:13-14 (KJV) ¹³Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. ¹⁴As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

Peter's Denial

(Matthew 26:69 NKJV) Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

(Matthew 26:70 NKJV) But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

(Matthew 26:71 NKJV) And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, "This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

(Matthew 26:72 NKJV) But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

(Matthew 26:73 NKJV) And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you."

(Matthew 26:74 NKJV) Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

(Matthew 26:75 NKJV) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter's Oath

The original Greek would lend itself to read that Peter was making an oath saying "if I know this man, let me be eternally cursed".

Talmud - Rooster

According to the Talmud, roosters were not to be in the holy city because the priests felt that birds would make a mess and defile the holy city, according to city ordinances, no roosters or hens were allowed in Jerusalem. Therefore, when Peter heard the sound of a rooster crowing, it would not only remind him of Jesus' words to him previously, but of his own sin. For just as a rooster had no place in the holy city, neither do these words have no place coming out of the mouth of a follower of Jesus Christ.

They do not rear chickens in Yerushalayim because of the Holy Things--Mishnah, Baba Qamma7.7

Deuteronomy 23:12-14 (NKJV) ¹²Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; ¹³and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. ¹⁴For the

Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.

Luke says – Jesus turned and Looked / Puffed Eyes – Sleep On / When you have Returned

Luke tells us that at this moment, as Jesus was led out of the house of Caiaphas, He “turned and looked on Peter”. Imagine the mutilated face of Jesus after all the beating; blooded, beyond recognition, but enough to see through the puffed face, to look at Peter. That look would have been, sleep on Peter, I told you this would happen. I told you that you would deny Me three times. But, Peter, I’m not through with you. I love you.” I’ve prayed for you Peter, I live to make intercession for you, when you have returned to me, strengthen your brethren. I love you Peter. Christian the only way you will ever get up from a fall, will be to see the look of Jesus, to remember the words He has spoken, the look and the words together say, I’ve prayed that your faith shall not fail (and it hasn’t, I am still your God), and when you return to Me, go out and strengthen your brethren. See the look, that says I love!

Luke 22:60-62 (NKJV) ⁶⁰But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. ⁶¹And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “**Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.**” ⁶²So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Luke 22:31-32 (NKJV) ³¹And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

Matthew 27

Innocent Blood (Matthew 27:1-26)

Billy Graham and the Limo

Billy Graham was returning to Charlotte after a speaking engagement and when his plane arrived there was a limousine there to transport him to his home.. As he prepared to get into the limo, he stopped and spoke to the driver. 'You know' he said, 'I am 87 years old and I have never driven a limousine. Would you mind if I drove it for a while?' The driver said, 'No problem. Have at it.' Billy gets into the driver's seat and they head off down the highway. A short distance away sat a rookie State Trooper operating his first speed trap. The long black limo went by him doing 70 in a 55 mph zone. The trooper pulled out and easily caught the limo and he got out of his patrol car to begin the procedure. The young trooper walked up to the driver's door and when the glass was rolled down, he was surprised to see who was driving. He immediately excused himself and went back to his car and called his supervisor. He told the supervisor, 'I know we are supposed to enforce the law... But I also know that important people are given certain courtesies. I need to know what I should do because I have stopped a very important person.' The supervisor asked, 'Is it the governor?' The young trooper said, 'No, he's more important than that.' The supervisor said, 'Oh, so it's the president.' The young trooper said, 'No, he's even more important than that.' The supervisor finally asked, 'Well then, who is it?' The young trooper said, 'I think it's Jesus, because he's got Billy Graham for a chauffeur!'

Jesus the Christ / Not Last Name – but Mission / Innocent Blood – He is Spotless Lamb

We are studying the life of the King of the Universe, Jesus the Christ. I say Jesus the Christ, for Christ is not His name, but His mission, for Christ means Messiah, and the mission of the Messiah was to save man from the wrath of sin. The title of this message is "Innocent Blood" as we will see the Lamb of God be deemed spotless (perfect and pure), thus making Him innocent of any sin and wrong doing, thus fulfilling the requirement to become the innocent sacrifice in place of the guilty man. I say guilty man in the singular term, for though Jesus died for the sins of the world, it is singularly and personally up to each person individually if they choose to receive His free gift.

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."

Day is Thursday – Hours before Cross / 5am – Rooster has Crowed / Context at Verse 74

The day is Thursday, it is the last day of Jesus' life, and we are only hours before the cross. Jesus has just left the illegal night trial before the High Priest Caiaphas, it is now approximately 5 or 6am, for the rooster has just crowed and Peter has been broken, let's pick it up there in verse 74 of chapter 26 for context.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:

Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)

Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)

Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)

11th – Monday

Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)

Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)

Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
 12th – Tuesday
 Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
 13th – Wednesday
 The Gospels are Silent
 14th – Thursday –
 Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

(Matthew 26:74 NKJV) Then he began to curse and swear, saying, "I do not know the Man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

(Matthew 26:75 NKJV) And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Peter's Lowest Point / Point not Period

Here we are at the lowest point of Peter's life, and maybe your mind is flashing back to a similar moment in your life (a time where you felt you had totally let the Lord down). This is Peter's lowest point, but that point is not a period at the end of his life, it is just a point in his life.

Pear Tree / Seasons in Life / Measure at the end of the Sum of All Seasons

There was a man who had four sons. He wanted his sons to learn not to judge things too quickly. So he sent them each on a quest to look at a pear tree that was a great distance away. The first son went in the winter, the second in the spring, the third in summer, and the youngest son in the fall. When they'd returned from their journeys, he called them together to describe what they had seen. The first son said that the tree was ugly, bent, and twisted. The second son disagreed saying no it was covered with green buds and full of promise. The third son shook his head. He said it was laden with blossoms that smelled so sweet and looked so beautiful, it was the most graceful thing he had ever seen. The last son thought them all mistaken; he said it was ripe and drooping with fruit, full of life and fulfillment. The man then explained to his sons that they were all right and that they had each seen but only one season in the tree's life. He told them that they shouldn't judge a tree, or a person, by only one season, and that the essence of who they are and the pleasure, joy, and love that come from that life can only be measured at the end, when all the seasons are up. If you give up when it's winter, you will miss the promise of your spring, the beauty of your summer, the fulfillment of your fall. Don't let the pain of one season destroy the joy of all the rest. Don't judge life by one difficult season

Jesus delivered to Pilate

(Matthew 27:1 NKJV) When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death.

(Matthew 27:2 NKJV) And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

This will be the third trial, examination, of the 5 that Jesus will be put before:

The Trial

- **Jesus before Annas – Jn 18:12-14**
- **Jesus before Caiaphas – Mt 26:57-66**
- **Jesus questioned by Pilate 1st Time – Mt 27:11-14**
- **Herod Tries Christ – Lk 23:8-12**
- **2nd trial before Pilate / Barabbas is freed by Pilate – Mt 27:15-25**
 - **Pilate Presents Jesus – Behold your King – Jn 19:4-16**

The Field of Blood

(Matthew 27:3 NKJV) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, **(Matthew 27:4 NKJV)** saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!"

(Matthew 27:5 NKJV) Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.

400 years Prior / God knows your Future – You can rest in That

Four hundred years before it happened, God said it would (Zechariah 11:12-13). God knows your future too by the way and you need not stress about your unknown future, for unknown future is a known future to God, and He will reveal and open it up to you as necessary.

Psalms 41:9 (NKJV) ⁹ *Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me.*

Zechariah 11:12-13 (NKJV) ¹²*Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. ¹³And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.*

3 years Observing / Any Fault – Could Justify his Betrayal / Judas realizes Jesus Sinless

Judas has spent 3 years with Jesus, watching His every move, and hearing His every word. If Judas had seen any fault, any inconsistency, any hypocrisy, or any sin in Jesus, he could have justified the betrayal in his own mind. He could have said, "He makes Himself out to be the Son of God, but I've seen Him lose His temper," or "I remember the time He stretched the truth," or "I heard Him gossip." Instead, Judas realized Jesus was exactly who He declared Himself to be—the Lamb of God, the Sinless One.

Duet 19 – Fate of the False Witness

It intrigues me that Judas hung himself on a tree. Deuteronomy 19:16–19 says that if a man bears false witness and someone suffers because of the lie, the false witness must share the same fate as the one about whom he lied. Do you see what's happening? As Judas realized Jesus would soon be crucified on a tree, it's as if he got as close as he possibly could to sharing the same fate as the One about whom he lied. This is further proof that Judas realized perhaps more clearly than any other man that Jesus was completely flawless and totally innocent.

Deuteronomy 19:16-20 (NKJV) ¹⁶*If a false witness rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, ¹⁷then both men in the controversy shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. ¹⁸And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, if the witness is a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, ¹⁹then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so you shall put away the evil from among you. ²⁰And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you.*

Often hear if Only God show Himself / Judas walked 3 Years / Saw Miracles – Received His Love

How often we hear a person say "if only God would show me a sign, reveal Himself in a special way, then I would be so on-fire for Him". A person can say that, but they are kidding themselves, it won't change anything; Judas walked with Jesus for 3 years, saw all His miracles, but not only saw Jesus' great displays of love, but was a personal recipient of Jesus' love, yet He would still choose to betray Him.

Bible translation – Repented / 2 Cor 7:10 / Godly sorrow produces Action

If your Bible's translation says that Judas repented, don't be confused with that word repent, it is better translated (remorseful), he felt sorrow for what he did, but not enough to change what he had done. 2 Corinthians 7:10, says for godly sorrow produces repentance. Godly sorrow will say go correct what needs to be corrected. If I have offended a brother I am to go to them and ask forgiveness, if I have stolen from a person I am to go repay (with interest) what I have taken. Judas seeks the chief priests and elders out, but he doesn't seek Jesus out. Forgiveness and repentance must be both vertical and horizontal, we must repent and correct before God, and man. Many people like to do just one but not both; it is easier to say sorry God, than to say to a person, I am sorry. Where there are some who will say I am sorry to their fellow man, but refuse to repent and make a lasting change before God, they will justify their actions and never make a change that comes in line with God's will and ways.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11 (NKJV) ¹⁰For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. ¹¹For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

Judas failed and Quit, Peter failed and Served / Peter picture of Repentance / Take Steps

On this night 2 men failed Jesus; Judas failed Jesus and then he went and quit on Jesus. Peter failed Jesus, and then went on to serve Jesus. Judas died apart from Jesus, Peter died for Jesus, and there we see the picture of what repentance truly is. There are lots of people (Christians included) who will say I am so sorry for what I have done, but they can be like Judas and do nothing to correct it, make no changes towards restoration and correction back into God's will and ways. But the victorious Christian life are those whose repentance are like that of Peter's, I have failed but now I take the steps back to restoration and correction until I am in His will and ways, no matter the cost!

Errant Teaching – Judas not Saved

There are some Bible teachers who teach that Judas repented and got saved, and is in heaven. They say Judas repented but just made a stupid mistake. That teaching violates the words of Christ, who said it would have been better if he had never been born. Jesus would have never made that statement if Judas' ultimate end was heaven.

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."*

Suicide Rate – 30K / Lie – no Rest / Saved? – 2 Cor 13

With the suicide rate at what it is at in our lives (USA over 30,000 a year – WHO statistic), let me never miss the opportunity to point out that suicide is a lie from the pit of hell, people who think if they commit suicide they will finally have rest, it is a lie, for if you don't know Jesus your torment will have just began as you enter into the torment of hell. IF you believe you are saved and contemplating suicide, you need to question if you truly are saved, because I put before you the two examples of Judas and Peter. One repented to the will of God (Peter), one was just sorry that his life was so messed up (Judas).

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) ⁵Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.

Demonically Fueled – Luke 22 / Recognize – Get under Safety Net

Notice and know that suicide is from the pit of hell, it is demonically fueled. In Luke 22:4 it says that Satan entered, and Judas went his own way. Thoughts of suicide are fueled from the pit of hell, and any person that is having thoughts of suicide need to recognize that. Once recognition comes, then get yourself to godly counsel, don't a Judas and go your own way, get to a strong brother or sister and get people to stand with you.

Luke 22:3-4 (NKJV) ³Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. ⁴So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.

Proverbs 11:14 (NKJV) ¹⁴ Where there is no counsel, the people fall;
But in the multitude of counselors there is safety.

Proverbs 24:6 (NKJV) ⁶ For by wise counsel you will wage your own war,
And in a multitude of counselors there is safety.

(Matthew 27:6 NKJV) But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood."

(Matthew 27:7 NKJV) And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

(Matthew 27:8 NKJV) Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

(Matthew 27:9 NKJV) Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced,

(Matthew 27:10 NKJV) "and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me."

Leaders Responsibility bury Strangers

It was the religious leader's responsibility to bury strangers that died in Jerusalem.

Bible Critics / Jeremiah 18-19, Potter and Innocent Blood / Zech Exact Quote / Compressed

Jeremiah didn't say this exactly, and this becomes one of those verses that Bible critics use to say that the Bible is fallible, that it was man made, and not God inspired. Zechariah is quoted 4 times in the NT and none of those times is he referenced, so there is no rule that every OT quote has to be referenced back to its source. Now as for this one, in Jeremiah chapters 18-19, the potter's and clay is referenced, and it is in Jeremiah that we see God's judgment passed on Jerusalem for following after false gods, and putting to death the innocent; mind you the context of this passage is Judas saying I have betrayed innocent blood. Specifically it is in Zechariah that the silver and the field are quoted. So we have 2 OT verses/themes compressed into one here in verse 7-10; I think to hang your salvation on that verse is not only risky, but foolish.

Zechariah 11:12-13 (NKJV) ¹²Then I said to them, "If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain." So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver. ¹³And the Lord said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord for the potter.

Jeremiah 19:3-4 (NKJV) ³and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will tingle. ⁴"Because they have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with the blood of the innocents

Salvation comes down to This – Verse 11 / Are you the King

Salvation comes down to this, verse 11 and verse 22, Pilate asks Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews", and Jesus says to him, "It is as you say"; and then he asks man what shall we do with Jesus. That is what salvation comes down to, is Jesus the King of the Jews, the promised Messiah who would take away the sins of every man who would receive Him as the King!, and what will you do with Him. Will you make Him King of your life (Lord), and will you make Him your Savior (who will take your sins away form before the Holy God)?

(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."

(Matthew 27:22 NKJV) Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

Central Message – God Traded Places / Satan changed it to Homosexuality / Much Broader

That is the message of Christianity, that God (Jesus Christ) became man and trade places with man, assuming man guilt and sin, and took the full wrath of God for those sins, for a Holy God must judge sin or He is not a Holy God. That is the central message of Christianity, that is the heart of Christianity. Satan has done a marvelous job of pigeon-holing Christianity, and now the central message and theme is about homosexuality and abortion. When I meet people and they find out that I am a Christian, and they want to talk Christianity with me, they seem to quickly jump to the subject of, "what does God say about homosexuality". I say to them, listen, Christianity is much more broad than just this subject on homosexuality, the central heart of the message is about God dying for you, for you are destined to perish if you do not repent of your sins and give your life to Jesus Christ. Satan (through the media) wants to get Christianity boiled down to that we are nothing but a bunch of unloving, judgmental people. The heart of Christianity, the central message, is Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:2 (NKJV) ²For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Create – Die – nor Judge

The other answer I give when people ask me what do I think about homosexuality, I say who cares what I think, I didn't create you, I didn't die for you, nor will it be I that you stand before on the day of Judgment. If I was you I'd be much more concerned about what Jesus Christ says about homosexuality, and what He says about your sin personally.

Jeremiah knew something of Pottery

Now Jeremiah did know something of the Potter and the Clay, he would write:

Jeremiah 18:1-4 (NKJV) ¹The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: ²"Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." ³Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. ⁴And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

What Potter's Field / Broken pottery and bones / That is our Life without Jesus / Tossed Out

What was a potter's field? In Bible times, if a potter discovered cracks or chips in something he had made, he would throw the marred vessel outside of his shop. Over time this area would become full of broken pottery. Because nothing would be able to grow in this portion of land, it was good for nothing except to use as a cemetery for strangers and travelers who had no other place to be buried. Now, think with me for a moment. The blood money of Jesus Christ was used to buy the place where broken pottery and dead bodies were. That's us. Without Jesus we were shattered, dead, tossed out, and good for nothing. But when a person recognizes that who they are, and that they were bought with the blood money, the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

What Hope for Broken Pottery – Hot Water over long Times / God Love and Word

What hope is there for broken pottery? In the hands of Jesus Christ, all hope. You can take broken pottery, soak it in warm water over a long period of time, the clay becomes pliable again, and can then be reshaped and formed into a vessel of honor and use. So, too, if we as broken pieces of pottery become soaked in the warmed water (water a picture of the Word and the Holy Spirit)(warmed – warmed in His love) our Master Potter turns us from broken pottery thrown away by the world, into a beautiful vessel used for His glory.

Jesus before Pilate

(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."

(Matthew 27:12 NKJV) And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.

(Matthew 27:13 NKJV) Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"

(Matthew 27:14 NKJV) But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

Not a Word – Ish 53:7

The accusations were being hurled against Jesus, but He answered not a word—just as Isaiah had prophesied seven hundred fifty years earlier (Isaiah 53:7). Jesus would answer when asked if He was the King of the Jews, but now this question concerns bearing the guilt and shame of sin, and Jesus remains silent for He is bearing the sins of the world, your sin and my sin.

