

An OVERVIEW

By Topics of the

New

Testament

#1 – Matthew, Mark, Luke

12 Lessons

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Lesson One

"The Hand of God in the Affairs of Men"

(Matthew 2:1-10)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Matthew 1-4)

1. A Great Bible Truth is: ***"God was made flesh to dwell among men."***
2. 1 John 4:2—***"By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God."***
3. Stress is obviously laid upon our holding to this belief!
 - a) Matt. 1:23—***"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which is translated, God with us."***
 - b) John 1:1, 14—***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...."***
 - c) Matt. 1:21—***"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."***
4. It is also very faith building to learn how God made these things possible.
 - a) We need to see the hand of God working in the affairs of men to carry out his great plan of Redemption.
 - b) A great number of problems had to be worked out.
 - c) Many prophecies made about His coming had to be fulfilled.
5. See a few of these problems:

DISCUSSION

I. PROBLEM--HOW TO BRING A MAN & A WOMAN TOGETHER TO SERVE AS A FAMILY FOR JESUS WHO WERE OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH.

A. Matthew's genealogy is a reminder of God's promise to Abraham:

- 1) Matt. 1:1—***"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham...."***
 - a) God had promised Abraham that one of his descendants would bless all nations. (Gen. 22:18)
 - b) Paul stated in Galatians 3:16 that that descendant was Jesus.

B. Unfortunately, we are not told or given any insight as to how these two came to be engaged to be married.

- 1) God did take a direct hand in the conception of Jesus to a virgin.
- 2) Matt. 1:18—***"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: after His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit."***
- 3) God took a direct hand in this!

I. PROBLEM--HOW TO BRING JESUS' FAMILY TO BETHLEHEM AT THE RIGHT TIME FOR HIS BIRTH.

A. It was prophesied that Jesus would be born of David's lineage in the city of Bethlehem.

- 1) 2 Sam. 7:12-13—*"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."* (c. 1000 B.C.)
- 1) Micah 5:2—*"But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."*

B. How was God able to bring about this event?

- 1) Somehow, the right two people of the lineage of David, desired to get married.
- 2) They were righteous, obedient to God, and good child-raisers!
- 3) While engaged:
 - a) God brought about the conception of His Son in Mary.
 - b) God convinced Joseph that this was God's doings.
 - c) Joseph was willing for her to become his wife.
 - d) So far---so good!
- 4) Next thing—how to get them from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the right time?
 - a) Luke 2:1-7
 - 1) The Emperor of the Roman World sent out a decree.
 - 2) For what purpose---for taxing!
 - 3) Yes---but it also brought Joseph & Mary to Bethlehem at the right time for Jesus' birth.
 - 4) Interesting, to say the least!
 - b) Did God use Caesar Augustus to bring about the fulfillment of His prophecies about Jesus?
 - c) If so, how did He do it????

III. PROBLEM---HOW WILL GOD ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH OF HIS SON?

A. Why not let Joseph & Mary announce it to the people?

- 1) Joseph could have said: **"I have a new son; He is the Son of God."**
- 2) Or, **"My wife is the mother of the Son of God."**
- 3) Or, Mary could have said: **"I am a virgin, but I am the mother of the Son of God."**

B. I wonder what the reaction of the people would have been to such?

- 1) **"Foolish, crazy people!"**
- 2) **"Of all the nerve; a fallen woman claiming to be the mother of the Son of God!"**
- 3) **"How brazen can you get!"**

C. God's way of announcing it:

- 1) Luke 2:8-20
 - a) The angels did not tell the shepherds where the child was exactly. Why?
 - b) So they would have to ask all over town....**"Where is the new born Savior, that is laying in a manger & wrapped in swaddling clothes?"**

- 2) The reaction of the people:
 - a) "A Savior, born in a manger?"
 - b) It would get their attention!
 - c) Luke 2:18—"*And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*"
- 3) The shepherds found Jesus.
 - a) The angels' words were confirmed.
 - b) They spread the news all over the area.

D. Thus, the birth of Jesus was confirmed to 3 groups:

- 1) **Shepherds**---angels had told them correctly.
- 2) **Townspeople**---They perceived that the shepherds were honestly seeking the promised Messiah.
- 3) **Joseph & Mary**---All the events taking place confirmed God's Word to them.

IV. PROBLEM---HOW WILL GOD MAKE THE JEWISH NATION AWARE OF IT, AS WELL AS KINGS & RULERS OF THE WORLD?

A. What approach did God take?

- 1) God's approach was the wise men from the East.
- 2) Matt. 2:1-12

B. Who were the wise men?

- 1) Daniel's prophecies could have had tremendous impact through the years (500 B.C. to the birth of Christ)...especially in the East!
- 2) We are not sure who these wise men were.
 - a) Babylonia, India, & Persia had their Magi, or Wise Men.
 - b) They were counselors for the Rulers, usually.
 - c) These counselors were made up of Pagan priests, physicians, and learned men.
 - d) In Daniel's time, he was made chief over them.

C. How would they have known about the Messiah?

- 1) Again---possibly through Daniel's prophecies, as well as other teachings.
 - a) Israel had been carried into this area in 722 B.C.
 - b) Judah into Babylonia & Persia area in 600 B.C.
 - c) Many Jews stayed in this area instead of returning to Judah.
 - d) History tells us there was a very strong Jewish element in this area who would be knowledgeable of the O. T.
 - e) Acts 2:5, 9—"*And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven.....Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia.*"
- 2) These wise men could have been Jews, or men influenced by Jews.
- 3) Somehow they knew the following things:
 - a) A special star had appeared that the Wise Men followed. (Matt. 2:2)
 - b) They believed it announced the birth of the King of the Jews.
 - c) They had come to Jerusalem (capital) to find out where he was to be born.

D. How many wise men were there?

- 1) We usually think of three because of the three kinds of gifts.
- 2) Early Eastern writers say there were 12 men.
- 3) Don't really know for sure.

E. How did God use them to announce the birth of His Son?

- 1) The King, Chief Priest, and Scribes in Jerusalem were told by the wise men. (Matt. 2:1-6)
- 2) The news spread all around Bethlehem. (Matt. 2:16-18)
- 3) Interesting:
 - a) God used outsiders to announce Jesus' birth.
 - b) Probably made it more believable.

F. How would others learn of the Birth of the Messiah?

- 1) The Wise men would have told the people as they traveled to Jerusalem, possibly!
- 2) God saw to it that they traveled back another way.
- 3) Thus, other nations of people could have learned about the birth of Jesus.
- 4) And then word would spread from place to place.

CONCLUSION

1. That which we may take for granted as simple truth:
 - a) May be far more complicated than at first appears;
 - b) When examined closely shows the hand of God in the affairs of men.
2. This is just one of hundreds of times God has intervened in the affairs of men.
 - a) It was a very important time.
 - b) One well-documented for our benefit.
3. Let's not be faithless, but believing.
4. God cares for His people and is still working in the affairs of men.

Lesson Two

"MOTIVATIONS JESUS USED"

(Matthew 5:3-10)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Matthew 5-9)

1. Man is a creature of motivation!
 - a) This is an obvious fact.
 - b) God made man to go on motives!
 - c) And he will not go without them!
2. A lack of motivation drains energy from the individual or the church!
 - a) The church at Laodicea is a good illustration.
 - b) They were lukewarm.
 - c) How did they get that way?
 - d) They had lost their motivation to be a zealous, working group.
3. Without sufficient motivation—man will miss heaven!
4. What is motivation?
 - a) It is something internal!
 - b) It is a process of:
 - 1) Seeing goals;
 - 2) Something creating a desire to attain those goals;
 - 3) Engaging in the activities required to reach those goals.
 - c) Illustration:
 - 1) An employee wanted a two-day vacation from work.
 - 2) His employer said: "*Increase your productivity up to a certain level by Friday and you can have Monday & Tuesday off.*"
 - 3) The employee made the increased production and got his two days off.
 - 4) We say, "*He was motivated to achieve his goal.*"
5. Three factors of MOTIVATION!
 - a) A goal must be STRONGLY DESIRED & considered worthwhile.
 - 1) The stronger the desire for the goal, or the greater the felt need is....
 - 2) The greater will be the motivation!
 - 3) Motivation makes an appeal to something we want or want to miss.
 - b) It must be a firm BELIEF that the reward will be given.
 - 1) Let's suppose that the employer promised, but didn't give the 2 days off!
 - A) How will he motivate the employee the next time?
 - B) Can he motivate him by promising 2 days off again?
 - C) Can he motivate him with a threat of firing him?
 - 2) Doubts tend to destroy motivation.
 - 3) We need assurances of the Promises of God.
 - 4) Jas. 1:6—"***But when you pray, you must believe and not doubt at all. Whoever doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven and blown about by the wind.***"
 - c) A TIME FACTOR is also involved!
 - 1) The closer and more tangible the rewards, the greater the motivation.
 - A) "Blessings now" has a much stronger appeal than 20 years from now.
 - B) Problem with saving money!