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.

Pilate swayed by Opinion / Pilate knows Jesus Innocent / Defies Roman Law

Pilate swayed by public opinion. What we see on the campaign trial today is nothing new, politicians swayed by public opinion rather than what the law says. Jesus is an innocent man, Pilate already knows this, and he knows that an innocent man is not to be put to death in accords with the Roman Law, but he will bow to public pressure rather than upholding the law.

USA is a Republic

Many people are confused about the United States government; many people think that we are a Democracy, that is that our laws are shaped by public opinion. That is not correct, our leaders our elected by public opinion (whoever receives the most votes wins the race). But as for our Government, we are a Republic, and a Republic is not based on popular vote, but by Laws. Our whole USA society is shaped and based on our Laws (Bill of Rights, the Constitution). Regardless of popular opinion, a Representative cannot change the laws without a constitutional amendment.

The federal government of the United States is the United States governmental body that carries out the roles assigned to the federation of individual states established by the Constitution. The federal government has three branches: the executive, legislative, and judicial. Through a system of separation of powers or "checks and balances," each of these branches has some authority to act on its own, some authority to regulate the other two branches, and has some of its own authority, in turn, regulated by the other branches. In addition, the powers of the federal government as a whole are limited by the Constitution, which leaves a great deal of authority to the individual states.

*The word democracy derives from the ancient Greek *dimokratía* (δημοκρατία) (literally, rule by the people) formed from the roots *dimos* (δῆμος), "people,"[4] "the mob, the many"[5] and *kratos* (κρατος) "rule" or "power".*

When Jesus Silenced in America / When Opinion overrides the Law

When will Jesus Christ be crucified (put to death, silenced) in the United States, exactly as He was in Jerusalem by Pilate, that is when public opinion has a more overriding voice than what the Law of the land states. Folks we are seeing that more and more in the days that we live. Freedom of Speech (our First Amendment Right, proclaim the Name of Christ, well except in the Public School, unless it is a California Public School and you can teach Islam but not Christianity. In 1776, the United States Declaration of Independence declared that "life" is one of the unalienable rights, implying that all persons have the right to live and/or exist, unless you are a fetus, you lose that right, even though all men were created in the image of God, therefore all men have been created in the image of Jesus Christ. It is no longer slowly but surely, it is as quick as they can override the voice of the Law we are seeing Jesus Christ be crucified (put to death, silenced) in the United States of America,

World siding with Barabbas'

The world is siding with the Barabbas', the murderers, the criminals, over the Prince of Peace!

Jesus or Barabbas

(Matthew 27:15 NKJV) Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished.

(Matthew 27:16 NKJV) And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.

(Matthew 27:17 NKJV) Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"

(Matthew 27:18 NKJV) For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.

Other Accounts – A Murderer / Pilate think surely not Chose Barabbas over Jesus

From other Gospel accounts, we know Barabbas was an insurrectionist and a murderer. He was despicable, brutal, and hated by the people. As Pilate brought out Barabbas, he must have been certain that the crowd wouldn't want a man like him back on the streets. Pilate must have thought that surely the Jews would want Jesus instead—the true Son of the Father.

Mark 15:7 (NKJV) ⁷And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion.

(Matthew 27:19 NKJV) While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

(Matthew 27:20 NKJV) But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

History says Claudia Saved

Claudia Procula, the daughter of Augustus, had married Pontius Pilate. Church history not only tells us she had converted to Judaism, but also that, following this event, she became a convert to Jesus Christ (take it for what you want – we will find out in heaven).

Brave man going against Wife

Brave man, no foolish man, he sided against his wife which from what I have heard from news articles that I have read, can really cause some contentions in the home.

(Matthew 27:21 NKJV) The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas!"

(Matthew 27:22 NKJV) Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

The Question before all Man / Eternal State Decided / Pilate could Stand or Cave / Narrow - Legal

The question that is before all men today, what will you do with Jesus Christ. Every humans eternal state will be determined on how they decide, for every man lives for eternity, the quality of eternity is what will be determined by a man's answer. Pilate had a choice to make right then. He could either stand up for what he knew was right, or he could follow the crowd and save his political skin. So, too, there are those who truly know in the bottom of their hearts that Jesus Christ is the only Way, even though the crowd all around them says, "Don't be so restrictive. Don't be so narrow. You don't want to be a fundamentalist do you?"

(Matthew 27:23 NKJV) Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

Lose an Argument Scream Louder

Isn't that the way it goes, when a person is losing the argument, they have nothing to stand on, they just yell louder. I read that in an article too.

(Matthew 27:24 NKJV) When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

(Matthew 27:25 NKJV) And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

(Matthew 27:26 NKJV) Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Jewish Practice – Deut 21:6

This Roman governor who was constantly at odds with the Jews now followed a Jewish practice taken from Deuteronomy 21:6 that stated that if a man was murdered outside a city and no one knew who the murderer was, the elders were to wash their hands as an illustration of their innocence in the matter.

Deuteronomy 21:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain man shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley. ⁷Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen it.

Every man's hands has the Blood of Christ on Them

But for man today, as Pilate then, you can't wash Jesus Christ off your hands or out of your life. Once Jesus Christ is revealed to a man, there is no washing Him away.

(Matthew 27:22 NKJV) Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

Behold the Man!

Matthew 27:26-46

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."

Day is Thursday – Hours before Cross / 5am – Rooster has Crowed / Context at Verse 74

The day is Thursday, it is the last day of Jesus' life, and we are only hours before the cross. Jesus has just left the illegal night trial before the High Priest Caiaphas, it is after dawn for the rooster has just crowed and Peter has been broken, and Jesus is now before Pilate, and we pick it up in verse 24.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

- Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:
 - Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
 - Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
 - Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)
- 11th – Monday
 - Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
 - Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
- 12th – Tuesday
 - Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 - Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 - The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 - Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
- 13th – Wednesday
 - The Gospels are Silent
- 14th – Thursday –
 - Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 - Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 - The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 - The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 - Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
- 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
- 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
- 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

Jesus before Pilate

(Matthew 27:24 NKJV) When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

(Matthew 27:25 NKJV) And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children."

(Matthew 27:26 NKJV) Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

Details of Scourging

Scourging was brutal, and what I am about to describe is real, and it really happened to Jesus Christ, the God-Man, and it happened because of you and me. As I describe it, trade places with Jesus, for had He

not traded places with you, you would be reading the account of you had He not traded places. Scourging, it was done with a Roman instrument of torture called a “flagellum” (flə-jěll'əm) - a whip made of twelve or thirteen leather thongs. Lead balls were attached to the ends of these thongs, and pieces of broken pottery and sharp metal bits were embedded between the lead balls and the handle. The accused would be tied by his wrists and dangled about a foot off the ground, rendering him helpless to protect himself in any way. Then the beating would begin—usually thirty-nine lashes. The first blows would cause welts to form on his shoulders and back. By the seventh or eighth blow, the pottery would begin to cut open these large welts, not only reducing the back to the consistency of hamburger, but also exposing the internal organs. At the end of the beating, the accused would be cut down and he would fall to the ground where he would lay in a pool of his own blood.

Scribe Present – Writing Confessions / Lighter whips with Confessions / No Mercy

During the scourging a scribe would be there writing down confessions; the idea was that as the guilty would confess his past crimes (thus enabling Rome to close-out their cold-cases, gathering information on other guilty associates) as the person would confess the whipping would get lighter and lighter; but with the back shredded open like hamburger, even the lighter would be extremely excruciating. But Jesus was innocent, He had no crimes to confess, thus the whipping would increase strike-after-strike. I would suggest to you, that Jesus endured the most severe scourging of any person in the history of this torturous device, all because He had nothing to confess, but also, Jesus never dime-ed us out (confess our names), He took all our guilt so we would escape the punishment and torture ourselves, He would never confess who His guilty associates were.

Romans never Seen This / Jesus presented – Behold the Man!

The Romans would have never seen anything like this. Most men died under the beating of the flagellum. But Jesus, of course, did not die here. Soldiers stood Him up, brought Him out, and presented Him to the crowd. “Behold the Man,” Pilate said (see John 19:5) as if to say, “Look at this Man. Isn’t this enough?” But know this Christian, with Satan it is never enough, he is never satisfied with the pain he inflicts upon you, and will never be satisfied until he fully devours you.

John 19:5 (NKJV) ⁵Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, “Behold the Man!”

Jesus Beaten and Mocked

(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.

Archeological Find / Game – Kill the King

These soldiers are playing a game with Jesus, amusing themselves. I have been to Israel, and in the underground level below modern day Jerusalem (at what is considered the level in the times of Jesus), underneath what would have been the Antonio Fortress, archaeologist have uncovered (carved into the stone) a game such as the one referenced here. I have seen it personally myself and stood right over top of it. The game interesting enough was called, “Kill the King”, as Pilate would ask, are you the King of the Jews.

(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.”

Pictures!

Crown of Thorns – Judgment for Sin in Garden

Verse 29 - When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head - Jesus would bear the crown of thorns, taking us all the way back to the Garden of Eden, where thorns would be part of the judgment for man's sin and transgression against the Holy God. The thorns in this region of Israel would be about 1.5 inches long; imagine the pain of that piercing through the skin into the skull:

Genesis 3:17-18 (NKJV) ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed is the ground for your sake;

In toil you shall eat of it

All the days of your life.

¹⁸ *Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,*

And you shall eat the herb of the field.

Romans soldiers tie Rope on Ankle / For Entertainment

Verse 31 - and led Him away to be crucified - Historical writings say that the Roman soldiers would tie the crossbeam of the cross to the one being crucified arms, and then tie a rope to one ankle, then on the processional to the crucifixion they would pull the rope, causing the person to fall flat on their face with the crossbeam driving their face into the ground. They did it for entertainment, Jesus did it so that He may attain you, and enter into you. Have you considered His love this week, maybe you even questioned His love for you this week, well here is His answer to you in both cases. Behold the Man!

40 Lashes – Satan gives no Mercy / Blood Coagulate / Yet count it all Joy

Verse 31 - put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified - Speaking of the robe, they would lay 40 lashes upon Jesus (not the 39 which symbolized mercy – for Satan gives Jesus nor you any mercy – he just seeks to destroy), and after the scourging they placed a robe upon Jesus. Now all the flesh that was ripped open by the scourging, the blood would start to coagulate, it would start to coagulate to the robe that was placed upon His back as they mocked Him, the blood would coagulate to the fibers of the robe, start to dry, and then they would rip the robe off His back, tearing open again every blood vessel, letting the blood flow again, and yet the Lord says that He counted that.....all joy, worth it, for you and for me. Behold the Man!

(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.

Jesus led to Golgotha

(Matthew 27:32 NKJV) Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross.

All the people in the World / Would you have felt Honored – Good News you can Today

So out of all the people in the world, this man Simon the Cyrene (from N. Africa) was given the privilege to carry Jesus' cross. If you were there would you not have felt that you were given the greatest honor in the world, to carry His cross? To reflect everyday, wow God chose me to carry His cross, how that would motivate you every day. I have good news, you can have that same privilege today, you can carry His cross, He gives you the honor to do so – today!

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV) ²⁴Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Living Christian Life drag without the Cross / Live Life with Privilege of Cross / Law Biogenesis

I'll tell you what, trying to live the Christian life without the privilege of the Cross is a total drag, it is nothing but a burden, nothing but a bunch of rule and regulations. But live the Christian life with the privilege of the cross upon your shoulder, and you will find life and that more abundant. As I carry the cross as a privilege rather than a weight or a burden, my Christianity becomes a joy because continually touching against me is His message of love, a demonstration of love, a picture of love, and my heart can't help to respond in love. There is a Law in Science, it totally refutes evolution but that is another study for another time, and that Law is call the Law of Biogenesis, and it simply states that only life can produce life, and that Law applies in the Christian realm as the Life of Christ creates life in us, and nothing else

can or will because Jesus Christ is the Author of Life. The cross is not the arm of Christianity; it is the heart of Christianity:

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.*

(Matthew 27:33 NKJV) And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull,

Place of Skull

Called "Place of a Skull" because the hill looks like a skull. It was here that they quarry the stones to build the city, and I wonder if that included some stones that were used to build the temple; if so the chief cornerstone was now upon the peak of this hill, which by the way if you look at a topography layout of this hill, it is exactly 777 meters (7 is the number of completion in the Scriptures and Jesus will cry out – It is Finished).

Picture!

Talmud 4 ways to Die / Why Significant – to Fulfill Prophecy

Now in the Jewish Talmud there were only 4 ways that were allowable for Capital Punishment; burning, strangulation (hanging), decapitation, stoning. Crucifixion was not one of them. Why is that significant? After a night of agony in the Garden of Gethsemane followed by a beating at the hands of the palace guards, Jesus was led before Pontius Pilate. Why? To fulfill prophecy. You see, when the Jews put a man to death, they stoned him. Old Testament prophecies, however, all depict the Son of God being crucified. "Cursed," the Old Testament Law declares, "is everyone that hangs on a tree" (see Deuteronomy 21:23). Thus it was in fulfillment of prophecy that Jesus was brought before a Roman governor in order that He might die a Roman death. If Jesus had been stoned, then the critics could say no big deal, that is how the Jews killed all those who blasphemed, but to prophecy several hundred years prior about dying a way that had not even been invented yet (for Romans devised Crucifixion), now that is a prophecy that every man has to make a decision on – just happen chance, or Divine inspiration?

Psalms 22:14-18 (NKJV)¹⁴ *I am poured out like water,*

And all My bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax;

It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ *My strength is dried up like a potsherd,*

And My tongue clings to My jaws;

You have brought Me to the dust of death.

¹⁶ *For dogs have surrounded Me;*

The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.

They pierced My hands and My feet;

¹⁷ *I can count all My bones.*

They look and stare at Me.

¹⁸ *They divide My garments among them,*

And for My clothing they cast lots.

Jesus Crucified

(Matthew 27:34 NKJV) they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink.

(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."

(Matthew 27:36 NKJV) Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

(Matthew 27:37 NKJV) And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: **THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

Gall & Myrrh – Same / Jesus took it all at Full-Strength

In the Greek language, "gall" and "myrrh" are the same word. Since myrrh was used as a narcotic to deaden pain, were the soldiers showing mercy to Jesus by offering Him myrrh? Probably not. More likely, it was because they didn't want Him to die too quickly. They wanted to lengthen His suffering. Jesus would not allow the pain to be masked or deaden, He took it all at full-strength. Myrrh was a costly

substance. Exodus 30 says it was used to anoint prophets, priests, and kings. Psalm 45 refers to it as a perfume. John 19 tells us it was used for embalming. At His birth, Jesus was given myrrh (Matthew 2:11). Why? Because He is the Anointed One, because His Name is as ointment poured forth (Song of Solomon 1:3), because He came to die. Behold the Man!

Sign – Written in Greek, Hebrew, Latin

Verse 37 - And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS - The other gospel account tells us that this was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin: Luke 23:38 (KJV) ³⁸And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

These verses – Dying not for Jews Only – All Mankind / Language – Garments - Soldiers

In these verses we see Jesus dying not just for the sins of the Jews, but of all mankind, of all humanity. The sign over His head was written in Hebrew, the Jewish language, Greek the language of the common man at that time, and Latin the international language of that time (under the Roman Empire). And the garments being divided means they were not on Jesus' body (it is my personal opinion He was crucified naked) but at the very least the most He would have had on was His undergarment. Clothing identifies a nation, it is easy for me to go Annapolis and pick out all the Europeans because of their clothes, the people from India, the orient, and the likes; by Jesus dying without His garments, His clothing would not identify Him with any particular nationality. And, keep in mind, however, that Roman soldiers were drafted from all countries throughout the empire. So, although it was the Jews who sentenced Jesus to die, and although it was the Romans who devised His method of execution, He who died for the sins of the whole world did, in fact, die by the hands of the whole world.

(Matthew 27:38 NKJV) Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

(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."

Jesus did say This / Also Said – Heaven & Earth, My Yoke, As a Child, Chief Cornerstone

Yes Jesus did say this, this is one of the things He said. He also said

John 2:18-21 (NKJV) ¹⁸So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

¹⁹Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." ²⁰Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" ²¹But He was speaking of the temple of His body.

(Matthew 26:64 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Matthew 5:17-18 (KJV) ¹⁷Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. ¹⁸For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

Matthew 11:28-30 (KJV) ²⁸Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 18:3-4 (KJV) ³And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 21:42-44 (KJV) ⁴²Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? ⁴³Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. ⁴⁴And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Took 1 Verse – Built a Life / 23,145 OT – Hundreds Point to Jesus / Man does it Today

These people took one verse, and they built their whole doctrine and theology off of it. There are 23,145 verses in the OT, hundreds and hundreds all pointing and referencing the Messiah so the Messiah

couldn't and wouldn't be missed, but these men grab hold of this one verse, take it out of context, and build their whole belief system off of it. And so it continues today, men and woman take a verse or two, a page here and a page there, and they build their whole belief system out of those few pages, those few verses. That verse here or there will be as these men, out of context without putting them in the context of all 31,102 verses contained in this Bible; they do the same as these men at the cross, they throw their life away.

(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.