- C) The farther away the rewards are, the lesser the motivation.
- 2) This is man's dilemma spiritually!
 - A) The pleasures of sin are right here and now!
 - B) Heaven or Hell is afar off...in most people's minds!
 - C) Which has the greater appeal?
- 3) This is a reason why it takes extra effort to motivate a person to go to heaven.
 - A) See Mark 10:29-30
 - B) Not only shows the great reward of eternal life after awhile.
 - C) But shows the immediate rewards of being a Christian.
 - D) A 100-fold here & now!!!
- 6. A QUOTE to illustrate:
*"An excellent **PLUMBER** is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent **PHILOSOPHER**. The society which scorns excellence in **PLUMBING** because **PLUMBING** is a humble activity, and tolerates shoddiness in **PHILOSOPHY** because it is an exalted activity, will have neither good **PLUMBING** nor good **PHILOSOPHY**. Neither its **PIPES** nor its **THEORIES** will hold water."*
 - a) What will motivate a plumber to be a good plumber?
 - 1) Depreciating his work?
 - 2) Treating him with contempt?
 - 3) Or, showing appreciation for him & his work?
 - b) What will motivate a philosopher to be a good philosopher?
 - 1) Praising his shoddy work?
 - 2) Make him think he is a big shot because he is a philosopher?
 - 3) Or, showing appreciation for him & his work?
- 7. Jesus was and is the MASTER TEACHER!
 - a) If there is anything to this motivation bit—Jesus would have used it!
 - b) And, if there is any place that we would find it, it would be in the sermon on the Mount!
 - c) And sure enough—Jesus makes an appeal to at least three major motivations in the Sermon on the Mount.

DISCUSSION

I. THE MOTIVATION OF REWARD!

A. Scriptures:

- 1) Chapter 5:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11-12, 19b
- 2) Chapter 6:1-4, 5-6, 14, 16-18, 33
- 3) Chapter 7:7-11, 14, 21, 24-25

B. Observations:

- 1) God is not the only one that offers motivation by rewards.
- 2) Men offer rewards also....*"To be seen, or heard, or praised by men."*
- 3) What a man does depends upon which motivation he desires most!
- 4) John 12:42-43
- 5) Also, Notice the emphasis upon doing in order to receive the reward!

II. THE MOTIVATION OF PUNISHMENT!

A. Scriptures:

- 1. Chapter 5:19a, 20, 21-22, 25-26, 27-30
- 2. Chapter 6:15, 23

3. Chapter 7:1-2, 6, 13, 19-20, 22-23, 26-27
4. Punishment can be a proper motivation in some instances.
5. However, if punishment is a long way off...it has less effect!
 - a) Eccl. 8:11—"***Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.***"
 - b) Also, the less severe the punishment is...the lesser the motivation.
 - c) Punishment is threatened because:
 - 1) They failed to do what was right;
 - 2) Or, they did the wrong thing.

III. THE MOTIVATION OF A SENSE OF DUTY.

A. Scriptures:

- 1) Chapter 5:13-16, 23-24, 38-42, 43-48
- 2) Chapter 7:12, 15-18

B. Observations:

- 1) A sense of duty...the way man ought to act as one made in the image of God.
- 2) That sense of "Ought" has been placed in man!
- 3) A child ought to do right to please his parents.
- 4) Notice the concept again....Sense of duty....to do right!

CONCLUSION

1. The overwhelming majority of man's efforts to serve God are based on these 3 motivations!
2. The Lord gave another motivation later: "***If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.***"
 - a) This motivation requires more maturity, deeper understanding, more unselfishness!
 - b) It is rare when any act is done purely out of LOVE alone!
 - 1) There is nearly always a reward, a blessing that is involved.
 - 2) Or, a sense of duty fulfilled.
 - 3) Or, an escaping of punishment by doing so.
 - c) The UNSELFISH LOVE of a mother for her child is the closest thing....
 - 1) And yet—there are underlying motivations possible there too.
3. QUESTION—**If we were offered no Reward, nor threatened with no Punishment, nor promised any Satisfaction—would we do what God commands?**
 - a) Probably the greatest test of a man's actions...**To act out of love!**
 - b) This is what the Lord did for us.
 - c) He illustrates this motivation.
 - d) We are called upon to try to imitate it.
4. If you become a Christian, it will be out of a motivation of:
 - a) Reward, or escape of punishment, or sense of ought, or love!
 - b) Or, All four.

Lesson Three

"PARABLES & THEIR SIGNIFICANCE"

(Matt. 13:10-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. Our lesson comes from the reading of Matthew 10-16.
 - a) **Chapter 10**
 - 1) Jesus has chosen 12 full-time disciples and sends them forth with a message: *"The kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
 - 2) He tries to prepare them for the hardships they will face as they go.
 - 3) He re-assures them of His blessings over their lives.
 - b) **Chapter 11**
 - 1) Jesus also went about to teach & preach in the cities of the Jews.
 - 2) Jesus makes it clear to John's disciples that John had prepared the way for the Messiah.
 - 3) He pointed out the fickleness of the generation he was speaking to.
 - 4) And then pronounced a woe upon those cities who would not listen to His Words.
 - 5) And then extends that great invitation in vs. 28-30.
 - c) **Chapter 12**
 - 1) Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their unmerciful spirit.
 - 2) They accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub.
 - 3) He turns again with strong rebukes to that adulterous generation.
 - d) **Chapter 13**
 - 1) He went out by the sea and sat down to teach the multitudes that gathered.
 - 2) V. 3—*"Then he spoke many things to them in parables, saying: 'Behold, a sower went out to sow....'"*
 - 3) Matthew records 8 parables in this one chapter.
 - 4) What is a parable?
 - A) "An earthly truth with a heavenly meaning."
 - B) Literally: *"To throw along side of"* (**Para-ballo**)
 - C) **Parallel ideas**---Physical world—Spiritual world.
 - D) Jesus used this physical world to illustrate the spiritual world.

DISCUSSION

I. WHY DID JESUS SPEAK IN PARABLES?

A. Verses 10-12

- 1) It was a method that they were accustomed to.
 - a) The Orientals were born story-tellers.
 - b) To make use of the familiar could be a help.
- 2) It arrested attention
 - a) A story is an attention-getter.
 - b) It does not lose appeal to young or old.
 - c) Jesus could use familiar things to teach spiritual truths.
- 3) It aroused thought
 - a) The truth had to be thought out.
 - b) The honest inquirer would be challenged to think more on the parable.

- c) V. 36—*"Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.'"*
 - 4) It helped to preserve truth.
 - a) Story form helps one to remember better.
 - b) Harder to escape honest inquirer's thinking.
 - 5) It illustrated spiritual truths
 - a) V. 11—*"it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."*
 - b) Made truth easier to understand and grasp.
- B. Verses 13-17**
- 1) It was a means of hiding the truth from the insincere.
 - a) To them, it was only a story—no further interest.
 - b) To those seeking to do him harm—nothing to condemn Him with.
 - c) The parables help to show the kind of hearts they had:
 - A) The sincere would seek further to know.
 - B) The insincere would be turned away.
 - 2) Significance of the parables
 - a) *They showed the disciples the kind of hearts they had.*
 - A) **"Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear."**
 - B) Their hearts were open, receptive, seeking truth.
 - C) They desired to know the things pertaining to the kingdom.
 - b) *They were greatly blessed to hear these great truths.*
 - A) **"Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them..."**
 - B) Jesus was telling of the coming of the kingdom of heaven!
 - C) It had been prophesied of for hundreds of years.
 - D) It had been longed for by the Jewish nation.
 - E) The Messiah was here in person.
 - F) The kingdom was ready to be set up among men.

II. PRINCIPLES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PARABLES.

A. They are to illustrate—not prove a truth.

- 1) God has designed the physical to illustrate the spiritual world.
- 2) Illustration:
 - a) Tri-une God.
 - b) Triunities in universe (Time, Space, Man, etc.)

B. There is a primary central truth to be gained.

- 1) It can be discovered by:
 - a) Watching the circumstances that brought about the parable.
 - b) A statement in the text.
 - c) A parable was often given in answer to a question.

C. Do not force truths from details of the parables.

- 1) Unjust Steward—Illustrates his wisdom, not his dishonesty.
- 1) Hidden treasure—Illustrates his willingness to make a great sacrifice to obtain something very valuable; not his method!

III. TEACHINGS OF THE PARABLES

A. *The Beginning, Growth, & Effectiveness of the Kingdom in the world.*

- 1) Parable of Spontaneous Growth—Plant seed, wait patiently, harvest.
- 2) Soils (Sower)—Received in different kinds of hearts & results.
- 3) Householder—To understand things about kingdom.
- 4) Mustard Seed—Small beginning, but large growth.
- 5) Strong One Defeated—Behold a greater is here.
- 6) Leaven—Influencing effect of Kingdom on world.

B. *The Lord's Evaluation of the Kingdom.*

- 1) Hidden Treasure—Willingness to pay cost for greater value.
- 2) Pearl of Great Price—High cost & value of kingdom.
- 3) Great Feast—Privilege to be invited to kingdom.
- 4) Wedding Feast—Cast out those who did not value it highly.

C. *Lord's Concern for the lost & Cost of Citizenship in kingdom.*

- 1) Lost Sheep & Lost Coin—God's seeking for the lost.
- 2) Lost Son—Man must repent & return home to a loving Father.
- 3) Man Building a Tower—Count cost before making a decision.
- 4) King Going to Battle—Count cost.
- 5) Two Sons—Repentance leads a man to do God's Will.

D. *Ungodliness in kingdom.*

- 1) Tares—Evil one tries to place counterfeits inside kingdom.
- 2) Drag-net—All will be gathered out that offend.

E. *Duties in Kingdom.*

- 1) Prayer
 - a) Friend at Midnight—Persistence in Prayer.
 - b) Widow & Judge—God is just and will answer.
- 2) Humility
 - a) Great Feast—Do not seek 1st place or chief seats.
 - b) Pharisee & Publican—Self-righteousness condemned.
- 3) Forgiveness
 - a) Unmerciful Servant—If won't forgive, will not be forgiven.
- 4) Work-Fruitfulness
 - a) Laborers in Vineyard—Reward to all who come early or late.
 - b) Barren Fig Tree—Unfruitful will be cast into fire.
- 5) Lay up treasures in heaven
 - a) Rich Fool—Rich in goods, not rich towards God.
 - b) Unfruitful Steward—Concern & preparation for spiritual future.
 - c) Rich Man & Lazarus—Reward & Punishment.
- 6) Love Neighbor
 - a) Good Samaritan—Neighbor is one we see in need.
- 7) Watchfulness
 - a) Household Servants—Rewards go to the watchful.
 - b) Faithful & Unfaithful Servants—Reward & Punishment
 - c) Master of House—Need to be ready for Lord's return.

F. *Destiny of those in kingdom*

- 1) Pounds—Reward to faithful servants who used possessions wisely.

- 2) Talents—Reward comes when Master returns.
 - 3) Faithful & Wise Servants—Reward
 - 4) Ten Virgins—Need to be prepared & ready
 - 5) Sheep & Goats—Great separation Day. Parables stay with us—once we have heard & understood them.
1. They illustrate vividly the message to be understood.
 2. Danger—Not to push parable to teach contrary to plain Scripture statements.
 3. The most touching appeals to sinners—Lost Sheep, Coin, Son.

Lesson Four

"EMPHASIS: HEAR YE HIM!"

(Matt. 17:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Matthew 17-22)

1. At this time:
 - a) Jesus is over half way through his public ministry.
 - b) His teachings about who He was is becoming more obvious to the apostles.
 - c) Events, such as the Transfiguration, made clear Jesus' prominence.
 - A) Moses & Elijah are pictured as conversing with Jesus.
 - B) The apostles were in awe of the scene.
 - C) God's voice from heaven: "**Hear Ye him!**" (v. 5)
2. A new system—a new covenant arrangement was about to be enacted!
 - a) John the Baptist had paved the way for Jesus.
 - b) Now, the listeners needed to listen to & follow Jesus.
3. This section of Matthew's gospel gives some strong basic teachings to hear from Jesus!

DISCUSSION

I. STRONG FAITH NEEDED. (17:14-23)

A. Situation:

- 1) Apostles unable to cast out a demon in a man's son.
- 2) Jesus' statement about such: (v. 17)—"**O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.**"

B. Apostles wanted to know why they could not cast the demon out.

- 1) 17:20-21
- 3) Why prayer & fasting?
- 4) To increase their faith!

II. PROBLEM AREAS IN KINGDOM. (17:24-20:16)

A. Obedience to Government enjoined. (17:24-27)

- 1) This was a real problem to the Jewish population.
- 2) They wanted to throw off the Roman domination over them.
- 3) Jesus said they were to pay tribute to the Romans by His example.
- 4) 17:27

B. Necessity of Humility to enter the kingdom. (18:1-6)

- 1) Man's greatest problem is his pride, and feeling of self-sufficiency.
- 2) This is the reason why only a few will enter kingdom of heaven.
- 3) Because they will not humble themselves before Jesus.
- 4) 18:3

C. Those who cause offenses are sternly warned. (18:7-35)

- 1) Jesus pointed out that offenses would come.
- 2) But woe to the man by whom they come.
- 3) He encourages us to cut off the source of these offenses, or be lost.
- 4) We are not to despise "little ones"—for God is concerned about them.

- 5) He came to seek the lost, not destroy them!
 - a) Illustrated by a man who lost one sheep & went to seek for it.
 - b) The rejoicing when one sheep is found.
 - c) God does not want even ONE of these little ones lost.
 - 6) Jesus strongly urges that offenses be straightened out quickly.
 - a) Go to the one who offended you & tell him—not everyone else.
 - b) If will hear—gained a brother.
 - c) If won't hear—take other witnesses.
 - d) If won't hear you in face of these witnesses, tell it to whole church.
 - e) If won't hear the church—have nothing to do with him.
 - 7) The question is then raised by Peter:
 - a) *"How often do I forgive a brother?"*
 - b) Jesus' answer: *"70 times 7"*
 - c) He then told a parable to illustrate such—Unmerciful servant.
 - d) 18:35
- D. Marriage & divorce & remarriage dealt with. (19:1-12)**
- 1) Jesus stressed God's original purpose in marriage.
 - a) The two become one;
 - b) God joins them as one;
 - c) Man is not to separate them.
 - 2) He explains why Moses' Law was lenient in this area.
 - a) 19:8
 - 3) This leniency was not to be passed on into the New Law.
 - a) 19:9
 - b) 19:12
- E. Jesus again used little children to illustrate the nature of those who come into the kingdom of heaven. (19:13-15)**
- 1) The children had been brought to Jesus and He blesses them.
 - 2) He made it clear—Don't forbid the children to come to Him.
 - 3) 19:14
 - 4) Little children are safe—not lost!
- F. The necessity to forsake all to enter the kingdom of heaven. (19:16-30)**
- 1) Illustrated in life of rich young ruler.
 - a) *"What must I do to enter into life?"*
 - b) Jesus' answer: *Keep the commandments!"*
 - c) He stated that he had kept them from his youth up.
 - d) 19:20-21
 - e) He went away sorrowfully—had great riches!
 - 2) The apostles had forsaken all to follow Jesus.
 - a) *"What will be our reward?"*
 - b) 19:28-29
- G. What about those who come into kingdom late? (20:1-6)**
- 1) When a man hears the call to come work in God's Vineyard:
 - a) He should answer it; whether early in life; or, late in life!
 - b) All will receive same reward—if sincerely answered.

III. WILL THERE BE POSITION & POWER IN THE KINGDOM? (20:20-28)

A. Request:

- 1) Mother of James & John made a request of Jesus.
- 2) ***"Let my two sons sit in prominent positions in your kingdom."***
- 3) Why would a parent ask such?
 - a) Parents want their children to succeed in life.
 - b) To become important in their work.
 - c) Because that reflects back on them.
- 4) Why would the two apostles want such a position?
 - a) Would it be pride?
 - b) When other apostles heard, they became indignant!
 - c) Why? Because they didn't ask first??

B. Jesus' reply to her request?

- 1) It was not His to give.
- 2) And besides—His kingdom will not be structured like the world.
 - a) They stress having dominion over people.
 - b) They wanted authority over people.
 - c) But Jesus said it would not be so in his kingdom.
- 3) ***"The great will be the one who serves."***
- 4) ***"The chief will be the one who ministers."***
- 5) And Jesus set the example for such.
 - a) 20:28

IV. DISRESPECTFULNESS OF JESUS & HIS KINGDOM. (21:1-22:46)

A. Sacrilege. (21:1-16)

- 1) The people had been allowed to bring their businesses right into the temple area.
 - a) The enclosure (courtyard) was considered a part of the Temple.
- 2) When you let down a little—people take advantage of it.
 - a) Give an inch---People take advantage of it.
 - b) Jesus drove them all out.
 - c) 21:13

B. Unfruitfulness. (21:17-22)

- 1) Jesus cursed a fig tree because it was unfruitful.
- 2) The lesson was obvious.
- 3) The apostles were more impressed with the miracle.
- 4) Jesus used their interest to stress faith.
- 5) 21:21-22

C. Dishonesty & Disrespect. (21:23-27)

- 1) The religious leaders challenged Jesus' right to do what He did.
 - a) ***"By whose authority do you do these things?"***
 - b) Authority-minded people have trouble with people trying to do good!
- 2) Jesus turned the tables on them.
 - a) 21:25-27
 - b) They would not answer.
- 3) Thus, he showed their dishonesty & disrespect for God's authority.
 - a) They wanted everyone under their authority.

b) But they were unwilling to respect Jesus' authority over their lives.