Without Realizing – Concurring with Miracles / Lepers, Blind, Lame, Dead / Save Others - Role

Without realizing it the religious leaders are concurring with Jesus' miracles (as He saved lepers, the blind, raised the dead). But secondly they are confirming the role of the Messiah, and that is to save others, the Messiah could not save Himself; it was one or the other, and Jesus chose the other.

What the World wants Today – A Cross-less Christ / Why – have to answer for the Cross

This is what the world still wants. The world wants Christ—but not crucified. The world wants a Jesus figure, a Christ-consciousness, a cosmic spirituality, a harmonic convergence, teachings on love, truth, and global unity. The world still says, "Give us Christ—but not on the Cross." Why? Because Christ crucified means we have to acknowledge the part we played in His horrific death. We have to acknowledge that we are murderous sinners in need of a Savior. And the world doesn't want to do that. They want Jesus as a Hero, but not as a Lamb slain for their sin.

Let World Know – He will Come Down

But let all mankind know this, Jesus is the King of Israel and He will come down, not from the cross but from heaven, and it will be soon.

What read is in Daylight – Sun at Highest / Highest Hill / No Missing – No Excuses

What we have read we have read in the daylight (9am to Noon), in the next verse darkness will fall upon the land. Jesus was lifted up on the highest hill in Jerusalem, and He was lifted up in broad daylight when the sun was at its highest. There was no missing Him, and today there is no excuse for not seeing Him high and lifted up.

[Darkness over the Land / My God, My God](#)

(Matthew 27:45 NKJV) Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

(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?"

Darkness – Whole Earth

Darkness over the whole earth for 3 hours from noon to 3pm; the darkness was not over Jerusalem only, but the whole world.

Luke 23:44-45 (KJV)⁴⁴And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

Not Lunar Eclipse / Recorded in other Ancient Writings / god Pan – God must be Suffering

This darkness is a miracle. This is not a lunar eclipse, for Passover is a lunar feast meaning the moon would be full, and the moon can only be full as it reflects the light from the sun (therefore the sun had to be in front of the moon, not the moon in front of the sun). Some people will say that it was only local, but you have to consider when half the world is in daylight, the other half is in nighttime, so by default the whole world would have been in darkness. There are historical writings that record this darkness over the

land in their regions; writings in Egypt says it was dark, as a historical writing says that the sun went dark at noon and priests in Egypt started to howl and cry because they said it meant that the god Pan (an Egyptian god of the natural forces of the world) must have just died. Another Egyptian writing records this period and they write, "God must be suffering". So historical writings record this period of darkness.

God Shutdown the World / Get the Lamps / Plowing, Chopping, Playing

God shutdown the world; everyone would have had to stop what they were doing to go get lamps and torches to see. The man plowing in the field would have had to stop, the man chopping the tree, the woman chopping carrots, kids playing outside. All the world would stop at and in this darkness, all mankind would be left to ask what is going on, why am I sitting in darkness.

We see Symbolism of Darkness / Egypt – Tribulation – Hell - Amos

We see great symbolism here of the darkness over the land. We have seen it before, and will see it again.

- There was great darkness over the land of Egypt when Pharaoh would not let the children of Israel free, darkness fell over Egypt (9th Plague) (a picture of the world) for having a hard heart towards God.

(Exodus 10:21 NKJV) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, darkness which may even be felt."

(Exodus 10:22 NKJV) So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.

(Exodus 10:23 NKJV) They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

- In the Tribulation Period there will be darkness over the land as the 6th seal is broken open.

(Revelation 6:12 NKJV) I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.

(Joel 2:30 NKJV) "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.

(Joel 2:31 NKJV) The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.

(Joel 2:32 NKJV) And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

- And in hell there will be total darkness, a darkness so dark that the flames of hell will not be seen, only felt,

(Matthew 22:13 NKJV) "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Jews should have known, Amos declared it, the Day of the Lord would be darkness, no light; when their world was plunged into darkness they should have known:

Amos 5:18-24 (NKJV) ¹⁸ Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

For what good *is* the day of the LORD to you?

It *will be* darkness, and not light.

¹⁹ It *will be* as though a man fled from a lion,

And a bear met him!

Or as *though* he went into the house,

Leaned his hand on the wall,

And a serpent bit him!

²⁰ *Is not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light?*

Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

²¹ "I hate, I despise your feast days,

And I do not savor your sacred assemblies.

²² Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,

I will not accept *them*,

Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.

²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs,

For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.

²⁴ But let justice run down like water,

And righteousness like a mighty stream.

Scientific Definition of Darkness / All Mirrors – Light of World Separated from Father / Turn Back

Scientifically the boiled-down definition of darkness is the absence of light. And in all the cases above, Hard-hearts of the World, the Tribulation Period where the wrath of God is being poured out on a Christ-rejecting World, and hell the final abode for a Christ-rejecting heart, all are mirrors of this moment in time as Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, is being separated from God the Father. That is what darkness is, it is the separation from God. Jesus at this very moment in time is being separated from God the Father and will cry out why have you forsaken Me, but will receive no answer because at that moment He would be taken on the sins of man, and the Holy God cannot look upon sin, He must turn His back from it: *(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."*

(Isaiah 59:1-2) ¹ Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

(Habakkuk 1:13) ¹³ You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?

Psalms 22:1-3 (NKJV) ¹ My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?

*Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning?*

*² O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not silent.*

*³ But You are holy,
Enthroned in the praises of Israel.*

Death of God in Man's Life – Bring Darkness

The death of God in any man's life will bring darkness up his or her entire world.

Out of Darkness the Voice Breaks Through – It is Finished / The Promise no more Darkness

Yet out of the darkness, the voice will break through it and not just say it, but proclaim it, "It is Finished". It is finished for all who will receive it, no more darkness, no more separation. A promise of a One who will wipe away every tear from your eye, a promise of no more pain, nor sorrow, the One who said He makes all things new

(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.

(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."

(Revelation 21:7 NKJV) "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."

***1 Pet 2:9 - 10 (NKJV)** ⁹But 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; ¹⁰who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*

Today my friend, Behold the Man!

It's Friday, but Sunday is a Coming!

Matthew 27:45-66

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."

Day is Thursday – [Picture Golgatha](#) / King on the Cross / The Son will hang for 6 hrs / Left off Dark

The day is Thursday (even though the world calls it Friday, and that isn't a problem for me, the key is that they see the day of the Cross), we left off last week with the King of the Universe being nail to a rugged and brutal Roman Cross. The Son of God will hang on that Cross for 6 long agonizing hours; we left off at the 3 hour mark last study as darkness was upon the whole land, as the Light of the World was being crucified, so let's pick up there in verse 45.

The Jewish calendar of Events:

- Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:
 - Jesus Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-10)
 - Goes into Temple but Leaves (Mark 11:11)
 - Sleeps outside city in Bethany (Matt 21:17 / Mark 11:11)
- 11th – Monday
 - Curses Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)
 - Cleanses the Temple (Mark 11:15-18)
 - Leaves the city when Evening Came (Mark 11:19)
- 12th – Tuesday
 - Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree (Mark 11:20-26)
 - Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged) - (Mark 11:27 – 12:1-44)
 - The Olivet's Discourse (Mark 13)
 - Jesus goes out to Bethany (Matt 26:6)
- 13th – Wednesday
 - The Gospels are Silent
- 14th – Thursday –
 - Passover Meal (Mark 14:1-31)
 - Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52)
 - The Trial (Mark 14:53 – 15:1-14)
 - The Passover Sacrifice – Jesus Beaten & Crucified (Mark 15:15-41)
 - Jesus Buried (Mark 15:42-47)
- 15th – Friday – Feast of Unleavened Begins
- 16th – Saturday - Sabbath
- 17th – Sunday – First Day of week – Resurrection – Feast of First Fruits

[Darkness over the Land / My God, My God](#)

(Matthew 27:45 NKJV) Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land.

Darkness all Land / God makes World Stop – Not just some Day / Today World must Answer

As we saw last week, the land spoken of meant the whole world; therefore darkness was upon the whole world when God's Son was killed. God the Father wasn't going to allow the world to just continue on in everyday life, everyday personal pursuits, God the Father was going to make the whole world stop this day isn't just any day, it is a Day unlike any other. Still today that is true, for every man and woman must give an answer of what did they do when they heard about this day, did they just wait for the daylight to

go on about their life, or did they realize this wasn't no ordinary day, and determine what it means to them personally, and respond to that knowledge.

Speaking of Land – No Ordinary Land / Genesis 22 – Message outside of Time

Speaking of this land, this very specific piece of land, this spot of earth know as Golgotha, was no ordinary piece of land either. In Genesis 22 a message given to us from outside our time domain, occurring 4000 years ago on this very exact spot, 4000 years ago, and 2000 before the cross. Abraham was told to take his son, his only son Isaac and go to this very exact spot and sacrifice him there before God:

(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."

Moriah is Jerusalem

The land of Moriah was the area of Jerusalem. The mount of the LORD is Mount Moriah and today is known as the Temple Mount. In II Chronicles we read:

(2 Chronicles 3:1 NKJV) Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Look at Geography / Golgotha - Exact same Place

If you will take a careful look at the geography of mount Moriah, you will note that the Temple Mount is at the side of the mountain and not at the top of mount Moriah. Mount Moriah continues on a gentle slope from the Temple Mount up to the top. However, when Solomon built the temple and the walls and many of the buildings, he did it on the north side of the city where the rock is perfect for building. It lays in stratas and all they have to do is cut it. That is where they quarried the stone and so on the north side, mount Moriah has had a great chunk taken out of it. Originally at Abraham's time this stone had not been quarried and so from the temple mount, the gentle slope would have come all the way up to the top of mount Moriah which is now across some sort of valley from the wall of Jerusalem. If you stand near Herod's Gate on the top of the wall of Jerusalem, though you are standing nearly sixty feet from the ground down below, the wall is only twelve feet high, because of the bedrock. As a result of quarrying the stone, there are caves which resemble a skull. Thus the name of the place became Golgotha which means, "the Place of the Skull," or in Latin is called, "Calvary." Above the skull, Golgotha or Calvary, was originally mount Moriah and no doubt when Abraham went to the mount, he went to the top which was customary in those days when you built an altar. So, on the top of the mountain where Abraham went to sacrifice Isaac, some two thousand years later; because, God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son as a sacrifice for our sins. Interesting, I was looking at a topography map, and the one I was looking at said the peak of Golgotha is 777 meters.

Exact same Place God Sacrifices His Son / God will be the Lamb

In the same place where Abraham built his altar, God would sacrifice His Son and the prophecy of Abraham was fulfilled when he said, "God will provide Himself a sacrifice." In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen and it was, two thousand years later. The picture of Abraham sacrificing his son is a foreshadowing of that which God would do for love of the world in sacrificing His only begotten Son. I might note that the clearest reading in the original language is "God will provide himself a lamb," Abraham told Isaac—not, "God will provide for Himself a lamb"—but, "God will provide Himself a lamb. He will be the Lamb."

(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.

®And Abraham^{H85} said^{H559}, My son^{H1121}, God^{H430} will provide^{H7200} himself a lamb^{H7716} for a burnt^{H5930} offering: so they went^{H3212} both^{H8147} of them together^{H3162}.

The Nails are Exclamation Points – Psalm 22 – 750 years / 1492 Columbus sails the Ocean Blue

Those nails that pierced Jesus' hands and feet were exclamation point that nailed conclusively that Jesus was the Promised Messiah, and the Cross was Jesus Christ being sacrificed as the Passover Lamb who would take away the sins of the world. Death by Crucifixion wasn't even invited when King David penned it in the Psalm, Psalm 22 was written nearly 750 years before crucifixion was invented by the Romans.

Maybe an example we can relate to and see how amazing this prophecy was, would be the equivalent of, in 1492 (just 515 years ago) Columbus sailed the ocean blue; lets change that to say that it actually happened in 1992 Columbus sailed the ocean blue, but here is what was written in 1492.....when Columbus found the America's he sent an email via his Blackberry back to Spain to tell of his findings but the Castles Server was done and the email was rejected. Columbus was however able to reach the Queen on her cell phone to tell of the amazing discovery. The Queen said when you get back to Spain I want to hear all the details, please check my Outlook Calendar and set up a meeting, if you aren't going to be back in the country for a few months, then lets just do a Net meeting. If someone came and showed us what had been written 500 years prior in such precision, would say unbelievable, this message has to be from outside our time domain. The prophecy of the Cross is truly amazing if you consider it in modern day terms.

Psalms 22:14-18 (NKJV) ¹⁴ *I am poured out like water,*

And all My bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax;

It has melted within Me.

¹⁵ *My strength is dried up like a potsherd,*

And My tongue clings to My jaws;

You have brought Me to the dust of death.

¹⁶ *For dogs have surrounded Me;*

The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.

They pierced My hands and My feet;

¹⁷ *I can count all My bones.*

They look and stare at Me.

¹⁸ *They divide My garments among them,*

And for My clothing they cast lots.

(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?"

Abba – God – Speaks from a Distance / Father no Choice to turn Back / Agony of Isolation

Every other time Jesus addressed God, it was always as "Abba." But here He speaks from a distance to His Father as He says, "My God, My God." Why? Of God, Habakkuk declared, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). Yet Paul writes that Jesus not only bore our sin, but actually became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, unable to behold evil or look on iniquity, the Father had no other choice but to turn His back on His Son—and Jesus felt the agony of that isolation.

(Isaiah 59:1-2) ¹ *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.*

² *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*

(Habakkuk 1:13) ¹³ *You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, And cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours A person more righteous than he?*

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

Not only Agony – but Information / Psalm 22 Describes the Cross – Clueing / They in Darkness

Hear not only the agony of isolation, but a word of information. Those who taunted Him as He paid for their sin should have known Jesus was quoting Psalm 22, the classic psalm that described crucifixion. Thus, even as He was dying, Jesus was clueing people in. As they mocked Him, He was saying, "Psalm 22 is being fulfilled in your very presence." But they didn't understand. They were in the dark not only physically but spiritually because they chose not to see the Light.

Psalms 22:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*

Why are You so far from helping Me,

And from the words of My groaning?

² *O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;*

And in the night season, and am not silent.

Can we Ever Understand God Forsaking His Son / Fitting it is in Darkness / We never say My God
Can we ever understand this, Jesus forsaken by God the Father. How fitting that Jesus is being forsaken in the darkness, because we can't understand this completely, but thankfully we will never have to utter these words, my God why have you forsaken me.

(Matthew 27:47 NKJV) Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!"

(Matthew 27:48 NKJV) Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

(Matthew 27:49 NKJV) The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

Where's Your God / Cruel God – Sick Humor God / It's Friday – Sunday is Coming / Matt 24:13

What's wrong, Jesus?" the crowd heckled. "You trusted in God—now look at You." You'll hear the same thing today. People will say to you—or perhaps you'll hear the enemy whisper in your ear—"I thought you trusted in God. How come you're in this mess?" Is this what you get for following God, sounds like a cruel God who a sick sense of humor. Many a times when we are in our hard times, we ourselves or other people may question, "where is your God? But, as the old sermon says, "This is Friday. But Sunday's a-comin'." Beloved, you just endure to the end, and your Sunday will come! Jesus spoke it only a few days ago, he who endures to the end shall be saved:

Matthew 24:13 (NKJV) ¹³But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

Corrie Ten Boom

This is a story relayed by Corrie Ten Boom, "It was Christmas, 1944. My sister, Betsie, had died. I was in a hospital barracks in Ravensbruck, a Nazi prison camp. Dark it was in my heart, and darkness was around me. There were Christmas trees in the street between the barracks. Dead bodies of prisoners had been thrown under the Christmas trees. I tried to talk to the people around me about Christmas, but they mocked and sneered. At last I kept quiet. In the middle of the night I suddenly heard a child crying and calling, "Mommy! Come to Oelie. Oelie feels so alone." I went to her and saw a child not so young, but feebleminded. "Oelie, Mommy cannot come, but do you know who is willing to come to you? Jesus will come." Oelie was lying on a bed next to the window, not far from death due to lack of food, yet she still had a sweet face and beautiful eyes. A bandage of toilet paper covered an incision from surgery on her back. That night I told this poor child about Jesus. How He came into the world as a little baby how He came to save us from our sins. "The Lord Jesus loves Oelie and has borne her punishment on the cross.... Jesus is ... [in heaven] right now. He is getting a little house ready for Oelie." Later I asked her what she remembered of what I had told her. "What is the little house like?" I asked. "It is very beautiful. There are no wicked people as in Ravensbruck only good people and angels. And Oelie will see Jesus there." The child added, "I will ask Jesus to make me brave when I have a pain. I will think of the pain that Jesus suffered to show Oelie the way to heaven." Oelie folded her hands; together we gave thanks. Then I knew why I had to spend this Christmas in Ravensbruck."

When People Challenge – Tell them Sunday is Coming

When people challenge you, question you're following of Christ, just tell them it's Friday, but Sunday is a coming, lets see how it all ends ups.