D. Disobedience and its results illustrated. (21:28-32)

- 1) Illustrated with two sons. (21:28-32)
 - a) Father told them to do something.
 - b) One said he would go, but didn't.
 - c) Other said he would not, but changed his mind, and went.
 - d) Which was obedient?
 - e) 21:32
- 2) Illustrated with Parable of householder & his vineyard. (21:33-46)
 - a) Householder rented out his vineyard to some men.
 - b) When the time came for pay—he sent servants to receive it.
 - c) They mistreated & killed his servants.
 - d) The householder sent his son saying: **"Surely they will respect him."**
 - e) But they didn't—they killed him!
 - f) What will the householder do to these men?
 - g) Lesson: 21:43-46
- 3) Illustrated with parable of Marriage Feast. (22:1-14)
 - a) Invitations sent out—would not come.
 - b) Make light of the invitation.
 - c) They were destroyed for their indifference.
 - d) Others were invited.
 - e) One came in without proper wedding garment!
 - f) He was punished for his disrespect!
 - g) 22:12-13

E. Disrespect shown by religious leaders' efforts to trap Jesus. (22:15-46)

- 1) Tried to trick him with question of paying tribute to Caesar.(22:15-22)
 - a) He rebuked their hypocrisy. 22:21
- 2) Tried to trick him with an impossible question about the resurrection. (22:23-33)
 - a) Had an imaginary situation.
 - 1—Woman winds up marrying seven men.
 - 2—Whose wife will she be in the resurrection?
 - b) 22:29-33
- 3) Tried to trick him about what was the greatest commandment. (22:34-40)
 - a) Opportunity to stress the two greatest commands.
 - b) Love God & Love neighbor.
- 4) Jesus then turned the tables on them.
 - a) He asked: **"The Messiah, whose son is he?"**
 - b) David's, of course!
 - c) 22:43-45
 - d) This stopped the questions to trick Him.

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus said that a Seeking, Searching mind shall find the truth!
2. But the dishonest, disrespectful will only meet condemnation.
3. Jesus triumphed over all his enemies.
4. But there was no joy in it—for it meant their condemnation.
5. The challenge is great to hear Jesus!

Lesson Five

"SHOULDERING RESPONSIBILITY"

(Matt. 25:14-19)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Matthew 23-28)

1. V. 15
 - a) Notice that not all were given the same amount to invest.
 - b) Varied according to their ability to handle.
 - c) Only responsible for what they had been given—no more!
 - d) But they were responsible for that!
2. V. 19
 - a) They were called to give an account of their actions.
 - b) To see what they had done with their responsibilities.
 - c) God has a right to expect this of us.
 - 1) To shoulder the responsibility given us;
 - 2) To use what is entrusted—to do good with it.
 - d) Story of 3 teenage girls:
 - 1) Were asked to baby sit a small baby.
 - 2) They stole several hundred dollars from the house.
 - 3) Left baby alone.
 - 4) Went to another town and spent money.
 - e) Analyze:
 - 1) Felt no responsibility to their employer.
 - 2) No responsibility to keep their word or to do the work agreed upon.
 - 3) Felt no responsibility to the baby.
 - 4) Did not respect property rights of family.
 - 5) Felt no responsibility to themselves or their parents.
 - 6) Most of all, none to God!
3. V. 21
 - a) There is reward to those who will shoulder responsibility.
 - b) Blessed with greater opportunities and privileges.
 - c) Most of all—blessed by God!
4. V. 26
 - a) Why was he called wicked & slothful—did not shoulder responsibility!
 - b) He had ability—was given responsibility accordingly.
 - c) But he failed in the very basic fundamental that makes man different from the animal world.
5. V. 30
 - a) Punishment is severe!
 - b) But God indicates—it is deserved!
 - c) Illustration:
 - 1) A man went to a home town football game.
 - 2) The home team was losing...struggling hard against a better team.
 - 3) Close by were 4 boys from the school.
 - 4) They were shouting discouraging words—derided the players.

- 5) Berated them—called them stupid, etc.
 - 6) The man felt compelled to say something.
 - 7) He singled out the largest & loudest critic.
 - 8) *"You seem to be an expert on this game. You are big enough, why didn't you go out for the team?"*
 - 9) *"Who me? No sir! Not me! Do you think I am crazy or something?"*
 - 10) The man observed: *"I guess it is easier and safer to be a sideline expert critic than even a poor player, isn't it?"*
- d) The member who will not shoulder his responsibilities is called wicked & slothful!

DISCUSSION

I. A GREAT NEED IN CHURCH—A FEELING OF, AND SHOULDERING RESPONSIBILITY!

A. To get into the game of life & put our all into it.

- 1) Not to be a sideline critic.
- 2) Not to be a wicked & slothful servant.
- 3) For every man willing to get up & lead singing:
 - a) There are some who would not dare try it—
 - b) But, they are expert sideline critics.
- 4) For every man who strives to serve as an elder:
 - a) There are some who would not dare try it—
 - b) But, They are expert sideline critics.
- 5) For every man who strives to preach the gospel:
 - a) There are some who would not dare try it—
 - b) But, they are expert sideline critics.
- 6) For every man who attempts to really put themselves into the Lord's Work:
 - a) There are some who run from responsibility—
 - b) But, they are expert critics of the people.
- 7) Of all the hypocrites in the church:
 - a) The sideline critic is the most obnoxious.
 - b) He sits safely on the sidelines casting his slurs—
 - c) While admitting to all—he is too cowardly to get in & try himself.

B. A lack of a sense of responsibility will destroy us eternally.

II. A PERSON MUST FEEL A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD.

A. Rev. 3:6—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

- 1) This is not just being hearers only—but doers of the word! (Jas. 1:19)
- 2) It is to show respectfulness to the God who gave the message.
- 3) It is to surrender our will to His Will.

B. This word is to be taught without fear or favor!

- 1) 2 Tim. 4:2—***"Preach the word: be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."***
- 2) God is no respecter of persons—neither should we be.
- 3) If it is the truth—preach it—in love & concern for all.

- 4) It may hurt, but God intended that it be preached.
- 5) Heb. 4:12—*"For the word of God is...sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*
- 6) To feel no responsibility to the word of God means—I will be lost!

III. NEED TO FEEL A KEEN SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE ANOTHER.

A. Moral law is to regulate & guide man's actions towards his fellow-man.

- 1) Tells us how we ought to act towards each other.
- 2) To help us get along with one another.
- 3) To bring good, not evil on each other.

B. The N.T. is filled with admonitions of how Christians should act towards others.

- 1) We are to love one another;
- 2) To help one another;
- 3) To encourage one another;
- 4) To rebuke one another;
- 5) To admonish one another;
- 6) To see after the spiritual needs of one another.
- 7) Gal. 6:1—*"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*
 - a) How many of us, who feel we are not among the weak & erring...
 - b) Reach out to the weak & erring.
 - c) Make a visit, send a card, or call on the sick.
- 8) Do we feel responsible to one another?

IV. CHRISTIANS NEED A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY ABOUT WORSHIPPING GOD.

A. First, that it be sincere worship from the heart. (John 4:24)

B. Second, that we will not willfully forsake the assembling of God's people.

- 1) Heb. 10:25
- 2) That we will feel a sense of responsibility to be there!
- 3) Feel a sense of responsibility to be involved.
- 4) To show I am willing to pay the cost to be a Christian.
- 5) Faithful attendance at services is no "optional extra" like power-steering on a car.

CONCLUSION

1. Illustrate:

- a) Small village to have a great feast to celebrate an event.
 - b) Each was to bring bottle of best wine.... all put in together.
 - c) Each reasoned...*"My little bit will not be missed"*
 - d) They had a barrel of water to drink!
2. Whether my little bit will be missed or not is really not the point!
 - a) The point is—Do I shoulder my responsibility?
 - b) If not, I will be lost!
 3. Contrast:

- a) What's the difference:
 - 1) Between an infidel who supports no church;
 - 2) And a church member who does not support the church?
 - b) What's the difference:
 - 1) Between an atheists who does not believe the Bible;
 - 2) And a church member who will not follow & obey it?
 - c) What's the difference:
 - 1) Between those who cry Bibles Classes are sinful;
 - 2) And a church member who will not attend Bible Classes?
4. 1 Cor. 16:13—***"Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, be strong like men."***
- a) Babies & small children do not feel responsibility.
 - b) Men do! Strong & courageous men & women do!
 - c) Need to be sure we are acting like responsible adults & not playing at our Christianity!

Lesson Six

**"A FORERUNNER, HELPER, OR DIVIDER:
WHICH ONE?"**

(Mark 1:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Mark 1-5)

1. Most everyone has a tendency to characterize people—to label them—judge them.
 - a) Some characterization is very flattering—others, a put down!
 - b) Some are done with a very critical attitude & purpose.
 - c) Others are fair, honest, and really trying to correctly characterize the person.
2. What about characterizing ourselves?
3. How would we answer the following:
 - a) Am I a helper or a hinderer in the Lord's work?
 - b) Am I a liability or an asset to the Lord's Cause?
 - c) Do I carry my own load, or does someone have to carry it for me?
 - d) Am I a worker or a shirker?
 - e) Am I a laboring person or a lazy person, spiritually?
 - f) Am I hot, cold, or lukewarm?
 - g) Am I a doer or a dodger?
 - h) Am I a harmonizer or a divider in the church?
4. In the first 3 chapters of Mark...we can see 3 distinct characters to study.

DISCUSSION

I. THE VALUE OF A FORERUNNER. (Mk. 1:1-8)

A. John the baptist was a forerunner.

- 1) It was foretold that this would be his work.
- 2) He was very effective at what he did as forerunner.
- 3) Jesus said there had not arisen a greater prophet than John.
- 4) His purpose was to prepare the people for the Messiah.
 - a) He knew his time was short—Used it well!
 - b) He found listening ears to his message.

B. Application:

- 1) We, too, can be forerunners for Jesus.
- 2) Such are greatly needed.
- 3) People must be prepared to hear the message—we can help them.
- 4) Illustration—Preachers in India prepared way for us Americans.
- 5) 1 Cor. 3:6-9
 - a) There needs to be Sowers, Waterers, as well as Reapers.
 - b) But you can't sow where people won't listen.
 - c) This is the great value of the forerunners—get people ready to listen.
- 6) Illustration:
 - a) Dan Smith used to say to new members....
 - b) *"Don't try to teach yet—just be enthusiastic about what you have heard—Tell friends—'You have just got to study with Bro. Smith.'"*

- c) Dan baptized a lot of people!
- 7) Let's be willing to be forerunners!

II. THE VALUE OF HELPERS. (Mk. 2:1-12)

A. *Story of the healing of a Paralytic (Palsy) man.*

- 1) 4 men brought him to Jesus.
- 2) He had to be brought on a "stretcher."
- 3) They couldn't get thru the door, so they let him down thru the roof.
- 4) V. 5—"**Seeing their faith**"
 - a) Whose faith?
 - b) The 4 men for sure.
 - c) What kind of faith?
 - 1. "Jesus, as the Son of God?"
 - 2. Had not been preached as yet.
 - 3. A prophet with power to heal people? (Probably)
- 5) V. 5—"**Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.**"
 - a) Upon what basis?
 - b) An active faith in His power to heal.
 - 1. They brought the man to Jesus to be healed.
 - 2. They kept on trying until Jesus was aware of him.
 - 3. Emphasis—"**Seeing** their faith"
- 6) V. 10—"**To show you the Son of man has power to forgive sins**"
 - a) These leaders rightly said: "**Who could forgive sins, but God only.**"(v. 7)
 - b) And that was the point—He was God, in the flesh.
 - c) And to prove it—He healed the man also.
 - d) Only the power of God could heal—only God can forgive!

B. *Application:*

- 1) The 4 men's active faith was rewarded.
 - a) They were helpers.
 - b) They brought the man to Jesus to be blessed!
 - c) We, too, can bring people to Jesus to be blessed!
- 2) But—we need to look closer at man's forgiveness!
 - a) He was already a child of God under Old Covenant system.
 - b) We live under a different system—a New Covenant.
 - c) To receive forgiveness today, men must:
 - 1. Have faith in Christ as the Son of God;
 - 2. Be penitent, make a decision to turn from sinful walk;
 - 3. Be baptized into Christ;
 - 4. Continue faithful to serve God.
- 3) Men need this forgiveness.
- 4) We need to be helpers to bring people to Jesus for forgiveness.

III. THE DISASTER OF A DIVIDER. (Mk. 3:22-30)

A. *Jesus was exercising His power to help the people see who He was.*

- 1) He had power over sin and its penalty—He could forgive men.
- 2) He also gave power to His disciples & sent them out. (Mk. 3:14-15)

- 3) Jesus cast out demons by His power.
- 4) He exercised power over nature—calming the seas. (4:39)
- 5) He cast out legion of demons from a man.
- 6) He had the power to raise the dead back to life. (5:41-42)
- 7) He helped people so they would know He was their promised Messiah.

B. But there were those who didn't appreciate what Jesus was doing.

- 1) The religious leaders saw Jesus' obvious powers.
- 2) But, they fought against him—rather than working with Him.
- 3) They were dividers.
- 4) They attributed His power to Satan—rather than God.
- 5) Their divisive spirit brought about the downfall of their Nation.
- 6) Jesus warned them of the dangers. (Mk. 3:24-25)
- 7) Because they didn't listen, their nation perished.

C. Application:

- 1) Men in leadership positions in the church:
 - a) Can cooperate with one another & with Jesus—or be a divider!
 - b) Can encourage men & women to follow Jesus—or be a divider!
 - c) Can be a unifying & harmonizing force—or be a divider!
- 2) A divider can ultimately bring about the downfall of a church.
- 3) Warnings:
 - a) Rom. 16:17-18
 - b) 1 Cor. 1:10-13
- 4) Leaders can be a unifying force or a destroying force in the church.

CONCLUSION

1. If someone was characterizing you:
 - a) Would it be favorable or unfavorable?
 - b) Would it be accurate or inaccurate?
 - c) Would you be proud or ashamed?
 - d) Would you be a forerunner, a helper, or a divider?
2. No one forces us to be what we are....we choose that!
3. Why not choose to be what God wants us to be?

Lesson Seven

"THE PRIVILEGED HAVE OBLIGATIONS"

(Mark. 6:1-6)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Mark 6-10)

1. Jesus was in His home town of Nazareth.
 - a) While there, He taught in their synagogue & performed miracles.
 - b) V. 2—"*.....were astonished, saying, 'Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands!'*"
 - c) But, "*...they were offended at Him.*"(V. 3)
 - d) He is just a carpenter's son.
 - e) We know His mother, brothers & sisters.
 - f) They wrote Him off in spite of His great abilities!
2. Jesus' reaction to them:
 - a) V. 4—"*A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house.*"
 - b) V. 6—"*He marveled because of their unbelief.*"
 - c) V. 5—"*He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.*"
3. Lesson to be learned!
 - a) The people of Nazareth had been given a great privilege:
 - 1) To have Jesus in their midst;
 - 2) To hear His great wisdom;
 - 3) To see His great powers of healing.
 - b) But along with privilege comes great obligations!
 - 1) What they had seen & heard required proper action on their part.
 - 2) Instead, they were offended—reacted negatively to Him.
 - c) Some of Jesus' strongest pronouncements of judgment were upon those of great privilege.
 - 1) Mark 6:11
 - 2) Matt. 12:38-42
 - 3) Matt. 11:20-24
4. Mankind, in general, likes to enjoy the privileges of the inner circle!
 - a) But often fail to shoulder the obligations that come with it.
 - b) These Jews had a great privilege—to have the Son of God in person to teach them.
 - c) But their rejection of Him brought terrible consequences.
5. We need to be keenly aware of this principle: **The privileged has obligations!**

DISCUSSION

I. PRIVILEGES OF THE CLOSE DISCIPLES OF JESUS.

A. Their privileges:

- 1) Mark 6:7
 - a) They were with Jesus constantly;
 - b) Hearing His great teachings;
 - c) Observing his great powers at work.

- d) They saw miracles over & over—week after week!
- e) The multitudes may not have seen but a few.
- 2) Mark 6:13
 - a) They even were given the privilege of doing the same among the people.
 - b) They taught & performed miracles by His power.
- 3) They also experienced a sense of belonging to Jesus.
- 4) They had a powerful friend to turn to for help.
- 5) They were truly a privileged few!
- 6) But they also had grave obligations as well!

B. Obligations:

- 1) They were sent out to tell the things they had seen & heard (6:7)
- 2) They were rebuked for their lack of faith at times:
 - a) Mk. 8:17-21
 - b) Mk. 8:33
- 3) They were rebuked for seeking places of honor & not realizing the obligations they had.
 - a) Mk. 9:34-35
 - b) Mk. 10:37
 - c) Mk. 10:42-45
- 4) They needed to see the grave obligations that would be there's because of these privileges:
 - a) Mk. 13:9
 - b) Mk. 13:13
 - c) Mk. 16:15
 - d) Acts 1:8—"*....ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*"
- 5) The Apostles did handle their obligations magnificently!
 - a) The gospel was taken to the whole world in 30 years (Col. 1:23).
 - b) They gave us the written message of Jesus.
 - c) All but one died a violent death in carrying out their obligations.

II. WHAT ABOUT DISCIPLES OF JESUS TODAY?

A. Privileges:

- 1) We are a special redeemed people unto the Lord.
 - a) 1 Jn. 3:1-2
 - b) Among all the billions on earth—we are among the "few"—the inner circle!
- 2) Heb. 6:4-5
- 3) 2 Pet. 2:20
- 4) Eph. 1:3
- 5) What great privileges we enjoy because we are children of God!
 - a) Jn. 15:14—Can be called the friend of God.
 - b) Rom. 8:28—Promised that all things will work together for good.
 - c) Rom. 8:37—Assured that we are more than conquerors thru Christ.
 - d) 1 Pet. 5:7—We have a friend upon whom we can cast all our cares.
- 6) What about the obligations that goes with these privileges?

B. Obligations:

- 1) We have been purchased from sin to serve the living God.
 - a) 1 Cor. 6:19-20
- 2) We are a debtor to God & must realize that obligation.
 - a) Rom. 8:12—***"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh."***
- 3) We are freed from sin, but not free to do as we please.
 - a) 1 Pet. 2:16—***"As free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants to God."***
- 4) We must be willing to undergo great trials for the name of Christ.
 - a) 1 Pet. 4:12-19
- 5) Our Privileges are great—but so are our obligations!