[Jesus Dies / Veil is Torn](#)

(Matthew 27:50 NKJV) And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

The Cross – Lungs fail Operating Properly / Pushing of Legs / Break the Legs

The pain from the nails piercing Jesus' hands would cause His pectorals' major muscles to go into spasms and His lungs to no longer operate properly. The only way one being crucified could breathe would be to straighten his legs, place his full weight on the nail driven through his feet, and stand straight, thereby forcing air into his lungs. To exhale, he would bend his knees, causing the full weight of his body to hang on the nails in his hands. Imagine His shredded back sliding up and down on the wood, the splinters piercing into His body every time He would slide up and down. Finally when they wanted to finally kill a man being crucified; the Romans would break his legs and the person would no longer be able to gathering a breath and die. It was the most cruel, torturous death ever devised by man

Jesus didn't Die – He Yielded the Spirit / Shortest 32hrs – Longest 13 days / Jesus no Wimp

Verse 50 - and yielded up His spirit - But Jesus didn't die—He dismissed His Spirit. His life wasn't taken away—He gave it away. It says that when Pilate heard that Jesus had died already he was amazed. The shortest crucifixion death recorded in Roman historical writings and records is 32 hours, and the longest is 13 days. It wasn't a quick death but a slow agonizing death. It was meant to also be a deterrent from future crimes as people would see the agonizing death of crucifixion and think twice about committing a crime. So when Pilate heard that Jesus was dead in just 6 hours he was amazed. No bear in mind that Jesus is no wimp, he was a carpenter, he would have been strong and fit to do such a type of work (there were no machines; it was all hard manual labor cutting and chiseling through the wood, and that was only after going out into the woods to cut the tree down and drag it back to the wood shop).

Foxes have Holes / Jesus finally Rests His Head – His work was Complete

John says that he bowed His head and gave up the Spirit. Jesus would say that foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nest, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head. Very interesting the next time we see this word for lay (in the Greek) is here in this passage of John, for Jesus finally found a place to bow His head, and that was here at the cross, after His work was complete.

Matthew 8:20 (NKJV)²⁰And 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."

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

(Matthew 27:51 NKJV) Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

Embroidered 2 Cherubim's / Garden of Eden – Symbolism / 60-30 / 300 Priests / Veil Separated

Embroidered on the veil were two cherubim; which is interesting symbolism as we are reminded of the two angles God had placed before the Garden of Eden to keep man from eating of the tree of life, to guard man from eating of the fruit and being cursed forever. These two cherubim were symbolic that no man could just stroll on into the Holy of Holies. Josephus the Jewish historian writes that this veil was 60 foot high, 30 feet wide, and 8-10 inches thick. The veil was so heavy that it took three hundred priests to hang it. This veil separated the Holy Place of the Temple from the Holy of Holies, and the High Priest would only enter into the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement where he would sprinkle the blood and request forgiveness of sins on behalf of Israel before God.

Genesis 3:22-24 (NKJV)²²Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—²³therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. ²⁴So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

As Veil Rent – God reaching Down / Open House / Hebrews 10:17-22

As the veil in the temple was rent in two, ripped in two from the top to the bottom (that is starting 60 feet high) it was as if God literally reached down from heaven Himself and tore the veil in two. The Holy of Holies became open for anyone to come into the presence of God at any time concerning any matter. God is proclaiming, "Open House", come on in:

Hebrews 10:17-22 (NKJV)¹⁷then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." ¹⁸Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and having a High Priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Acts 6 – Many Priest Believed / Good Things – God telling them by Veil you out of Job

Acts 6:7 says the many of the priest in the Temple believed when they saw this veil ripped in two. Imagine seeing that veil ripping before your very eyes, how amazing that must have been. Many believed, and that was good for them because God was telling them you are out of job My friend, the priesthood is no longer needed as man can now freely come before Me the Holy God based on the Final

Sacrifice, My Only Begotten Son.

Acts 6:7 (NKJV) ⁷Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Sadly – Lots of Veil Menders / Out of Job

Sadly today there are many veil-menders, people who have tried to sew the veil back together and put themselves between man and God. They exalt themselves and project themselves before other men that they need to come through them to get to God. God is saying here that you are out of a job, and for all men to see they can freely come into His presence;

Josephus Records this Quake – The Temple Doors Opened

Verse 51 - and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split - Both Josephus and the Talmud record this earthquake. The Talmud says that about 40 years before the destruction of the Temple (which was in 70AD) there was a great earthquake in Jerusalem. They record that the very massive doors of the Temple opened on their own accord; here is Josephus' account of the event:

At the same festival (Passover)... the Eastern gate of the inner court of the Temple, which was of brass, and vastly heavy, and had been with difficulty shut by twenty men, and rested upon a base armed with iron, and had bolts fastened very deep into the firm floor, which was there made of one entire stone, was seen to be opened of its own accord about the sixth our of the night. - Josephus; The Wars of the Jews 6.5.3

The Talmud concurs that the doors opened on their own, and very interestingly as we speak of darkness, it records that the Menorah, the Golden Lamp stand, flamed out. The Rabbi's said the westernmost of the lights in the menorah burned perpetually (Talmud Shabbat 22b). (The menorah stood against the south wall of the tabernacle, so the westernmost light was the one on the right end.) The Talmud says that the westernmost light burned perpetually to demonstrate that the Divine Presence dwelt in the Tabernacle. The Menorah extinguished as they crucified the Light of the World, but the Light of the World would rise again on the 3rd day, and there would never be the need again for the Menorah in the Holy Place of the Temple, for the Light of the World would now dwell in the hearts of all man. And let us not forget our past study that the crimson thread never turned white again on the Day of Atonement when the High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies that one time a year to seek forgiveness of sin on behalf of the people, the thread would turn white if God accepted their sin offering, but the Talmud said that it never turned white again from that year (which was the same year Jesus was crucified).

"Forty years before the destruction of the Temple (ie. 30 C.E.) the lot did not come up in the right hand, nor did the crimson stripe become white, nor did the westernmost light burn; and the doors of the heikhal (the Holy Place of the Temple) opened of their own accord, until Rabbi Yochanon ben Zakkai rebuked them. He said to it [the Temple]:

'O heikhal, heikhal, why do you alarm yourself? I know full well that you are destined to be destroyed, for Zechariah ben Iddo has already prophesied concerning you 'Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour the cedars' (Zech. 11:1).'

--Talmud Bavli, Yoma 39b

The Law – Earth Quaked – Shake them Up / Earth & Veil – Quake to set us Free

How interesting to consider that when God gave the law to Moses on Mount Sinai, the earth shook (Exodus 19:18) because the Law was meant to shake people up. "You think you're righteous?" the law asked. "You think you're okay? Try this on for size and see how you match up." Paul wrote in Galatians that the law was given as a schoolmaster to make us see that we're sinners in need of a Savior (Galatians 3:24). Here, the earth is shaking again—this time not to shake man up, but to shake him loose. We're free! It is finished. The veil is rent. The price is paid, Open House, Come on In! This is the ultimate "rock concert".

Exodus 19:17-18 (NKJV) ¹⁷And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.

Galatians 3:24-25 (NKJV) ²⁴Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

(Matthew 27:52 NKJV) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

(Matthew 27:53 NKJV) and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Strange Passage / Notice the Context and Order / Ezekiel 37

Kinda of a strange passage here, not totally sure what is happening here. It seems as if it was interjected here by Matthew, that he gives us some information that is out of chronological order. If you notice Matthew says that the graves were opened at the earthquake, but the bodies didn't come out of the graves until after the resurrection. You can still see it today in that area and other parts of the world, and that is the graves are crypts, that are above ground, not buried under the ground, so we see here the stone covers shaking off the top and the bones exposed for all to see. I love the picture here, the old dry bones laying bare for all to see, and then 3 days later resurrecting and been see by all. Reminds me of Ezekiel 36-37, wow what a sight:

Ezekiel 37:4-6 (NKJV) *4Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD.'"*

(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!"**

Centurion didn't need 3 Days

The Centurion didn't need to wait 3 days though, he knew it then. Church history says that he went on to walk with the Lord.

Jesus placed in the Tomb

(Matthew 27:55 NKJV) **And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar,**

(Matthew 27:56 NKJV) **among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.**

(Matthew 27:57 NKJV) **Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus.**

(Matthew 27:58 NKJV) **This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him.**

(Matthew 27:59 NKJV) **When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,**

(Matthew 27:60 NKJV) **and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.**

Mary – 7 Demons / The Boys Mother – Sit at Left & Right / Christian can you trust a No

Mary Magdalene was the woman from whom Jesus cast seven demons (Luke 8:2). Also here is James and John's mother who if you remember back in Matthew 20, James and John's mother had come to Jesus saying, "I have a favor to ask. Could one of my boys be on Your right hand and one on Your left hand in the kingdom?" "You don't know what you ask," He had answered. As she looked at Jesus now—with a man hanging on His right and another on His left—I wonder if her heart stopped as she realized how little she had understood. Christian, can you trust God when He says no, or do you feel that He has withheld something from you? If you ever do remember James and John's mother, and remember whatever your situation is, it is Friday, but Sunday is a coming!

Joseph had not Consented / To Follow would be Excommunicated / Joseph risked it All

Verse 57 - there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus - Joseph of Arimathea came, now Joseph did not consent to the death of Jesus, in fact he opposed the whole Sanhedrin. Now if a person followed Jesus as a Jew they would have been excommunicated from the Jewish community, it would cost the person great hardship and financial loss. We read about it in Acts, the Jews who followed Jesus fell on hard financial times and the Church took a collection up to send to the Church in Jerusalem to help them out financially. Here is Joseph of Arimathea (who was quite wealthy) was willing to risk it all to identify himself with Jesus Christ. How about you, are you willing to risk name and wealth to be identified with Jesus Christ?

Luke 23:50-51 (NKJV)⁵⁰Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. ⁵¹He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God.

John 9:20-23 (NKJV)²⁰His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." ²²His 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. ²³Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

Tomb Hewed out of Rock – very Expensive / No Problem only 3 Days / Christian how about You

This tomb would have been hewed out of the rock. This wasn't dirt or mud, it would have been stone. To cut through the rock would have taken considerable time and money on the part of Joseph, yet he was willing to give it up for Jesus. I heard (just joking) that they said to Joseph, hey what are you doing going up you tomb that is a lot of money; but Joseph said not a problem, it's only for a couple of days. Christian, how about you lately, has your Christianity been all about what will the Lord will give you, or are you looking for opportunities to say, here Lord take this and use it for as long as you see fit.

Gordon's Tomb / [Picture of Tomb](#)

By the way, for what it is worth (it is interesting to me), this tomb that was discovered by archeological finding that is the (celebrated tomb of Christ), in 1885 General Gordon (British Man) discovered this tomb and the first things he did was do a soil sample throughout the tomb looking for human decomposition; in every soil sample there was no evidence of human remains anywhere in the soil.

Joseph fulfills Ish 53 / Doubt we Realize all we are Fulfilling

We know that Nicodemus was with Joseph. I wonder if Nicodemus had said to Joseph, hey this is Isaiah 53 fulfilled, which says the rich in His death, Joseph you are that man. I don't think that those who are truly out there living for Christ, lives set apart for Him will ever truly realize all the things they are fulfilling on God's behalf on this earth.

Isaiah 53:9 (NKJV)⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Criticized for Secret Disciples / Where Apostles

We often hear Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea criticized for being secret disciples. But where were the prominent disciples? Where were Peter, James, and John? They were hiding. It was the heretofore secret disciples—Nicodemus and Joseph—who were at the Cross, ministering to the body of their Lord. Perhaps you feel like you don't do much. You don't walk on water very often. You haven't healed a whole lot of lepers lately. You're not real vocal on the job about your belief in Christ. Listen—like Joseph and Nicodemus, you'll have your opportunity. Quite frankly, I think sometimes the secret disciples are the ones who really shine when the way gets dark. The quiet ones, the unknown ones, are often the strongest. So it was with Joseph and Nicodemus. Their moment had arrived.

(Matthew 27:61 NKJV) And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb.

2 Mary's didn't get Confused

Just note that, the two Mary's watch Jesus go into the tomb, they know what tomb He was laid in. One of the Bible critic attacks are that the woman went to the wrong tomb on Easter Sunday, and thus why it was empty. Well right here it is clearly recorded for us that they watch which tomb Jesus was placed in.

[The Tomb Secured](#)

(Matthew 27:62 NKJV) On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate,

(Matthew 27:63 NKJV) saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.'

(Matthew 27:64 NKJV) "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

(Matthew 27:65 NKJV) Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."

(Matthew 27:66 NKJV) So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Only Matthew Records this – Insider Information

Only Matthew records this detail, thus being a tax collector for Rome he must have used his privileged position to get this insider information by somehow getting himself there or having this conversation passed on to him by someone who was present there.

Seal with X Rope / Guard – Expert Swordsman – Our Navy Seals / Seal Broke - Escaped

To seal the tomb they would place rope across the stone in an "X" formation, and then place a seal of wax on it to assure that the ropes were not messed with. The Roman Guard mentioned here was comprised of 50 expert swordsmen (both short sword and long sword); kind of comparable to our Navy Seals or Green Beret today. If a soldier broke the seal, they would crucify the soldier upside down. If you broke the seal and the prisoner escaped, they would crucify every man, woman, and child in your home. If one of the 50 fell asleep during the watch, and a senior officer came along and saw it, all 50 soldiers would be killed. So what the fellow soldiers did if they saw one of their fellows fall asleep, they would set their robe on fire, and obviously that would wake you up. So if the scene was the year 2008, the record would read that they set 50 Navy Seals outside the tomb to keep guard.

The Skeptics Remembered 3 Days / Believers not Camped / Unbelievers see more than Believer

These skeptics remembered what Jesus said. With Jesus' words about rising again in three days ringing in their memories, Jesus' enemies were worried about what might happen. The believers? They were skeptics. Had they really believed Jesus would rise, they would have been camped out around the tomb to see it happen. Have you found that sometimes the unbeliever believes more than we do? The unbeliever often has more of an understanding of the power and reality of God than do we who have "theologized" or "dispensationalized" Him away with our doctrinal systems.

(Matthew 27:65 NKJV) Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."

(Matthew 27:66 NKJV) So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

Seal Embedded – Touch Rope Die / Watch is Set / All Hell couldn't keep Stone / Witnesses

The seal of the imperial sign of Rome was embedded in wax upon the rope in front of the stone. Anyone who tampered with the rope or touched the stone would be executed. The stone was sealed. The watch was set. All hell couldn't keep that stone in place. God is lining up witnesses to confirm that the stone was rolled away.

Chp 27 ends in Darkness / Friday – But Sunday is Coming

Chapter 27 ends on Friday, a dark Friday, but Sunday's "a-comin'."

Matthew 28

He's Alive! (Matthew 28:1-20)

Under Armor Commercial / Not being Cute / Must Protect this House

Maybe you saw the Under Armor Commercial that aired in the first half of the Super Bowl last Sunday (UA by the way donated to us about 5K worth of products for us to give out in Nicaragua on our mission trip), the commercial cost the company about 8 million dollars to produce and air (2.7 million for 30 seconds). It was a very athletic, high intensity commercial featuring professional and everyday athletes working out and training hard. The Super Bowl Ad Meter ranked it very low in comparison to the other SB commercials, they said it wasn't humorous, or cute, and therefore the other commercials outranked it. I like what the spokesman for Under Armor said, we didn't want to be cute or funny, we are an athletic company selling an athletic product to people who are serious about their training and sports. Our advertisements reflect our product. They noted, we received the same critic the time we ran an ad for the Super Bowl a few years ago, they said it wasn't funny or humorous and the ad ranked low; maybe you remember that ad, it had the motto "We Must Protect This House", and as Under Armor noted, you'll be hard pressed to find a high school or college locker room that now doesn't have that motto on their wall, it has become their motto – "We Must Protect This House".

Their Biz Approach good Illustration / We come to hear and be Changed

I like their business approach, it is a great illustration of our spiritual approach here, we do not come here on Sunday's to be cute, humorous, or tickle peoples emotions; we come here to find out what this Book says to us, and then take it apply that to our lives, fully expecting that through the Holy Spirit our lives will be changed.

19 months Ago started with a Question

And nineteen months ago we started with a question, what really happened 2000 years ago in the land of Palestine, with the One called Jesus Christ, we didn't care for jokes and emotion pricking stories, we came to find out what really happened. Maybe you remember the video we started with (here it is again, where we began, is where we will end).

Video – the Author of Life

19 months, 1051 – Started studying what Happened / Saw the Author of Life, King Come

19 months ago, 1051 verses ago, without being humorous, or trying to tickle the emotions, we started this study in Matthew with the question; what really happened 2000 years ago? We said for the weeks to come, we will look into what happened, and we saw over this time that the Author of Life came into our world, to give us the life we long for, 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, and for 1051 verses we studied the Birth of the King, the Life of the King, the Death of the King, and now for our 79th study over 19 months, we will finish the last 20 verses of this 1071 verse book, the Resurrection of the King!

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 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)

The Resurrection

(Matthew 28:1 NKJV) Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

(Matthew 28:2 NKJV) And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

Rolled not to Get Out – But we see In / Acts He walks through Walls

The stone was rolled-away not so Jesus could get out, but that Mary could get in; we will read in John Jesus walking through walls therefore He didn't need the stone rolled away to get out, but for all to see that the tomb was empty. And, here again we see what seems like an immovable object in our lives is becomes a couch when God says it is the appropriate time.

John 20:26 (NKJV)²⁶ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!"

(Matthew 28:3 NKJV) His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow.