CONCLUSION

1. Lk. 12:48—***"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."***
2. We are—without question—a privileged people----to whom much has been given.
3. The gravity of the obligations scares me!
4. May we remember Jesus' warning: ***"The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here."***
5. What have we done with our great privilege of hearing the Gospel of God's grace?

Lesson Eight

"THE EXTENT OF LOVING GOD"

(Mark 12:28-34)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Mark 11-16)

1. Religion has very little real meaning for many people.
 - a) It is a formality they go through for one hour on Sunday because it is necessary.
 - b) It doesn't have much affect upon their lives....little change for the better.
2. Various reasons could be given for this!
 - a) But probably the primary reason is---Religion is not 1st & foremost in their lives.
 - b) It is just not that important to them.
 - c) Religion is more superficial than real.
3. Until God is put first in our lives, our religion will have very little meaning.
 - a) Matt. 6:33—"**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.**"
 - b) Until God becomes our all in all....we really have no true religion.
 - c) The concept of religion is to bind us back to God.
 - d) This is impossible until we come to love God with all our mind, heart, soul, and strength.
4. Jesus says this is the first and greatest commandment.
 - a) This is what gives real meaning to Religion.
 - b) All other commands find their value & basis in this one command.
 - c) Without this—what value are the rest??
5. Take a closer look at this command.

DISCUSSION

I. WITH ALL OUR MIND.

A. What is the mind?

- 1) Making distinctions between these 4 words is not easy.
 - a) They are often used interchangeably when used alone.
 - b) The Lord used all four here.....so we will try to make some distinction.
- 2) The Mind:
 - a) "*The intellect, thinking part, that which learns.*"
 - b) God must be real to us—we must come to KNOW Him!
 - c) Jn. 17:3—"**And this is life eternal, that we might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.**"
 - d) God must command our INTELLECTUAL respect!
 1. *A shallow love indicates a shallow knowledge of God.*
 2. *To really know God is to love Him.*
 3. Acts 17:23—"**Him....whom ye ignorantly worship, I declare unto you.**"
 - e) God has revealed Himself:
 1. *In Nature. (Ps. 19:1)*
 2. *In a written Revelation. (1 Cor. 2:12)*
 3. *In the Life of Jesus upon the earth. (Jn. 14:9)*

B. Thus, to love God with our mind means:

- 1) We will devote our minds & intellects to searching to KNOW God.

- 2) To come to know the Excellencies of the Divine Being.
- 3) Matt. 5:6—"**Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.**"
- 4) **Illustrate:**
 - a) **Parent:** "Son, you have a good mind, you ought to be a doctor."
 - b) But what about his need to use his mind to Know God first???
 - c) And secondarily—to use his mind to be a doctor!
- 5) We also need the best minds among us to stand & make know the only True God to a lost world.
- 6) No work is more desperately needed!

II. WITH ALL OUR HEART:

A. *What is the heart?*

- 1) In most instances, it refers to the deep internal part of man.
- 2) Here, it probably refers to the "*Emotions, the feeling part of man.*"
- 3) Religion has it's greatest power when:
 - a) The knowledge of God is supplemented with strong emotional feelings for God.
 - b) Emotions alone can be misleading without true knowledge.
- 4) Emotional feelings can make:
 - a) Daily duties significant and not commonplace.
 - b) Can make the ordinary become extraordinary.
 - c) 1 John 5:3—"**For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.**"

B. *That to which we give the affections of our heart will be a most powerful force in our lives.*

- 1) Jesus said: "**Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**" (Matt. 6:21)
- 2) Feelings are powerful motivating forces.
- 3) In fact—They too often over-shadow the intellect.
 - a) Here is a great problem in religion.
 - b) When emotion rules over the intellect.
 - c) When a person is not concerned about true knowledge & understanding....
 - d) When he is only concerned about how he feels.
 - e) "*I wouldn't trade my feelings right here for all the Bibles in the world.*"
- 4) The heart needs to:
 - a) Warm & intensify what the Mind knows about God.
 - b) God wants our heart....for out of it are the issues of life.
 - c) But He wants our mind also.
 - d) He wants devoted followers of His Truth, His Word!!

III. WITH ALL OUR STRENGTH:

A. *What is our strength?*

- 1) "Power, will power, energies, abilities, strength to overcome."
- 2) When we know God:
 - a) Intellectually—IN ALL OF HIS GREATNESS & GOODNESS;
 - b) Emotionally—We are drawn to Him because of what we know about Him;

- 3) Then,
 - a) We become willing to spend our energies, strength in His service.
 - b) We are willing to make the commitment to leave all & follow Him.
 - c) Matt. 19:27—***"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"***

B. We must value something before we will pay the price!

- 1) Jesus said the Kingdom of Heaven is liken unto a man searching for the Pearl of Great Price.
 - a) When he found it—sold all he had to purchase it.
 - b) The value was seen—the price was paid!
- 2) God needs to become priceless to us!
 - a) When he does—we, too, will sell all and follow Him.
 - b) We will be willing to pay the supreme price to be His child.
 - c) All that I am and have is for God & His Kingdom!

IV. WITH ALL OUR SOUL.

A. What is our soul?

- 1) "Our very being, Life itself, our existence, one's self."
- 2) The part of our being that is most like God.
- 3) Our kinship with God.
- 4) A recognition that my very existence depends upon God.
- 5) That He has given me LIFE for a purpose.
- 6) Thus, my life should be devoted to Him.

B. We offer our very being unto Him & His direction & keeping.

- 1) Our soul is willing to be in subjection to the Father of spirits.
- 2) When our MIND & HEART finds someone worthy to worship & serve:
 - a) We will not only give our energies into His service;
 - b) But, we will give our very being for His glory.
 - c) Matt. 16:24—***"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."***
- 3) No sacrifice will be too much or too great.....
 - a) For the one we truly know & adore;
 - b) For the one that has captured our minds & hearts;
 - c) For the one that is the SUPREME BEING of all beings.....
 - d) We devote our entire being!!

CONCLUSION

1. Religion is merely an outward form, a facade, an unreal thing until:
 - a) We come to love God with our MIND, HEART, STRENGTH, & SOUL.
 - b) With our whole being, with all of our faculties.
2. Heb. 11:6—***"But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."***
3. Where does such a love come from?
 - a) 1 Jn. 4:7-13
 - b) We must be born again.....become new creatures. (2 Cor. 5:17)
 - c) God's love needs to fill our lives and control our lives!

Lesson Nine

"BAPTISM IS NOT A FIRE ESCAPE"

(Luke 3:7-18)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Luke 1-6)

1. John the Baptist came preaching to the Israelite nation:
 - a) He preached for them to: REPENT, CONFESS THEIR SINS, BE BAPTIZED (IMMERSED IN WATER)—Why???
 - 1) To prepare the people for the Messiah & the coming Kingdom of God.
 - a) *Luke 3:4—"As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."*
 - b) *Matt. 3:2—"And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
 - 2) So they could have their sins forgiven.
 - a) *Lk. 3:6—"And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."*
 - b) *Lk. 3:3—"preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."*
 - 3) So they could escape the wrath to come.
 - a) *Lk. 3:7—"Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"*
2. The people's response to John's preaching was overwhelming!
 - a) *Lk. 3:7—"multitudes that came forth to be baptized"*
 - b) *Mark 1:5—"And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins."*
3. But were their actions real? Genuine? Truly penitent for sins? Lasting?

DISCUSSION

I. JOHN STRESSED THE NEED FOR TRUE REPENTANCE

A. What was he calling for in repentance?

- 1) Greek word—METANOIA
 - a) *"to change one's mind or purpose."*
 - b) Always used to emphasize a change for the better, mending one's life.
- 2) Involves a turning from sin and a turning to God!

B. It was a change to see themselves for what they were.

- 1) Not what they thought they were! Especially their leaders!
 - a) *Lk. 3:8—"We have Abraham to our father"*
 - 1) *We are children of the covenant.*
 - 2) *We don't need repentance.*
 - b) *Jn. 8:31-39*
 - 1) *They were descendants of Abraham.*
 - 2) *But a mere outward lineage from Abraham was not enough.*
 - 3) *Needed to repent!*
 - c) *Rom. 2:28-29—"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."*

- 2) They were sinners in need of Repentance!
 - a) He called their religious leaders: "*a generation of vipers.*"(Lk. 3:7)
 - b) Matt. 23:33—"*Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*"
 - c) He called upon them to recognize their need of repentance and confession of sins.
 - d) Many were "*baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.*" (Mk. 1:5)
- C. *He called upon them to prove they had repented!*
 - 1) Lk. 3:8—"*Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.*"
 - 2) Matthew's account says: "*fruits meet for repentance.*"
 - 3) Show by your actions that you have repented—to see results in their lives.
 - 4) The mere action of being baptized & confessing sins is not enough to help them escape the wrath to come.
 - a) In other words—*Baptism, by itself, was not a fire escape!*
 - b) Unless joined with repentance & confession of sins—worthless!
 - 5) What kind of change was John calling for?
 - a) Lk. 3:10-14
 - b) Matt. 23:23-24
 - c) Show that righteousness, justice, faith that should be in your life.

II. JOHN STRESSED THE NEED TO ESCAPE GOD'S WRATH TO COME

A. Jeremiah 44:4-6

- 1) Because Israel would not repent, God's wrath was poured out upon them.
- 2) He allowed the Babylonians to take them away into captivity.
- 3) God's wrath is poured out upon the rebellious, unrepentant.

B. The O.T. ends with this warning & promise:

- 1) Mal. 4:1-6
- 2) John told them how they could escape the coming wrath of God!
- 3) By repenting—changing their minds, and show it.
- 4) By confessing their sinfulness before God.
- 5) By being immersed in water to have their sins cleansed away.

III. APPLICATION FOR US TODAY:

A. God's wrath is threatened upon mankind today!

- 1) Rom. 1:18—"*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*"
- 2) Rom. 2:8-9—"*Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*"
- 3) 2 Thess. 1:8-9—"*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*"
- 4) Heb. 12:29, 31—"*For our God is a consuming fire....It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*"

B. Mankind needs to truly repent or perish!

- 1) Luke 13:3
- 2) 2 Peter. 3:9—***"The Lord.....is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."***
- 3) Acts 17:30—***"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."***
- 4) We need to see OUR true condition before God.
- 5) We need to see OUR need for change in our lives.
- 6) John's message to the people of God then is needed by God's people today—
Repent!

CONCLUSION

- 1) We live under a different covenant than the Jews did.
- 2) We become children of God in a different way than they did.
- 3) Men & women today must:
 - a) Believe in Jesus as the Son of God (Jn. 20:30-31)
 - b) Repent—change of mind about serving Sin. (Rom. 6:1-2)
 - c) Confess Christ as the son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)
 - d) Be immersed in water for remission of sins (Rom. 6:4; Acts 2:38)
- 4) Will you not respond to Jesus' invitation today in order to escape the wrath that is to come?

Lesson Ten

"ARE DEMONS REAL?"

(Lk. 11:14-26)

INTRODUCTION

1. Luke 7-12 emphasizes the great power of God at work among men:
 - a) A Centurion's servant was healed
 - b) The widow of Nain's son was raised from the dead
 - c) Forgiveness was offered to a sinful woman
 - d) The winds & waves were rebuked and calmed
 - e) A Legion of Demons were cast out of a man (Mk. 5:9-13)
 - f) Jairus' daughter was raised from the dead
 - g) The apostles were sent out:
 - 1) *Given power over demons;*
 - 2) *Given power to heal all kinds of diseases*
 - h) 5000 were feed miraculously
 - i) The 70 were sent out:
 - 1) *To heal all kinds of sickness*
 - 2) *They returned exclaiming: "Even demons were subject to us."*
2. Quite a bit of emphasis upon confrontation with Demons.
 - a) The power of God over the Demons was obvious.
 - b) Even the disciples were given God's power over the Demons.
3. These things have brought on many questions.
 - a) The Bible doesn't answer all questions.....
 - b) But, it does give quite a bit of information!

DISCUSSION

I. ARE DEMONS REAL?

- A. The Bible speaks of them as real.***
 - 1) Many references to their existence:
 - a) Over 100 references directly to demons (devils in KJV).
 - b) Quite a few other references that are identified with them.
- B. Jesus, Himself, speaks of their existence.***
 - 1) He spoke to them.
 - 2) He exercised power over them.
- C. Lack of being able to see them, does not mean they do not exist!***

II .WHAT ABOUT THEIR ORIGIN?

- A. The Bible states that God (Jesus) created all things.***
 - 1) Col. 1:16—"*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him...*"
 - 2) It actually records the creation of the heaven & earth.
 - 3) It actually records the creation of the lower forms of life about us.
 - 4) It actually records the creation of man (Gen. 1-2)
 - 5) But it does not mention the creation of Angels, nor Satan, nor Demons, directly.

- 6) The very statement—Jesus created all things would infer that He created, at least the angels!

B. More than likely....Demons are fallen angels!

- 1) Angels were created good, but rebelled along with Satan, who was also an Angel.
- 2) All indications in Scripture seems to lead to this conclusion.
- 3) 2 Pet. 2:4—*"For if God spared not the angels that sinned..."*
- 4) Jude 6—*"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation...."*
- 5) Matt. 25:41—*"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."*
- 6) Matt. 12:24—*"But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils (demons), but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils (demons)."*

C. Observations:

- 1) God created all things good.
- 2) The angels had the power of choice like humans were given.
- 3) God did not create demons! Evil Spirits! Fallen angels!
- 4) Just like he did not create fallen man!
- 5) When the angels rebelled....became evil, fallen angels—demons.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEMONS:

A. Names:

- 1) 2 Peter 2:4—*"angels that sinned"*
- 2) Matt. 25:41—*"the devil and his angels"*
- 3) Matt. 12:24—*"devils (demons)"*
- 4) Matt. 10:1—*"unclean spirits"*
- 5) Matt. 12:45—*"spirits more wicked (evil)"*
- 6) It would seem that Evil spirits & Demons are the same—fallen angels.
- 7) Lk. 8:2—*"And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils (demons)."*

B. Their nature:

- 1) They are sinful, rebellious, evil spirit beings. (Matt. 12:45)
- 2) They possess personality & power & Intelligence:
 - a) Lk. 4:31-34
 - b) Us, we, us—pronouns used to refer to themselves.
 - c) They could communicate with Jesus—recognized Him.
 - d) Had great control over humans, when allowed. (Mk. 9:17-18)
 - e) They believe & tremble. (Jas. 2:19)

C. Their abode:

- 1) They left their first abode. (Jude 6—*"Kept not their first estate"*)
- 2) Possibly in heaven with God, but went down to earth.
 - a) Rev. 12:7-9
- 3) Mk. 5:2, 5; Lk. 11:24—They wander in mountains, desolate regions, among tombs, or in dry (waterless) places.

- 4) They were able, for a time, to possess or be in people—take control.
- 5) They could also go into animals. (Mk. 5:13)
- 6) But this seems to have been for a limited time.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF DEMONS IN N.T. TIMES.

A. Why so much activity of Demons in the N.T.?

- 1) Just before Christ came to earth, during His public ministry, and a short time after his Death, Burial, Resurrection & ascension—UNUSUAL ACTIVITY!
- 2) Their efforts were open, visible, and obvious to the people.
- 3) Why did God allow Demons so much freedom during this period of time?

B. Suggested answer:

- 1) A special battle between God & Satan was shaping up when Christ came to earth.
 - a) The Culmination of God's plan of Redemption thru Christ was ready.
 - b) If Satan and His Angels were to do anything—now would be the time.
- 2) God seems to have allowed them special powers for a time.
 - a) So that the triumph of righteousness over evil would be seen.
 - b) His disciples had special powers to cast out demons (Matt. 10:1, 7, 8, etc.)
 - c) Satan was allowed to possess people, so God's power could cast Him out of people.
- 3) Stated reason for Jesus' coming:
 - a) 1 Jn. 3:8—***"For this purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."***
 - b) Demons seem to realized this: ***"art thou come to destroy us?"*** (Mk. 1:24)
- 4) God allowed Demons to assert themselves in special ways:
 - a) So His power could be demonstrated over the power of Satan.

C. Demon possession was a characteristic of this period of time.

- 1) They used their power to do great hurt to people.
 - a) They inflicted immense pain and heartache upon people.
 - b) They injured people, both mentally & physically.
 - c) They caused dumbness, blindness, insanity, personal injury, deformities, etc.
- 2) They seemed to possess people even against their will.
 - a) They possessed men, women, and children (Matt. 4:24; Lk. 8:2; 9:39; Mk. 7:25).
 - b) One man had a Legion of Demons possessing him. (Mk. 5:9)
 - c) They used the minds, bodies, tongues of those they possessed (Mk. 1:26).
 - d) They could go in & out of people at will (Lk. 11:24).
- 3) However, Demon possession & sickness were not identical.
 - a) One was not the other.
 - b) Two separate things.
 - c) One may have caused the other.
 - d) Just because one was sick was not a sign of Demon possession.

D. Demons recognized Jesus & His power over them.

- 1) Jesus said you had to bind the strong man before you could spoil his house (Lk. 11:20-22).
 - a) Jesus & His disciples were spoiling Satan's house.
 - b) They were casting Demons out (Lk. 10:17-19).

- 2) They seem to realize that they had only a short time before being banished.
 - a) Lk. 8:28—"*I beseech thee, torment me not.*"
 - b) Matt. 8:29—"*art thou come hither to torment us before the time?*"
 - 3) Even though Demons were allowed special powers at this time:
 - a) They were under God's over-all control.
 - b) Both Jesus & His disciples could exercise power over them.
 - c) Jesus' complete authority was obvious in their presence.
- E. Satan & his Angels were dealt a severe blow in the death & resurrection of Jesus!**
- 1) Heb. 2:14—"*....that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.*"
 - 2) Col. 2:15—"*And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*"
 - 3) Everything pointed towards an end of their special privileges & powers.