(Matthew 28:4 NKJV) And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

Shake Uncontrollable – As Dead – no Control / See Video – Hear Armor Clanging

The word for shake here means to shake uncontrollably; although they are shaking uncontrollably they become as dead men, which means to me that though they are shaking uncontrollably they have no control over their bodies to move or speak, they are frozen except for the part that they are shaking right out of their Roman underwear. I can't wait to watch the video of this when we get to heaven, see these soldiers shaking, and all their armor clanging off of itself.

Crack Soldiers primed to Shake / Navy Seals – go Guard a dead Man – Make sure doesn't Escape

These crack soldiers are so primed to be shaking in their sandals. Imagine these Navy Seals if you will, alright we have a very important mission for you, ohh what is it, protect the president, rescue a hostage, blow-up a bridge? No He is not the president, He is a carpenter – a carpenter? Yes and He is dead at that, a dead carpenter? Yes He is a dead carpenter in a tomb, and your job is to make sure that He doesn't escape.

All fall Down – I love the Sunday's of Christian Life / Darkness – God breaks Through

They all fall down as dead men. How I love the Sunday's of the Christian life, after 3 days of Fridays. How I love it when all seems so dark and hopeless, and then God breaks through, he rolls away the stone that was keeping us entombed, and rains down His brilliance of light on the matter. And, I might add, I love it when He makes the mockers and the nay-sayers tremble and quake; that may not be the most Christ-like attitude to have, nor meekness, but I have to be truthful that I do love to see the critics silenced.

Navy Seals wiped Out / Why – Angels, Lightening, Word? / No Purity / Matt 5:5 / Family, Work

Members of the finest fighting force in the known world were wiped out. Why? Because they saw the angel of the Lord draw a flaming sword? No. Because the angel spoke a word and they fell down? No. I suggest to you it was the awesome power of purity that caused these Roman soldiers to become as dead men. Gang, do you know where power truly lies? Do you know from whence effectiveness really comes? It doesn't come from being strong and assertive, proving your point, or standing up for your rights. That's not what Jesus taught. He said, "Blessed are the meek. The whole world will be theirs" (see Matthew 5:5). Meekness, holiness, and purity are what cause the Roman soldiers of this world to collapse. When Jesus taught us to turn the other cheek, it was not so we would become lifeless doormats. No, whether it concerns your husband, your wife, your children, your employer, your relatives, or your neighbors, change comes not through asserting yourself. It comes through the power of purity and holiness; holiness will melt people, they will be unable to stand before it if they are not walking in holiness and purity themselves.

Matthew 5:5 (NKJV)⁵ Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.

Go tell the Disciples

(Matthew 28:5 NKJV) But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

(Matthew 28:6 NKJV) "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

(Matthew 28:7 NKJV) "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

(Matthew 28:8 NKJV) So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

Soldiers gone – Woman Come

Obviously the soldiers have all run away, and now the woman are here.

Be not Afraid – What words for Mary – we will be Back

Verse 5 - Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified – What word's for Mary (who had 7 demons cast from her), to hear from the angel, do not be afraid. I wonder if while Jesus hung there on the cross the demons started to circle back around Mary, whispering in her ears, when He is dead we will be back. You may make it a day, two or three at the most, but we all know that in the end we will inhabit you again, you are all alone, and it isn't a matter of if, but when, and we will inhabit you again. To hear those words of fear not, He is Alive!

First Come – then Go / Who remain quiet after Empty Tomb

Notice the wording. First: "Come and see." Then: "Go and tell." Who can remain quiet once you have seen the empty tomb?

(Matthew 28:9 NKJV) And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

(Matthew 28:10 NKJV) Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

Another account – and Peter / See heart of Savior – New Life to World, Concerned for the one

Another gospel account tells us that Jesus made sure to tell the angel to also say, and Peter. We see the heart of our Savior, He is declaring New Life to the whole world, yet even in the midst of the greatest moment in the history of the world (the resurrection), He is concerned about the one, as He makes sure the message was given to tell Peter I am thinking of Him. That is our Lord, the whole world is going on, the earth is hurling through the universe, 6 billion people moving about the planet, yet in the midst of it all He is saying, how's Ray, how's John, how's Donna, tell them I love them, tell them they are on My heart and that I am thinking of them, and I can't wait to see them.

Mark 16:6-7 (NKJV) ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

Example for Us

Jesus gives that example for us too, as He says He will leave the 99 sheep to go to the 1 lost sheep, so too shall we. I was reflecting on that principle and devotion as a Pastor, and how blessed I was when I realize that as a Pastor when I leave the 99 to go that 1 lost or hurting sheep in the Church, that I only go about a step or two and I see over my shoulder the other 99 coming with me to reach out to that 1 person who is hurting. I thank God for you all, and I am thankful to be a part of this church with such awesome people as yourself as I see you over and over reaching out to the lost and hurting people around you.

Using Woman proof of Truth / Like using Thief as Character Witness

Using woman to go tell of the resurrection is one of the proofs of the resurrection because if the story was made up they would never had used woman to be the first to see Him, because woman were not esteemed in those days. So if you were going to make up a story, you would never have woman as your witnesses for the story would immediately be challenged; it would be like using a an identity-theft crook as

your character witness. Using non-credible witnesses is just another little piece of proof that no one could ever make up a story like this.

Soldiers Bribed

(Matthew 28:11 NKJV) Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.

(Matthew 28:12 NKJV) When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers,

(Matthew 28:13 NKJV) saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'

(Matthew 28:14 NKJV) "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure."

(Matthew 28:15 NKJV) So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

After Deceit, treachery, mob mentality – resort to Bribery / 1.) If slept how Know 2.) Execute / BMW
After employing deceitfulness, treachery, and mob psychology to bring about the death of Jesus, the chief priests and elders finally resorted to bribery to cover up His resurrection. "Here's some money," they said to the Roman soldiers. "We want you to say that while you slept, the disciples came and stole Jesus' body." This was a ridiculous lie for two reasons. First, if the soldiers were sleeping, how could they have known who took the body? Second, if these soldiers had indeed fallen asleep, they would have been executed according to Roman military law for their failure to keep watch. Far from dying, however, these guys showed up the next day driving BMWs.

50 Navy Seals Concur – Yet Chief Priest still Ignore the Witness / Hard Hearts

One of the things these soldiers would have told the high priests was about the angel coming and rolling the stone back; now that is quite the story for 50 men to all concur on. 50 Navy Seals all coming in agreement with the same story. How hardened the hearts of these priests are in that they wouldn't step back and consider, these are some tough dudes, I wouldn't want to meet them in a dark alley, and yet all 50 were reduced to crust of bread by this incident.

Still Campuses Today – Disciples took Body / History of Martyrs / None Recant – nor Crack

On college campuses today, some so-called intellectuals still parrot this two thousand-year-old lie. Jesus' disciples took His body? Church history says that Matthew was burned alive (covered with pitch and tar), but never recanted his account. Mark was dragged behind horses and died of the wounds, Luke was hung on an olive tree until he died, Peter crucified upside down, James (the greater – Book of Acts) was beheaded, James the (lesser) was thrown off the temple and when his body landed they beat him with clubs, Bartholomew was skinned alive, Andrew was crucified but preached to his tormentors until he died, Thomas was impaled, Jude was shot through with 18 arrows, and John was boiled and banished. Many of them saw their families tortured and killed because they continued to preach the Resurrection. But not one ever recanted his story. I personally don't have enough faith to believe that eleven men suffered brutally, watched the annihilation of their families, and died violently for a lie. Certainly one of them would have cracked.

If just Story – What changed the Scared to Power / Only the Resurrection / Do you see Res Power

If this was just a story, what changed a bunch of scared men who went into hiding, would then come out and boldly proclaim, and powerfully endure all these types of cruel torture. Not one would recant.....only the resurrection could do such a thing. Are you scared today, confused, worried, filled with anxiety, then let me prescribe to you the same dose of power the disciples took, it is seeing the resurrection, believing that the same power is available to you today for all your needs:

Ephesians 1:19-20 (NKJV) 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,

Jesus not go to Critics – but Believers / Critics search for Historical Jesus / Sheep hear Voice

Interestingly we see that Jesus doesn't go to the Bible Critics after His resurrection, but He goes to those who believe. The Bible critics still today are searching for the historical Jesus, the One recorded throughout the history books, but search as they may, they cannot find Him, and therefore they question His existence. But Jesus went to His disciples, those who believed, and life begot life, and the disciples could not remain silent about Him no matter the cost, and then many others would believe also. Jesus said My sheep hear My voice, and when we hear that voice, we open can open this Bible and His words leap off the pages at us, we hear His voice, and this Bible is no longer a mystery but a beautiful letter.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (NKJV) ³For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

John 10:27-28 (NKJV) ²⁷My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. ²⁸And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

If you do not Believe – here is Challenge / Where is the Body / Romans, Jews, Disciples

If you do not believe Jesus resurrected, I challenge you to explain to me where His body went. If the Romans had stolen it, why didn't they produce it? Christianity was ultimately the force that led to the destruction of the entire Roman Empire. If His disciples were merely hiding Jesus' body, why did they give their lives believing He had ascended? If the priests could have produced they surely would have for Jesus crushed their livelihood as many Jews became followers of Christ. You see, I would be a Christian even if I had no emotional feelings about it. Intellectually, when I look at all the evidence, I have no other choice. The body is not there. The Resurrection is the most analyzed event in history. I also believe it is the most provable. That's why Jesus said, "One sign I'll give you. Destroy this body and in three days I will rise again." Truly, the Resurrection verifies that Jesus is exactly who He claimed to be.

Jesus meets the Disciples / Go Therefore

(Matthew 28:16 NKJV) Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them.

(Matthew 28:17 NKJV) When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

(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,

Go – Participle – as you are Going (store, school, work, mission trip)

In this verse 19, the word "go" is a participle and literally means "as you are going." In other words, "As you are going to the grocery store, as you are going to school, as you are going to Mexico—wherever you're going—share the gospel." In this light, the Great Commission takes on a much broader perspective. We're to be sharing and teaching wherever we're going, whatever we're doing.

Notice "name" singular / Picture of Trinity

Jesus didn't say, "Baptizing them in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." He said, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Thus, here is another picture of the reality of the great mystery called the Trinity.

(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.

As you Go – I am with You / The Pwr of the Ress – Christ in You / The Substitution Accepted

"As you're going, as you're baptizing, as you're teaching, as you're traveling together as disciples of Me, know that I am with you always even unto the end of the world." That is what Jesus says to you today. That is why the Resurrection is so important. He's with us! I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Galatians 2:20). "Christ liveth in me." That's the beauty of

the Resurrection and the genius of Christianity. Christ in you, the hope of glory, that is the power of the resurrection. Jesus didn't come to leave us religion, but to leave us Himself! Not only with us, but in us! The resurrection proves that God accepted the substitution; if God rejected the switch, Jesus taking our place, then Jesus would have never rose again. The resurrection proves that God accepted the switch. If He didn't rise from the dead we would be left wondering if God would accept us.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV) ²⁰*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.*

Colossians 1:27 (NKJV) ²⁷*To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

Formula – You provide Sinner, God provides the Savior / Savior not Leave you the Same

The formula for Christianity is amazing, man provides the sinner, and God provides the Savior. But the Savior won't leave the sinner in his sinful state as the Savior takes up residence within the person and begins to do a wonderful and amazing work from the inside out. The Savior takes up residence because it will take a lifetime to complete.

With You Always – Cherokee Indian

Verse 20 - I am with you always, even to the end of the age - Do you know the legend of the Cherokee Indian youth's rite of Passage? His father takes him into the forest, blindfolds him and leaves him alone. He is required to sit on a stump the whole night and not remove the blindfold until the rays of the morning sun shine through it. He cannot cry out for help to anyone. Once he survives the night, he is a MAN. He cannot tell the other boys of this experience, because each lad must come into manhood on his own. The boy is naturally terrified. He can hear all kinds of noises. Wild beasts must surely be all around him. Maybe even some human might do him harm. The wind blew the grass & earth and shook his stump, but he sat stoically, never removing the blindfold. It would be the only way he could become a man! Finally, after a horrific night the sun appeared and he removed his blindfold. It was then that he discovered his father sitting on the stump next to him. He had been at watch the entire night, protecting his son from harm. We, too, are never alone. Even when we don't know it, God is watching over us, sitting on the stump beside us. When trouble comes, all we have to do is reach out to Him. Just because you can't see God, doesn't mean He is not there.

Video – the Redeemer

I would like to close our study with a video; I remember a pastor some time ago say, if you only ten minutes in your whole life to hear the gospel, this is the 10 minutes that I would have for you. If you are reading these nights, you can see this video by going to youtube.com, do a search on raybo633, and the video will be there for you.

Stone Rolled away – Body not There / Roll Away the Stone – Let nothing Keep You / John 10

Beloved, the stone has been rolled, and the body isn't there. And now I charge you for your life today, "Roll away the stone and Live", let nothing keep you from what he came to do, to give us life and that more abundant:

John 10:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰.....*I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

7 Days Chronological Events of the Gospels

Nissan 9th – Saturday – Sabbath Day

Mary Anoints Jesus in Bethany – Jn 12:1-11

Nissan 10th – Sunday – First Day of Week:

(Exodus 12:3 – Lamb brought into the House of Israel)

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

Jesus Triumphal Entry – Mt 21:1-11

Jesus Triumphal Entry - Mk 11:1-10

Jesus Triumphal Entry – Lk 19:28-44

Jesus Triumphal Entry – Jn 12:12—19

Goes into Temple but Leaves - Mk 11:11

Greeks ask to see Jesus / Jesus Teaches – Jn 12:20-50

Sleeps outside city in Bethany - Mk 11:11

11th – Monday

Story of Cursing Fig Tree – Mt 21:18-22

Curses Fig Tree - Mk 11:12-14

Cleanses the Temple – Mt 21:12-17

Cleanses the Temple - Mk 11:15-18

Cleanses the Temple – Lk 19:45-48

Leaves the city when Evening Came - Mk 11:19

12th – Tuesday

Story of Cursing Fig Tree – Mt 21:18-22

Explains the Cursing of Fig Tree - Mk 11:20-26

Goes to Temple (Authority Challenged)

The Authority of John Baptist – Mt 21:23-27

The Authority of John Baptist - Mk 11:27-33

The Authority of John Baptist – Lk 20:1-8

Parable of two Sons – Mt 21:28-32

Parable of Vineyard – Mt 21:33-41

Parable of Vineyard – Mk 12:1-9

Parable of Vineyard – Lk 20:9-16

The Chief Cornerstone Rejected – Mt 21:43-46

The Chief Cornerstone Rejected – Mk 12:10-12

The Chief Cornerstone Rejected – Lk 20:17-18

Parable Marriage Feast Mt 22:1-14

Question of Taxes – Mt 22: 15-22

Question of Taxes – Mk 12:13-17

Question of Taxes – Lk 20:19-26

Whose wife in Resurrection – Mt 22: 23-33

Whose wife in Resurrection – Mk 12:18-27

Whose wife in Resurrection – Lk 20:27-38

The Greatest Command – Mt 22:34-40

The Greatest Commandment – Mk 12:28-34

The Son of David – Mt 22:41-46

The Son of David – Mk 12:35-38

The Son of David – Lk 20:39-44

Jesus condemns the Scribes and Pharisees – Mt 23:1-36

Jesus condemns the Religious Leaders – Mk 12:38-44

Jesus condemns the Religious Leaders – Lk 20:45-47

The Widow's 2 Mites – Lk 21:1-4

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem – Mt 23:37-39

The Olivet's Discourse

The Temple will be Destroyed – Mt 24:1-2

The Temple will be Destroyed – Mk 13:1-2

The Temple will be Destroyed – Lk 21:5-7

The Tribulation – Mt 24:4-26

The Tribulation – Mk 13:3-23

The Tribulation – Lk 21:8-24

The Second Coming – Mt 24:27-31

The Second Coming – Mk 13:24-27

The Second Coming – Lk 21:25-28

When Fig Tree Blossoms – Mt 24:32-35

When Fig Tree Blossoms – Mk 13:28-31

When Fig Tree Blossoms – Lk 21:29-33

Days of Noah – Mt 24:36-39

One is Taken / 1 is Left Behind – Mt 24:40-41

Exhortation to Watch – Mt 24:42-44

Exhortation to Watch – Mk 13:32-37

Exhortation to Watch – Lk 21:34-36

The 2 Servants – Mt 24:45-51

Parable of 10 Virgins – Mt 25:1-13

Parable of 5-2-1 Talents – Mt 25:14-30

Separating the Sheep from the Goats (when done to least of these) – Mt 25:35-46

After 2 days the Passover – Mt 26: 1-2

After 2 days the Passover – Mk 14:1

Chief priests plot to kill by Trickery – Mt 26:3-5

Chief priests plot to kill by Trickery – Mk 14:1-2

Jesus Anointed by Woman in Bethany – Mt 26:6-13

Jesus Anointed by Woman in Bethany – Mk 14:3-9

Judas Agrees to betray Jesus – Mt 26:14-16

Judas Agrees to betray Jesus – Mk 14:10-11

Judas Agrees to betray Jesus – Lk 22:1-6

13th – Wednesday

(The Gospels are Silent)

14th – Thursday

(Exodus 12:6 - Passover Lamb Prepared – 14th of Nissan)

Ex 12: 6 (NKJV)⁶Now 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.

14th/after sunset (beginning of new day) – Jesus eats with the disciples

The Passover Prepared – Mt 26:17-19

The Passover Prepared – Mk 14:12-16

The Passover Prepared – Lk 22:7-13

Passover Celebrated – Mt 26:20

Passover Celebrated – Mk 14:17

Passover Celebrated – Lk 22:14-18

Jesus washes the Disciples Feet – Jn 13:1-17

Jesus Predicts His Betrayer – Mt 26:21-25

Jesus Predicts His Betrayer – Mk 14:18-21

Jesus Predicts His Betrayer – Lk 22:21-23

Jesus Predicts His Betrayer – Jn 13:18-30

Lord's Supper Instituted – Mt 26:26-29

Lord's Supper Instituted – Mk 14:22-25

Lord's Supper Instituted – Lk 22:19-20

Disciples argue over who is Greatest amongst Them – Lk 22:24-30

Jesus Announces His Departure / Disciples known by Love – Jn 13:31-35

Peter's Denial Predicted – Mt 26:30-35

Peter's Denial Predicted – Mk 14:26-31

Peter's Denial Predicted – Lk 22:31-34

Peter's Denial Predicted – Jn 13:36-38

Jesus comforts the Disciples (I go prepare a place for you) – Jn 14:1-4

Thomas asks the way (I Am the Way) – Jn 14:5-7

Phillip asks to see the Father (Seen Me – Seen Father) – Jn 14:8-14

Jesus promises the Helper (Holy Spirit) – Jn 14:15-31

Jesus teaches He is the Vine we are the Branches – Jn 15:1-11

Jesus commands we are to Love one Another – Jn 15:12-17

Jesus tells of the World hating Us – Jn 15:18-25

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (Spirit of Truth) – Jn 16:1-15

Jesus speaks of His death and resurrection (He has overcome the world) – Jn 16: 16-33

Jesus prays for Himself (Glorify Your Son) – Jn 17:1-5

Jesus prays for the Disciples (Sanctify them by the Truth) – Jn 17:6-19

Jesus prays for all Believers (To be one with He and the Father) – Jn 17:20-26

Jesus numbered with the Transgressors – Lk 22:35-38

14th/ after sunset/before sunrise - Jesus in garden and arrested

Jesus prays in Gethsemane – Mt 26:36-44

Jesus prays in Gethsemane – Mk 14:32-42

Jesus prays in Gethsemane – Lk 22:39-46

Jesus prays in Gethsemane – Jn 18:1

Jesus Arrested – Mt 26:47-56

Jesus Arrested – Mk 43-52

Jesus Arrested – Lk 22:47-53

Jesus Arrested – Jn 18:2-11

The Trial

Jesus before Annas – Jn 18:12-14

Jesus before Annas – Jn 18:19-23

Jesus before Caiaphas – Mt 26:57-66

Jesus before Caiaphas – Mk 14:53-64

Jesus before Caiaphas – Mt 26:57-66

Jesus before Caiaphas – Jn 18:24

Jesus Beaten – Mt 26:67-68

Jesus Beaten – Mk 14:65

Jesus Beaten – Lk 22:63-65

Peter's 3 Denials – Mt 26: 69-75

Peter's 3 Denials – Mk 14:66-72

Peter's 3 Denials – Lk 22:54-62

Peter's 3 Denials – Jn 18:15-18

Peter's 3 Denials – Jn 18:25-27

Morning Daybreak

Chief Priests Question Jesus at Daybreak – Mk 27:1

Chief Priests Question Jesus at Daybreak – Lk 22:66-71

Jesus delivered to Pilate – Mt 27:2
Jesus delivered to Pilate – Mk 15:1
Jesus delivered to Pilate – Lk 23:1
Jesus delivered to Pilate – Jn 18:28

Judas commits Suicide – Mt 27:3-10

Jesus questioned by Pilate 1st Time – Mt 27:11-14
Jesus questioned by Pilate 1st Time – Mk 15:2-5
Jesus questioned by Pilate 1st Time – Lk 23:2-5
Jesus questioned by Pilate 1st Time – Jn 18:29--38

Pilate sends Jesus to Herod – Lk 23:6

Herod Tries Christ – Lk 23:8-12

2nd trial before Pilate / Barabbas is freed by Pilate – Mt 27:15-25
2nd trial before Pilate / Barabbas is freed by Pilate – Mk 15:6-14
2nd trial before Pilate / Barabbas is freed by Pilate – Lk 23:13-25
2nd trial before Pilate / Barabbas is freed by Pilate – Jn 18:39-40

Jesus is Scourged – Mt 27:26-28
Jesus is Scourged – Mk 15:15-20
Jesus is Scourged – Jn 19:1-3

14th/before 9am - Jesus sentenced to crucifixion
Pilate Presents Jesus – Behold your King – Jn 19:4-16

Jesus Lead to Golgotha – Mt 27:29-34
Jesus Lead to Golgotha – Mk 15:21-23
Jesus Lead to Golgotha – Lk 23:26-32
Jesus Lead to Golgotha – Jn 19:17

14th/9am to 3pm – Jesus hangs on the cross
Jesus Crucified – Mt 27:35-44
Jesus Crucified – Mk 15:24-36
Jesus Crucified – Lk 23:33-44
Jesus Crucified – Jn 19:18-29

The Veil Ripping & Jesus Dying – Nearly Simultaneous Events

The Veil is Ripped / The Earth Quakes – Mt 27:51-56
The Veil is Ripped / The Earth Quakes – Mk 15:38-41
The Veil is Ripped / The Earth Quakes – Lk 23:45

14th/3pm Jesus dies
Jesus Dies – Mt 27:45-50
Jesus Dies – Mk 15:37
Jesus Dies – Lk 23:46-49
Jesus Dies – Jn 19:30-37

14th/3pm He dies - New day begins at sunset, Jesus put in the grave before sunset (around 6pm)
Jesus is Buried – Mt 27:57-61
Jesus is Buried – Mk 15:42-47
Jesus is Buried – Lk 23:50-55
Jesus is Buried – Jn 19:38-42

15th – Friday

3 days and 3 nights in the Belly of Fish:

(Matthew 12:40 KJV) For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

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

Feast of Unleavened Begins:

*(Leviticus 23:6 NKJV) 'And on the **fifteenth day** of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread.*

(Leviticus 23:7 NKJV) 'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work on it.

The Scripture is clear that this feast is on the 15th. Leaven represents sin, corruption, decay, and they were to go through out the house cleaning it of leaven before this day came. It was promised that Jesus would not be left in hell or see corruption, nor that His body would decay:
(Psalms 16:10 KJV) For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
(Psalms 16:11 KJV) Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Pharisees ask for Guard at Tomb – Mt 27:62-66

16th – Saturday - Sabbath

6pm to 6am = 2 nights in the grave (Sabbath Day)

17th – Sunday – First Day of Week – Resurrection

6pm to 6am = 3 nights in the grave

Leviticus 23:9-11 Feast of First Fruits - Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection, He is our leader proving the perfect sacrifice was acceptable unto God, in that He rose again and was not left in the grave.:

(1 Corinthians 15:20 KJV) But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

(Leviticus 23:9 NKJV) And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

(Leviticus 23:10 NKJV) "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

*(Leviticus 23:11 NKJV) 'He shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; **on the day after the Sabbath** the priest shall wave it.*

The Ark Rests - 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.

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

The Empty Tomb – Mt 28:1-8

The Empty Tomb – Mk 16:1-8

The Empty Tomb – Lk 23:56 – Lk 24:1-12

The Empty Tomb – Jn 20:1-10

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene – Mt 28:9-10

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene – Mk 16:9-11

Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene – Jn 20:11-18

The Priests bribe the Soldiers – Mt 28:11-15

The Road to Emmaus – Mk 16:12-13

The Road to Emmaus – Lk 24:13-33

Jesus appears to Simon – Lk 24:34

Jesus appears to the Disciples behind closed Door (Thomas Absent) – Lk 24:35-43
Jesus appears to the Disciples behind closed Door (Thomas Absent) – Jn 20:19-25

Major Events Thereafter:

Appears to be same Event (2nd appearance to Disciples)

Jesus appears to the Disciples behind closed Door (Thomas Present) – Jn 20:26-29

Jesus appears to the 11 Disciples – Mt 28:16-17

Jesus appears to the 11 Disciples – Mk 16:14

Jesus appears to 7 Disciples at Sea Tiberias (3rd appearance to Disciples) – Jn 21:1-14

Peter feed My Sheep – Jn 21:15-23

The Great Commission – Mt 28:18-20

The Great Commission – Mk 16:15-18

The Great Commission – Lk 24:44-48

The Ascension of Jesus – Mk 16:19

The Ascension of Jesus – Lk 24:49-53

Disciples go and preach Everywhere – Mk 16:20

The History of the Land of Israel, the Jews, and Jerusalem

O' Jerusalem – The Cup of Trembling

(Genesis 12:5 NKJV) Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.

(Genesis 12:6 NKJV) Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

(Genesis 12:7 NKJV) Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

(Genesis 12:8 NKJV) And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Eyes of the World / Eyes of the Lord

The eyes of the whole world are upon the land of Israel, pick-up the newspaper and you will see and hear about this land daily. Why? Because the eyes of the Lord are upon this land (as we'll see), the land is God's (as we'll see), and it is God's prophetic end-times timepiece (as we'll see).

It's a Dot

The whole world has their eyes upon a land that is little more than a dot on the map: There are only 6 million Jewish people in Israel, compared to 300,000 million Americans. Israel population is about the same as the Greater Baltimore Metropolitan.

- Israel is only 250 miles long and 75 miles wide
- Israel is 8,020 sq. miles
- New Jersey is 7,787 sq. miles
- Maryland is 10,500 sq. miles
- Texas is 266,807 sq. miles
- Look at the map and compare it to the rest of the Arab nations in the Mid-East like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iran, Jordan, and Syria; it is a dot.

Unlike Texas, or any of the Arab nations, there is not a drop of oil to be found.

Study Outline

We will look at the land of Israel from three aspects:

- Scripturally – What the Bible says about the Land
- Historically – The 4,000 year history of the Land
- Spiritually – The spiritual aspect of the Land
 - Anti-Semitism / Muslim Faith
 - End Times

Caveat

Being Bible-believing Christians in no way requires us to support every secular policy of Israel's government, but simultaneously compels us to stand firmly against both anti-Semitism and racial or ethnic prejudice against Arabs (many of whom are Christian), and to desire peace, dignity and self-determination for all Middle Eastern peoples. Moreover, our Biblical faith requires us to support the existence of Israel as an independent democratic nation, to recognize that the land of Israel belongs eternally to the Jews by divine covenant, and to recognize that all Jews are God's chosen people, destined to receive the blessings of His promises.

Scripturally – What the Bible says about the Land

God Owns it All

All Land belongs to God, and the people too, and He can give that land to whomever he chooses because first He is God, and secondly all of the land is His to give:

(Exodus 19:5 NKJV) 'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

(Psalms 24:1 NKJV) The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

(1 Corinthians 10:26 NKJV) for "the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness."

God Chooses Israel / Jerusalem Specifically

Out of all the earth, God chose Israel specifically for Himself (He has the power and authority to do so because all of it is His), and He narrows it down specifically to Jerusalem. God's eyes are on Israel forever, and that is where His heart is. He said these things 3,000 ago:

(2 Chronicles 6:5 NKJV) 'Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel.

(2 Chronicles 6:6 NKJV) 'Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there; and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.'

(2 Chronicles 7:12 NKJV) Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice.

(2 Chronicles 7:13 NKJV) "When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people,

(2 Chronicles 7:14 NKJV) "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

(2 Chronicles 7:15 NKJV) "Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

(2 Chronicles 7:16 NKJV) "For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

The Cup of Trembling

God says He will use the Land as a "Cup of Trembling" to all nations.

(Zechariah 12:1 KJV) The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

(Zechariah 12:2 KJV) **Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about**, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

(Zechariah 12:3 KJV) **And in that day** will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

(Zechariah 12:4 KJV) **In that day**, saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

(Zechariah 12:5 KJV) And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hosts their God.

(Zechariah 12:6 KJV) **In that day** will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.

(Zechariah 12:7 KJV) The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.

(Zechariah 12:8 KJV) **In that day** shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them.

(Zechariah 12:9 KJV) And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

This was written 2,500 years ago, but notice that throughout the passage it says, "in that day". What day is that referring to, it is referring to the Last Days, when Messiah will return – Jesus. Here God is saying He will use Israel in the days preceding His return, before His Second Coming.

When Zechariah wrote this, 2,500 years ago, Israel was barren, yet God says keep your eye on Jerusalem. People would have had to laugh when they read this, saying keep your eye on a wasteland that is barren, (50 years ago – with no oil). But 2,500 years later the whole world is watching. The name Zechariah means "God Remembers". God never forget Jerusalem, and today the whole world watched on, looking at Israel and Jerusalem.

Who Did God Give the Land To

Whose land is it, it is God's and He can give it to whomever He pleases. This special dot the size of New Jersey, this place that is special to the Jew, the Muslim, and the Christian. Specifically Jerusalem, for to the Muslim it is the third most holy site behind Mecca and Medina. The Muslim believes at the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem is where Muhammad ascended into heaven, and the Dome of the rock was the spot where Abraham offered Ishmael (not Isaac).

Who Did God Give it To? / 8 Covenants

But who did God give the Land to 4,000 years ago? He gave it to, Abraham; right here in Genesis 12. So quickly lets recap the 8 specific Covenants we see in the Scriptures:

Definition of Covenant

"a sovereign proclamation of God, from the lips of God, that puts Him in a relationship of responsibility with a man, a family, a nation, and/or the world. It is a proclamation of God saying this is what I am going to do.

Sometimes these covenants are:

- Conditional
- Unconditional
- Perpetual (Forever)
- Expire.

Edenic Covenant: (Genesis 2:16-17). God declares to Adam and Eve, all of this is for you to enjoy, but if you eat of the tree of Knowledge and Evil, you shall surely die. This one is perpetual for we see man dying everyday as the result of the world being plunged into sin.

Adamic Covenant: (Genesis 3:14-19). Here is the result of the fall, the curse. Satan you shall slither on your belly, woman you shall suffer pain in childbirth, man you shall till the land in sweat. But there is hope, for a Savior will come through the Seed of the woman who will crush satan's head, but only after satan bruises His heal on the cross. This one is perpetual, woman still suffer in birthing, and man still sweats in the field. The Savior has come for sin, but next times He comes for His kids.

Noahic Covenant: (Genesis 8:21-9:17). Included the Diet (The Foods given to Eat); Discipline - (Punishment for Murder); and the Declaration (God will never flood the world again). It is a perpetual covenant.

Abrahamic Covenant: (Genesis 12,15,17). God telling Abraham I am going to bless you, and the nations will be blessed through you. For through the line of Abraham the Savior will come, and all who will receive Him will be free from sin and death. It is a perpetual covenant for the Love of the Lamb is available to all who will receive, every tribe, nation, and tongue. God also is going to give Abraham a land that will be his forever.

Mosaic Covenant: (Exodus 19, 24, 34). Better known as "The Law". This is a conditional covenant for it is based on; if you will do this you will be blessed, if you will that, then you will be cursed. It is an if/then covenant. If you do right then you will be blessed, if you do wrong, then you will be cursed. This covenant is not perpetual for it was superceded by the New Covenant.

Palestinian Covenant: (Duet 30). This covenant deals with the land of Israel. It states that the land of Israel will be the Jews forever and ever. It is perpetual, forever and ever, regardless of what Yassar Arraft thinks or says, regardless of what the United Nations or the United States says, it is the Jewish peoples forever and ever.

David Covenant: (2 Sam. 7:12; 22:51) From King David's seed would come a ruler who would reign on the throne forever - King Jesus. This one of course is perpetual, forever and ever. This covenant agreement reached its highest fulfillment when Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of the line of David, was

born in Bethlehem about a thousand years after God made this promise to David the king (Matt. 1:1; 2:4–6; Luke 1:29–33).

New Covenant: (Jeremiah 31:31-34 see also Heb 8:3). God says I will write my will on the tablets of your heart. Jesus would say His blood is the blood of the New Covenant (Matt 26:27-28). It is no longer an external covenant, but an internal covenant. It is Christ in you, the hope of Glory (Col 1:27). It is God Himself taking up residence in your body to lead you and empower you for your walk with Him.

God gives the Land to Abraham

God gives Abraham the Land of Israel:

*(Genesis 12:5 NKJV) Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. **So they came to the land of Canaan.***

(Genesis 12:6 NKJV) Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

*(Genesis 12:7 NKJV) Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "**To your descendants I will give this land.**" And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

(Genesis 12:8 NKJV) And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD.

Given Forever

God adds to the giving of the land – He says it is yours forever:

(Genesis 13:14 NKJV) And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are; northward, southward, eastward, and westward;

*(Genesis 13:15 NKJV) "**for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.***

(Genesis 13:16 NKJV) "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered.

Shows the Boundaries

God shows Abraham how large the given land is:

(Genesis 15:1 NKJV) After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."

*(Genesis 15:18 NKJV) On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, **from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates;***

Passes to Isaac – Not Ishmael

It is passed to Abraham's son Isaac (not Ishmael as the Muslim will claim).

(Genesis 26:1 NKJV) There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

(Genesis 26:2 NKJV) Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you.

*(Genesis 26:3 NKJV) "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; **for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.***

(Genesis 26:4 NKJV) "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;

(Genesis 26:5 NKJV) "because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Passes to Jacob

From Abraham, to Isaac, then to Jacob the Land will always be Israel. God changes Jacob's name to Israel (Gen 32:28)

(Genesis 28:10 NKJV) Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran.

(Genesis 28:11 NKJV) So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep.

(Genesis 28:12 NKJV) Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

*(Genesis 28:13 NKJV) And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; **the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants.***

(Genesis 28:14 NKJV) "Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

*(Genesis 28:15 NKJV) "**Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land;** for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you."*

Not because of Israel's Righteousness

God is not giving the Land to Israel because they are righteous, but because of the witness of His Word:

(Deuteronomy 9:1 NKJV) "Hear, O Israel: You are to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven,

(Deuteronomy 9:2 NKJV) "a people great and tall, the descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and of whom you heard it said, 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?'

(Deuteronomy 9:3 NKJV) "Therefore understand today that the LORD your God is He who goes over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and bring them down before you; so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.

(Deuteronomy 9:4 NKJV) "Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, 'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you.

(Deuteronomy 9:5 NKJV) "It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

(Deuteronomy 9:6 NKJV) "Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people.

3 Reason Israel the Chosen

God says to Israel don't get puffed up. Why is the nation Israel a chosen nation, why are they a chosen people? It is important to know and understand, so we can piece together our Old Testament history leading up to Jesus Christ, and so we can understand why things are as they are in the Middle East and world today.

3 Reasons:

1. To be a Witness of God's Ways.
2. A Keeper of God's Word
3. A Channel of God's Wonder

1.) To be a Witness of God's Way

God glorifies Himself through Israel. The world may be confused and in chaos, but God wants the world to see Him clearly:

(Isaiah 44:23 NKJV) Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel.

The Jewish nation was to be a light unto the world. The Jews were to show the world what it was like to have God as the Leader of their nation. Israel was to make the whole world crave to follow the God of the nation Israel (remember Rahab).

(Isaiah 49:6 NKJV) Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'

(Psalms 33:12 NKJV) Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, The people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

Unfortunately, turned it from being a missionary/witnessing calling to the world, to a self-righteous chosen election. It reached the point that the Jewish people believed that all that a Gentile (anyone not a Jew) was good for was to fuel the fire of Hell. They would walk down the street and when they saw a Gentile yell, unclean, unclean, and cross over to the other side. If their clothing brushed against a Gentile they would go home and bathe, and burn their clothing. Sadly, we can see some of that same mentality in the church today, a loss of love for those who are perishing, refusing to get dirty to snatch them from hell.

2.) A Keeper of God's Word

We all should be deeply grateful to the Jewish people, for they were meticulous in maintaining the purity of Gods Word, and we are blessed and benefit greatly from it today:

(Romans 3:1 NKJV) What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?

(Romans 3:2 NKJV) Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God.

3.) A Channel of God's Wonder

Through the Jewish nation, specifically Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would come the Messiah. The promised Seed of Genesis 3:15:

(Genesis 12:3 NKJV) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Israel's Witness / Dispersed / God's Word

Israel is a witness to the whole world. The whole world looks on and says how do they survive. How could a nation survive, even when they didn't have a homeland. For 2,000 years Israel kept their national identity, without a homeland, without a capital city. The fact that Israel exist today is a witness to God's Word. God said they would be dispersed, God said they would be without a homeland, but God said even when you are out of the land, it's still your land, and it will be waiting for you when I bring you back.

Palestinian Covenant

The Palestinian Covenant: (Duet 30). This covenant deals with the land of Israel. It states that the land of Israel will be the Jews forever and ever. It is perpetual, forever and ever,:

(Deuteronomy 30:1 NKJV) "Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you,

(Deuteronomy 30:2 NKJV) "and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul,

(Deuteronomy 30:3 NKJV) "that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you.

(Deuteronomy 30:4 NKJV) "If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.

(Deuteronomy 30:5 NKJV) "Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

The David Covenant: (2 Sam. 7:10-12; 22:51). Even the Davidic Covenant included that the land was theirs, and that the Messiah would come through King David.

(2 Samuel 7:10 NKJV) "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously,

(2 Samuel 7:11 NKJV) "since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.

(2 Samuel 7:12 NKJV) "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

Brief History

Abraham inherits the land and lives in it, it passes to Isaac and then Jacob. They go into bondage in Egypt for 400 years, come back to the land led by Moses and then Joshua. They have judges, then King Saul, David, and Solomon. The kingdom gets divided, they reject the warnings of the prophets, live in disobedience, then are taken captives by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. So for 70 years they are in captivity, but then return, and the land is still theirs, just as the Palestinian Covenant said it would.

God used the Babylonian kingdom for His purposes of disciplining Israel. God lets other nations control the land in order to work His will for Israel and His Witness to the world.

(Jeremiah 27:4 NKJV) 'And command them to say to their masters, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; thus you shall say to your masters:

(Jeremiah 27:5 NKJV) 'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me.

(Jeremiah 27:6 NKJV) 'And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him.

(Jeremiah 27:7 NKJV) 'So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them.

(Jeremiah 27:8 NKJV) 'And it shall be, that the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the LORD, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand.

Starting with Babylon / 2000 Years under someone's Yoke

It is from that time, from the time of Babylonian Kingdom, Israel will dwell in the Land, but they will never possess it. It will always be in someone else's ownership, someone else's yoke and bondage. Again, no nation has ever survived 2,000 years without a homeland that they controlled, but Israel did, and it can only be attributed to God.

Nation Born in a Day

After 2,000 years, after millions of Jews being killed. 1 million by Titus in 70AD, and 6 million by Hitler in WW2, the most amazing Scripture is fulfilled:

(Isaiah 66:1 NKJV) Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"

(Isaiah 66:2 NKJV) For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.

(Isaiah 66:3 NKJV) "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man; He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck; He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood; He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol. Just as they have chosen their own ways, And their soul delights in their abominations,

(Isaiah 66:4 NKJV) So will I choose their delusions, And bring their fears on them; Because, when I called, no one answered, When I spoke they did not hear; But they did evil before My eyes, And chose that in which I do not delight."

(Isaiah 66:5 NKJV) Hear the word of the LORD, You who tremble at His word: "Your brethren who hated you, Who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, That we may see your joy.' But they shall be ashamed."

(Isaiah 66:6 NKJV) The sound of noise from the city! A voice from the temple! The voice of the LORD, Who fully repays His enemies!

(Isaiah 66:7 NKJV) "Before she was in labor, she gave birth; Before her pain came, She delivered a male child.

(Isaiah 66:8 NKJV) Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion was in labor, She gave birth to her children.

(Isaiah 66:9 NKJV) Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD. "Shall I who cause delivery shut up the womb?" says your God.

(Isaiah 66:10 NKJV) "Rejoice with Jerusalem, And be glad with her, all you who love her; Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;

(Isaiah 66:11 NKJV) That you may feed and be satisfied With the consolation of her bosom, That you may drink deeply and be delighted With the abundance of her glory."

May 14, 1948

May 14, 1948, in one day, the nation Israel was recognized as a State, as a Nation. Exactly what God had said in Isaiah 700 hundred years before. No nation has ever been born in a day, especially after all the persecution and attempts to wipe them off the face of the earth. Israel truly is a witness of God's wonder and His Word. He proof the Israel exists, should be proof that God exists.

Dry Bones / The Regathering

If that wasn't enough, in Ezekial 37 we read the prophecy of "Dry Bones" coming to life; it is a picture of God regathering the children of Israel from all over the world back into Israel. It is the predecessor of Russian invasion that will happen in the end times (more on that in part 3). Amazingly, but 10's of thousand Jews immigrate from around the world every year to move to Israel. We truly are living in the Last Days:

(Ezekiel 37:21 NKJV) "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;

(Ezekiel 37:22 NKJV) "and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.

The Fig Tree has Blossomed

Just as all these Scriptures have come to pass and remain true, there is one that we all must grab hold of and live for:

(Matthew 24:32 NKJV) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

(Matthew 24:33 NKJV) "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at the doors!

(Matthew 24:34 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

(Matthew 24:35 NKJV) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

(Matthew 24:36 NKJV) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

(Matthew 24:37 NKJV) "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

We are the generation that has seen the fig tree blossom, and therefore the return of Christ is near. As I say if He doesn't come today, then He is coming tomorrow. Ask me tomorrow and I'll tell you the same thing.

Fulfilled the Messiah Promise

Just as the Lord has fulfilled everything concerning the Land and the People, He has fulfilled everything concerning the Person – the Messiah Jesus Christ who came to be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.:

(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.

Historically – The 4,000 year History of the Land

Abraham / Issac / Jacob / Famine to Egypt / Slavery

The history of ancient Israel is available for all to read in the Bible and secular history, and rightly begins with Abraham's call by the one true and living Creator-God to leave his ancestral home in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley and follow the Fertile Crescent in a counter-clockwise arch until he arrived in what is now Israel - a beautiful and fertile land that was at that time unsettled and occupied only by occasional wandering nomadic tribes of herdsman. There, God told him to mount a hill and look about him in all directions, promising to give him and his descendants the land forever. The promise to Abraham was renewed to his son Isaac, and later to his son Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel, then to Jacob's twelve sons and their descendants. The twelve sons of Jacob are, of course, the patriarchs of the tribes of Israel, and their physical descendants are the Jews. God reiterated on several occasions throughout the Old Testament that His promise of that particular locality was eternal. Because of a severe famine, Jacob, his sons, and their families migrated to Egypt where they were nourished and fed for several centuries under a series of friendly Pharaohs until a cruel king ascended to the throne who enslaved the Jews and subjected them to brutal task-masters.

Moses / Joshua / Judges / Kings

Moses, born of devout Jewish parents but raised in the courts and learning of ancient Egypt, was expelled from the land after intervening physically on behalf of his countrymen, spent the next 40 years as a shepherd in the desert, then returned to lead the children of Israel out of their bondage by the miraculous hand of God. Although Moses died in the wilderness, the Jews, now several million in number, reclaimed their God-given land under the leadership of Joshua, a land that had in the meantime been occupied by violent and debauchorous city-states and tribes. For several centuries, the 12 tribes of Israel were governed rather informally by a series of judges including Samuel, Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. About a millennium before the birth of Christ and about a millennium after the time of Abraham, the people of Israel demanded a king like the pagan nations around them and wound up with King Saul, whose rule was oppressive and at times disobedient to God. Saul in turn was replaced by David, the sweet psalmist, the shepherd king of Israel, and the author of many of the Psalms in the Bible. David was a man after God's own heart, and God again reiterated the promise of the land to him and his descendants, and additionally promised that the ultimate deliverer and redeemer, the King of all kings, the divine ruler of all creation, the Messiah, who would usher in everlasting peace and prosperity, would be one of David's descendants.

Solomon / Kingdom Splits / Babylon - Nebuchadnezzar

After the death of David, his son Solomon continued and expanded the empire, making Israel the wealthiest and most powerful kingdom on earth until his death, after which a civil war ripped the nation in two - Israel to the north with its capital city of Samaria, and Judah to the south with its capital city of Jerusalem. The northern kingdom had no godly kings although some were worse than others were, while the southern kingdom had a mixture of good and bad rulers. In 721 BC, the Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel, but were unable to take Judah or Jerusalem. They in turn were conquered by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar, who successfully conquered Judah and destroyed Solomon's temple and Jerusalem in 586 BC.

70 Years / Medo-Persians / Rebuild the Walls / Grecian / Roman

Seventy years later, Babylon in the meantime having been itself conquered by the Medo-Persians under Cyrus the Great, the Jews repatriated their homeland and reconstructed the temple in Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Zerubbabel. At this point, it should be emphasized that the Jews have maintained a continual presence in the land of Israel from the time of Joshua's conquest until the present. Even under foreign rule and occupation, even during the times of exile, some Jews were left in

the land, and Jewish settlements continued. Medo-Persia was later conquered by Alexander the Great (330BC) and Israel became a part of the Greek empire, which in turn was conquered by Julius Caesar, making Israel a part of the massive Roman Empire. It was into a Roman-occupied Israel that Jesus was born 2,000 years ago.

Days of Jesus / 70AD – Titus / 1 million Killed

Many Christians mistakenly believe that Jesus cursed His fellow Jews because they rejected Him, and that therefore Israel no longer has a place in God's plan. The promise of God to the physical descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob called Israel, however, was an eternal promise, the basis of an everlasting covenant, the promises of which will yet be fulfilled. Jesus wept over the unbelief of Israel and prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem, but nowhere ever implied any rejection of His own countrymen as a whole. In 70 AD, Titus led the infamous 10th Roman legion on an invasion of Israel and utterly destroyed Jerusalem just as Jesus had predicted. Over a million Jews were slaughtered, Jewish blood flowed like rivers through the streets of the Holy City, and the Romans changed the name of the country to Palestine - an anti-Semitic slur taken from the Philistines, who were a primary enemy of the Jews in ancient times. Resistance fighters held out for three more years until the last of them were destroyed at Masada in the Negev desert of southern Israel. Many of the remaining Jews were deported to various nations in the Roman Empire; nevertheless, Jewish settlements continued in the land, albeit in a minority.

Emperor Hadrian / Phillistine – Palestine / 313AD

In 132 AD, the Jews revolted against Roman occupation under the leadership of Simeon Bar Kochba - an uprising that was crushed by the emperor Hadrian, who subsequently rebuilt Jerusalem as a pagan city, forbade the Jews from entering it, outlawed the practice of the Jewish religion, renamed the area of Judah "Syria Palaestina", and settled gentiles in the area. Consequently, more Jews left Israel and the principle Jewish settlements in Israel moved to the region of Galilee in the northern part of the country. In 313 AD, Constantine issued an edict of toleration that officially allowed the practice of hitherto forbidden Christianity, which was later adopted as the state religion of Rome, and Israel and the Jews were subjected to the rule of a series of Byzantine emperors. It was during this Byzantine period when the Mishna and the Jerusalem Talmud, two primary Old Testament Jewish commentaries, were written.

Islam & Muslims

In 620AD, Mohammed is a nomad. He like many others is wondering who should he worship. In Mecca there in a temple were 360 gods you could chose from. He picks 1, and that one represented Allah, and he said this is god. Now Islam already existed, but Mohammed starts a movement. He closely mirrors Judaism, desiring that Jews would follow his religion. Instead of temple he has mosque, instead of fasting he has ramahdan, instead of Abraham and Isaac he has Abraham and Ishmael, and it was Ishmael to be sacrificed not Isaac. He pens the Koran, their holy book, which by the way doesn't mention the word Jerusalem or love in it. The Jews won't follow, and so an all out war begins. Here are some excerpts from the Koran:

Do Not take the Jew or Christian a Friend

5:51: O you who believe! do not take the **Jews** and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.

Fight against the Friends of Satan - till death if need-be

[4.74]

Therefore let those fight in the way of Allah,
who sell this world's life for the hereafter;
and whoever fights in the way of Allah,
then be he slain or be he victorious,
We shall grant him a mighty reward.

[4.75]

And what reason have you that you should not fight in the way of Allah and of the weak among the men and the women and the children,
(of) those who say:
Our Lord!
cause us to go forth from this town,
whose people are oppressors,
and give us from Thee a guardian and give us from Thee a helper.

[4.76]

Those who believe fight in the way of Allah,
and those who disbelieve fight in the way of the Shaitan.
Fight therefore against the friends of the Shaitan;
surely the strategy of the Shaitan is weak.

Jews and Christian are the Most Violent of People

5.82: Certainly you will find the most violent of people in enmity for those who believe (to be) the **Jews** and those who are polytheists, and you will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say: We are Christians; this is because there are priests and monks among them and because they do not behave proudly.

May Allah destroy the Jews and Christians

9.30: And the **Jews** say: Uzair is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allah destroy them; how they are turned away!

Rome Falls / Islam Rises

In the seventh century, after the fall of Rome, the Arabs established an empire extending from Persia (modern Iran) to the Atlantic Ocean and built only one city in Israel - Ramle, their administrative capital for the area. Although the Islamic regime was tolerant at first to both Christians and Jews, it later subjected both groups to harsh restrictions, and as a result, many Jews left the villages and countryside and resettled in cities, including Jerusalem, which replaced Tiberius as the center of learning and Jewish culture.

Crusader Period / Then Back to Muslim Army

In 1066, the Crusaders from institutionalized "Christian" Europe invaded the Holy Land to "liberate" the sites they considered sacred to Christianity from Moslem rule, captured Jerusalem and slaughtered most of the Jews and Moslems they found. As the crusaders marched across the European continent, they systematically murdered and pillaged Jewish settlements along the way, which, parenthetically, is why even today many Jews are reluctant to accept the witness of Christians. In the following century, Moslem armies led by Saladin recaptured Israel and Jerusalem and forced the crusaders to retreat, thus ending their rule. Later in the 13th century, the Mamelukes, a military caste of former slaves, rose to power in Egypt, advanced into and conquered what was left of Israel from the remaining crusaders. The last crusader stronghold, Acre, fell in 1291. Because Mameluke rule was centered in Egypt, Israel was mostly neglected and Jewish communities continued relatively unmolested in the ancestral homeland.

Ottoman Empire – Turkey / 1900's Immigration

In 1516 Israel was conquered by the Ottoman emperor Selim I, who later turned rule over to his son Suleiman the Magnificent, who was tolerant towards Jews and Christians for the most part, allowing Jews fleeing persecution in Spain, where the throne had ordered all of them expelled from the country, to resettle in Israel, an immigration that revitalized the Jewish community in Jerusalem. The Ottoman Empire slowly declined as Turkey grew politically weaker, and Bedouin marauders took advantage of the lapses of security to prey on Jewish settlements. In the 18th century, there was an influx of Jews from Eastern Europe and the Jewish population of Israel doubled. Waves of "aliyah" (immigrants) swept into the land in 1882 and again in 1904 for the specific purpose of building a Jewish national presence in the ancestral homeland. This was the beginning of the Zionist movement - a series of immigrations by dispersed Jews back to Israel, most for secular rather than religious reasons.

Ottoman Empire falls in WW1 / Great Britain Controls

After the defeat of Germany and the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Palestine fell under the control of Great Britain. In 1917, after conquering Jerusalem without firing a shot, Lord Balfour issued his famous "Balfour Declaration" which proclaimed Palestine as the a national home for the Jewish people. The newly formed League of Nations, the precursor to the United Nations, confirmed the British Mandate over the area, and Jewish immigration increased, resulting in the foundation of numerous Jewish settlements and the establishment of modern Jewish cities such as Tel Aviv. Meanwhile, Arab leaders fomented anti-Jewish riots, which resulted in the British limiting immigration of Jews into Israel.

Hitler / Nazi's / WW2 / UN Enters

It was at that time that Hitler was pushing his way across Europe in pursuit of his two-fold goal - world

domination and Jewish extermination. Six million Jews, one out of every three, were slaughtered under the terror of the Third Reich. Fleeing from Nazi Europe, many Jews attempted to enter their ancestral homeland only to be turned back by the British, resulting in Jewish resistance to the British occupation coupled with Arab terrorism against the Jews in Israel. In April of 1947, the British relinquished their mandate of Palestine to the United Nations, which issued a complex partition plan in November of that year, effectively dividing Israel into a Jewish and an Arab state. The United Nations Partition Plan divided Palestine into six parts - three Jewish and three Arab - linked at two crossing points, and Jerusalem was declared to be a separate enclave under international control. Although the plan was accepted by the Jews in spite of the fact that it left them with mostly uninhabitable desert, it was rejected by the Arabs, but passed into international law anyway by a 33-10 vote (with 10 abstentions) in the UN General Assembly on November 29, 1947.

A Nation in a Day / Next Day Invasion

The British began an unilateral pullout from Israel, and hostilities broke out immediately between Arabs and Jews - hostilities that reached a crescendo on May 14, 1948, when the British Mandate expired and the modern State of Israel was proclaimed. The next day, the armies of Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq invaded Israel, and were miraculously held off by an ill-equipped, poorly trained volunteer Israeli army, which used picks, shovels, hoes, hunting rifles and homemade armored cars to repel the invaders. A series of armistice agreements were signed between February and July of 1949, which gave Israel sovereign control of all of Galilee, the coastal plain, the Negev, the Jerusalem corridor, and the Gaza strip. Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan. Most of the Arabs living in the areas assigned to Israel left and moved into neighboring Arab countries, expecting to be absorbed into the populations by their Arab brethren, but instead were interned in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Egypt, and not allowed to become citizens. Jordan then annexed almost all of the land allocated by the UN as an Arab Palestinian state, and Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip along the southern Mediterranean coast.

No Such thing as Palestinian

Remember back to Emperor Hadrian when he renamed the land Palestine, it is important to recognize that there really is no such thing as a Palestinian. They are Arab people living in a land that was renamed Palestine. Palestine was named after the Phillistines, and there are no Phillistines alive today. The secular media and world leaders give them this name as to assign ownership to the land, but the land is truly Israel and the Israeli people.

Arabs Won't Absorb Them / Washington State

The surrounding Arab nations will not absorb into their land their fellow Arab brothers. The reason being is that if they did that, then the tension in and against Israel would go away. The Muslim nations know that if the Arabs in Israel could immigrate into their land, then there would be peace against Israel, and they do not want that. An example of that would be if we had to give the State of Washington to Canada. That state has about 6 million residents living there, the same size of Israel. Now we recognize the people of Washington as Americans, and surely we would absorb them into the rest of America; but the Arabs nations refuse to do that, even though they are so-called brothers in the faith, because they want them to fight and kill the Israeli in order to have a place to live.

Immigration to the Land

So, when Israel was established in 1948, Jews from Nazi-torn Europe immigrated in massive numbers - 700,000 between 1948 and 1951. In 1949, the dictator of Yemen ordered the expulsion of all Jews and the entire community moved to Israel; in 1950, 90% of the Jewish community left Iraq and headed for Israel. Immigration from Europe was the primary source of Jews moving to Israel until the 1970's, when Russia permitted its Jewish population to leave and move there. Today there are still planes landing weekly with immigrants move back to Israel.

Homocide Bombers Begin / 1967 – 6day War / Expanded Borders

After the War of Independence, the neighboring Arab nations, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, signed armistice agreements, but considered themselves to be at war anyway, sending terrorists and suicide bombers across the borders regularly. In 1956, Egypt, equipped with the latest Soviet weaponry, attacked Israel from the south, but Israel overran the Sinai Peninsula within a few days, and then withdrew under

pressure from the United States. Terrorist incursions continued from Egypt, Jordan, and Syrian controlled Lebanon through the 1960's until May of 1967, when Egypt and Jordan, invaded Israel intent on destroying it. The war lasted six days (June 5-10, 1967), and the Golan Heights, all of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount, the Western Wall of Solomon's temple compound, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula were captured and held by Israel. Jerusalem was annexed into Israel and the remaining areas were placed under military administration.

1973 Yom Kipper War

The Soviet Union rearmed Syria and Egypt after the Six-Day War, and on Yom Kippur, the Great Day of Atonement in the Feast of Tabernacles, on October 6, 1973, Israel was simultaneously invaded from the north by Syria and the south by Egypt. After bitter fighting, the Israeli defense forces drove back the invading forces and were within striking distance of both Damascus, the capital of Syria, and of Cairo, the capital of Egypt. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger negotiated a cease-fire, and Israel pulled back under pressure from the United States. On March 16, 1979, a peace accord fashioned by President Carter was signed between Israel and Egypt at Camp David, Maryland.

The Oslo Accord

The Oslo Accord signed by Rabin and Arafat in Washington on September 9, 1993 after being negotiated in Oslo, Norway - an accord in which the Israeli government agreed to recognize the PLO as a negotiating party for the Palestinians in exchange for the PLO's recognition of Israel, and begin plans for placing portions of Judea and Samaria, otherwise known as the "West Bank" of the Jordan River, under the control of a self-governing Palestinian group. In spite of continued terrorist attacks by Hamas, Palestinians took control of Gaza and Jericho on May 4, 1994.

Spiritually – The Spiritual Aspect of the Land

1.) Anti-Semitism / Muslim Faith

The Palestinian Authority

The Muslim Palestinian Authority remains committed to anti-Semitism and to the destruction of Israel. The Koran forbids any peace treaty with non-Moslems except for the purpose of deceiving them into a false sense of security.

[9.4]

Except those of the idolaters with whom you made an agreement,
then they have not failed you in anything and have not backed up any one against you,
so fulfill their agreement to the end of their term;
surely Allah loves those who are careful (of their duty).

[9.5]

So when the sacred months have passed away,
then slay the idolaters wherever you find them,
and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every ambush,
then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate,
leave their way free to them;
surely Allah is Forgiving,
Merciful.

That these modern peace accords have been entered into less than candidly by Arab nations should be obvious from the statements of the Arab leaders themselves:

The Palestinian Deception

"The Palestinian people accepted the Oslo agreements as a first step and not as a permanent arrangement, based on the premise that the war and struggle on the ground [i.e., locally against Israeli territory] is more efficient than a struggle from a distant land... for the Palestinian people will continue the revolution until they achieve the goals of the '65 revolution..." (P.A. Minister of Supply Abd El Aziz

Shahian, Al Ayaam, May 30, 2000.)

"Our people have hope for the future, that the Occupation State ceases to exist, and that it makes no difference [how great] its power and arrogance..." (P.A. Minister of Communications, Amad Alfalugi Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, November 18, 1999)

"I want to say that this is our Palestine, from Metulla [Israel's northernmost city] to Rafiah [Southern border] and to Aqaba [Israel's southernmost point], from the [Jordan] River to the [Mediterranean] Sea; whether they want it or not." (Dr. Jareer Al-Kidwah, advisor to "President" Arafat P.A. TV broadcast, November 29, 2000)

Dr. Ahmad Abu Halabiya, a member of the Palestinian Authority appointed "Fatwa Council" said: "Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them, wherever you are. Wherever you meet them, kill them. Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them and those who stand by them they are all in one trench, against the Arabs and the Muslims because they established Israel here, in the beating heart of the Arab world, in Palestine."

".Allah willing, this unjust state...Israel will be erased; this unjust state, the United States will be erased; this unjust state, Britain will be erased...Blessings to whoever waged Jihad for the sake of Allah...Blessings to whoever put a belt of explosives on his body or on his sons' and plunged into the midst of the Jews..." (Sermon by Sheikh Ibrahim Madhi a few days after Yasir Arafat's cease-fire declaration P.A. Television, June 8, 2001)

2.) End Times

God won't allow it for Israel His chosen people and His prophetic Timepiece to be wiped-out, it is obvious from History.

Always Outnumbered

Israel has always been outnumbered and outgunned since being birthed in a day, but God has always allowed them to prevail.

Consider this, the surrounding Muslim nations military might compared to Israel:

Israel 500,000 man army / Arabs Nations combined 2.5 million

Israeli tanks 3580 / Arab 15,000

Israeli Missles 1 for every 20 Arab

Israeli Aircraft 1 for every 3

Saddam Hussein said, "if we unite we can eliminate the Israeli problem in 24 hours.

The Cup of Trembling

Israel has always been outnumbered and outgunned since being birthed in a day, but God has always allowed them to prevail. Why? Because they are God's prophetic timepiece, and in the Last Days they will be a "Cup of Trembling" to all the nations:

(Zechariah 12:2 KJV) **Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about**, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.

God Not Done with Israel

It is important to understand this Christian, God is not done with Israel, or turned His back on them. Many Bible teachers and World Leaders have been wrong on that, and it has lead to much anti-Semitism against the Jewish people. They are wrong, and God says don't be ignorant about this:

(Romans 11:25 NKJV) *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

(Romans 11:26 NKJV) *And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;*

(Romans 11:27 NKJV) *For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins."*

Satan wants to Stop the Clock

Understand this, if Israel is wiped out, then prophecy can't be fulfilled, which means God's Word would fail, and we know that His Word never fails. Israel will never fail because they are the key player in the End Times prophecy once the Church is raptured. I personally believe that Satan believes that if he can wipe-out Israel and the Jews, then he can stop the prophecies from coming to pass (remember Satan knows the Scriptures). Satan believes if the prophecy can't be fulfilled, then Jesus can't come back. I believe this because Satan believed if he killed the Jesus when He was born, then Jesus couldn't redeem the world. Satan still thought he had a victory on the cross, that he had won.

Satan has tried in the past to eliminate the Jews. Killing all the male child in Egypt, but Moses was delivered. Trying to kill all the Jews under the Persian Empire but Esther and Mordecai were used by God. King Herod tried killing all the male children to stop the Messiah, Titus slaughtered 1 million in 70AD, Hitler if not stopped would have killed them all, but he couldn't because God never fails, neither shall His Word.

Must Be Present For End Times / Their Role

Israel must be present in the End Times, and therefore they will. Here is how they will play in according to the Scriptures:

After the Rapture (1 Thess 4:16) the Anti-Christ comes on the Scene (White Horse – Rev 6:2). There will never be peace in Israel with this type of spiritual warfare, and thus it sets the stage perfectly for the Last Days, as the Anti-Christ will come on the scene and give Israel what they have so longed for, Peace! He will broker 7 year Peace Agreement in Israel (Dan 9:27). During this time or before the half way point of the Peace Agreement, the Temple will be rebuilt (Rev 11:1). At some point Israel will be attack from the North by Russia (Ezk 38-39), but God will supernaturally protect them and a Revival will happen in Israel (Ezk 39:22). The Anti-Christ won't be able to stand that they are saved, and will go out to kill and slaughter the rest of the world (Rev 12:17). The Anti-Christ will go into the temple and proclaim he is god (Dan 9:27). God will rush the nation of Israel into the desert for safety for the rest of the Tribulation period (Rev 12:13). At the end of the 7 year period, Jesus Christ will return with His saints and Satan will be bound for 1,000 years.

You see if there is no Israel, then there is no fulfilling these prophecies, but God's Word never fails, so Israel will here for all them to happen.

The Fig Tree has Blossomed

Saints these things will happen because Israel is still standing today, after all Satan has thrown at them, therefore the Second Coming will happen. Just as all these Scriptures have come to pass and remain true, there is one that we all must grab hold off and live for:

(Matthew 24:32 NKJV) "Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near.

(Matthew 24:33 NKJV) "So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near; at the doors!

(Matthew 24:34 NKJV) "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

(Matthew 24:35 NKJV) "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

(Matthew 24:36 NKJV) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

(Matthew 24:37 NKJV) "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

The Fig Tree is Symbolic of Israel Throughout Scripture

The Fig Tree is Symbolic of Israel throughout Scripture. In Matthew 21 we see Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. This was the first time Jesus allowed public worship of Him as the Messiah. Jesus then goes to the Temple, and cleans house, "you've made my Father House a den of thieves"! Now, the next morning as Jesus was returning to the city, He sees a Fig Tree that had leaves, but no fruit, and He curses the tree (Matt 21:18-22). God doesn't take precious space in His word to curse a fruitless tree, he uses it to make a spiritual application, and we see what that application is in the context of the rest of the chapter. In the rest of the chapter, Jesus' authority is questioned by the Jewish leaders, and then Jesus gives the parable referring to Israel's blindness to Him being the Messiah. The parable is the parable of the Vineyard owner sending his servants his vineyard (land) and the workers of the land killed them. Then the Landowner sent his son, and they killed him also (representing God sending Israel first prophets, and then His Son - but the people of Israel killed them both). The Lord ends that chapter by affirming to them that He is the Chief Cornerstone that the builders rejected. In this whole context of this

chapter, Jesus is making the point that Israel has missed their Messiah. The point for the Jewish reader is unmistakable, because a Jew would know from the Old Testament Scriptures that the Fig Tree represents Israel.

The fig tree was often employed in Scripture as a symbol of Israel (1 Kings 4:25, Hosea 9:10, Joel 1:7, Nahum 3:12, Micah 4:4, Zechariah 3:10), and the barren fig tree often symbolizes divine judgment on Israel because of her spiritual fruitlessness despite an abundance of spiritual advantages (Jeremiah 8:13, Joel 1:12).

Ezekiel 37 – The Rebirthing of Israel

The rebirthing happened just like it was prophesied in the Book of Ezekiel;

(Ezekiel 37:1 NKJV) The hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it was full of bones.

(Ezekiel 37:2 NKJV) Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, there were very many in the open valley; and indeed they were very dry.

(Ezekiel 37:3 NKJV) And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" So I answered, "O Lord GOD, You know."

(Ezekiel 37:4 NKJV) Again He said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD!

(Ezekiel 37:5 NKJV) 'Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.

(Ezekiel 37:6 NKJV) "I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the LORD." "

(Ezekiel 37:7 NKJV) So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone.

(Ezekiel 37:8 NKJV) Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them.

(Ezekiel 37:9 NKJV) Also He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.'" "

(Ezekiel 37:10 NKJV) So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

*(Ezekiel 37:11 NKJV) Then He said to me, "**Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel.** They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!'*

*(Ezekiel 37:12 NKJV) "Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, **and bring you into the land of Israel.***

(Ezekiel 37:13 NKJV) "Then you shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.

*(Ezekiel 37:14 NKJV) "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, **and I will place you in your own land.** Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it," says the LORD."*

(Ezekiel 37:15 NKJV) Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

(Ezekiel 37:16 NKJV) "As for you, son of man, take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions.'

(Ezekiel 37:17 NKJV) "Then join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

(Ezekiel 37:18 NKJV) "And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, 'Will you not show us what you mean by these?';

(Ezekiel 37:19 NKJV) "say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand." "

(Ezekiel 37:20 NKJV) "And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand before their eyes.

*(Ezekiel 37:21 NKJV) "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, **wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land;***

2000 Years Without a Homeland

2000 years without a homeland, but May 14, 1948 Israel was re-birthed. How long is a generation? We can speculate on that, 40 years, 50 years, 60 or 70, 100? No matter how you look at it, it is soon.

Nobody knows, but we are told to look at the signs:

(Matthew 24:36 NKJV) "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

The signs of our times were the same as the times of Noah:

(Matthew 24:37 NKJV) "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

(Matthew 24:38 NKJV) "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

(Matthew 24:39 NKJV) "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

We are the generation that has seen the fig tree blossom, and therefore the return of Christ is near. As I say if He doesn't come today, then He is coming tomorrow. Ask me tomorrow and I'll tell you the same thing.

I Come Quickly

(Revelation 22:20 NKJV) He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!