V. HAS SATAN & HIS ANGELS BEEN BOUND?

A. They lost their place in heaven because of rebellion. (Rev. 12:7-9)

- 1) Even though cast out, they were not totally stopped from all activity.
- 2) O.T. incidences:
 - a) Satan among sons of God in God's presence—allowed to afflict Job. (Job 1-2)
 - b) Evil spirits were sent among people by God. (1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Kings 22:22)
- 3) N.T. incidences:
 - a) Satan's direct tempting of Jesus. (Matt. 4)
 - b) Possession of people during Jesus' day.
 - c) Even after death of Jesus—allowed for a time (Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:15-16).
- 4) But after this—Silence about Demon possession!

B. Conclusion:

- 1) When miracles ceased in early church, so did Satan's special powers.
- 2) Satan & Demons have both been bound (contained) by God's power.
- 3) 2 Pet. 2:4—"*....now....delivered into chains of darkness.*"
- 4) Jude 6—"*...hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.*"
- 5) Now, what can they do?
 - a) No ability to possess people now.
 - b) Cannot harm people without their consent....against their will.
 - c) Both God & Satan have ceased special miraculous events.
 - d) Satan & Demons can tempt & deceive men, but not coerce men!
- 6) Their final destiny: "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*" (Matt. 25:41)

CONCLUSION

1. We believe Demons are fallen angels doing the bidding of Satan.
2. At one time they were allowed to possess people, but not now.
3. God brought about their defeat and their binding unto the day of judgment.
4. The battle is not over however.....
5. We are still warned against the devices of Satan!

Lesson Eleven

"IS THERE A THIRD ROAD?"

(Luke 13:23-30)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Luke 13-18)

1. Illustration:

- a) **Lady:** *"You know, for years I thought I was on a third road that leads to heaven."*
- b) **Friend:** *"Could you explain what you mean."*
- c) **Lady:** *"I had thought about it this way—I do an honest day's work, take care of my children, try to be a good wife, and lead a useful life. I am not a thief and I don't cheat or lie, and I try not to gossip. I just didn't see myself in the same category as those who trod the broad way that leads to destruction."*
- d) **Friend:** *"But what about the narrow road?"*
- e) **Lady:** *"Yes.....that is a problem! However, I didn't attend church services very often and I thought of Sunday more as a day to read a book, go on a picnic, etc. I never visited the sick except when a close friend was in the hospital. Although I didn't see myself on the straight and narrow road—I didn't consider that I was on the broad road either. So I invented a third road. It was made just for me; a sort of half-way route just between the other two. It suited me just fine. I felt at ease on my road."*
- f) **Friend:** *"There are many that would like a road like that."*
- g) **Lady:** *"Yes, for something that does not exist, it is sure popular. Most of my friends seem to travel by my third road. It became so crowded I considered charging a toll."*
- h) **Friend:** *"What caused you to change your mind about the third road?"*
- i) **Lady:** *"Someone read the passage in Matt. 7:14-15 and I was shocked to hear about just two roads. I felt indignant that my road had been slighted. That set me to reading the Bible....and....of course, I realized my mistake. There are only two roads, not three. Now I intend to remain on the right one."*

2. I am sure that a lot of people would like to invent that 3rd road and feel at ease.

- a) But, there just isn't a third road—only two!
- b) The straight & narrow one that leads to life.
- c) The broad one that leads to eternal death.
- d) People may feel that they are okay on the third road, but they are in reality on the broad road that leads to death.
- e) Luke 13:24-28

DISCUSSION

I. THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS ABOUT THE NARROW ROAD:

A. It requires repentance. (Luke 13:3)

- 1) People looked upon calamity as a punishment from God for sin.
- 2) Jesus pointed out:
 - a) They were not sinners above others about them.
 - b) So, don't sit back in your smugness thinking you are okay.
 - c) You have sinned also.
 - d) Unless you also repent, a greater calamity will come upon you.

B. It requires bearing fruit. (Luke 13:6-9)

- 1) This is purely common sense.
 - a) If a tree won't produce, cut it down.
 - b) If it won't pay its way, plant one that will.
- 2) Even after being given time, it still would not produce—cut it down.
- 3) The Jewish people had had 3 years of Jesus' teachings.
- 4) They would be given a little longer.
 - a) If they didn't bear fruit;
 - b) They would be cut off.
- 5) What about us?
 - a) Are we bearing righteous fruit in the kingdom?
 - b) Or, are we worthless--non-productive—Need to be cut off?

C. It requires a merciful spirit. (Luke 13:11-17)

- 1) Jesus showed that mercy would at times supersede the Law.
 - a) The Jews were such slaves to the Law of the Sabbath—wouldn't even show mercy, which the Law allowed.
 - b) Jesus showed mercy—He healed the woman on the Sabbath.
 - c) Her reaction—Glorified God.
- 2) The Leaders reaction—you have six days to come & be healed—don't do it on the Sabbath.
- 3) Lord's answer—(v. 15-16)
- 4) Jesus made them ashamed of their attitude.
- 5) But Jesus did not break the Sabbath.
 - a) God had made provisions for merciful acts to be done on Sabbath.
 - b) God's Law is not to punish man, but for his good.
- 6) God's people need to be known for their merciful spirit.
 - a) But not for their nit-picking, binding of opinions on others.
 - b) And yet, to respect and be obedient to God's Law.

D. It requires humility of spirit. (Luke 14:7-11)

- 1) One who does not over-rate himself.
- 2) One who under-rates himself, so that others may have an opportunity to exalt him.
- 3) If over-rate one's self—and then, have to be rebuked—embarrassing.
- 4) Humility of spirit shown in another way too.
- 5) Luke 14:12-14

E. It requires an obedient spirit, not excuses. (Luke 14:16-20)

- 1) Three excuses for not attending the feast:
 - a) Have bought ground—must see it. (Don't buy ground without seeing it).
 - b) Bought 5 yoke of oxen—must prove them. (Don't buy oxen before proving them.)
 - c) Married a wife—cannot come. (At least more honest).
- 2) Excuses are just that—an effort to justify one's disobedience to God.
- 3) Only the obedient will be allowed to enjoy that eternal feast with God.

F. It requires a denial of self. (Luke 14:26)

- 1) Called upon to make a choice:
 - a) Go our way or God's way!

- b) Go the way parents, wife, husband, children, wantor God's way!
- 2) The choice must be made.
- 3) To follow Christ—we must die to self.
- 4) Need to sit down and count the cost—then make our decision.
- 5) Be willing to leave all behind that does not fit into God's will for me.

II. GOD IS NOW SEEKING FOR LOST MANKIND!

A. Illustrated in two parables.

- 1) The lost sheep.
- 2) The lost coin. (Luke 15)
- 3) Concern has and is being shown by God for lost souls.
- 4) His sending His Son is greatest evidence of this.

B. However, Man must realize his lost condition & come to God.

- 1) Illustrated in Parable of Lost Son.
- 2) Son chose to go astray—so he must chose to return.
- 3) He left God's love & fellowship to go into sinful world.
- 4) God bids him come home.
- 5) God patiently waits for him to come home.
- 6) When sinners do return:
 - a) God freely offers mercy and pardon.
 - b) ***"My son that was dead, but is alive again; was lost and is found."***

C. We need to be greatly concerned about our spiritual future.

- 1) Illustrated in Parable of the Unjust Steward.
- 2) He was concerned for his physical future & prepared for it.
- 3) If we are not concerned enough about our spiritual future—we won't be prepared.

D. The time for reward & punishment is coming.

- 1) Illustrated in Story of Rich man & Lazarus.
- 2) Death comes to all—rich & poor.
- 3) The rich may have elaborate funeral services, but no indication of his eternal destiny being with God.
- 4) For he lifted up his eyes in torment.
- 5) Lazarus was comforted.

CONCLUSION

1. It is so easy to feel that God owes us something.
2. That there ought to be a 3rd road that leads to heaven.
3. And we ought to be allowed to travel it.
4. But the Lord said—there are only two:
 - a) One leads to life
 - b) The other to death.
5. Which are we traveling?

Lesson Twelve

***"By what Authority
Doest Thou These Things?"***
(Luke 20:1-8)

INTRODUCTION

(Our Lesson comes from the reading of Luke 19-24)

1. Luke 20:1-8
 - a) What led the religious leaders to question Jesus' actions?
 - b) Luke 19:45-48
 - c) Jesus' activities in the Temple were very unusual.
 - 1) He taught as One with authority.
 - 2) He made changes in their lucrative sacrifice trade.
 - 3) He had no authority from them to do this.
 - 4) They wanted to know by what authority He was doing these things.
2. This is a legitimate question and one with tremendous consequences.
 - a) Such a question infers:
 - 1) Authority is needed for our religious activities.
 - 2) Proper respect should be given to properly constituted authority.
 - 3) Rom. 13:1—"***Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.***"
 - 4) There are obviously grave dangers of punishment to the disrespectful & disobedient.
 - b) Jesus had obviously not secured authority from them for His actions.
 - 1) His authority came from a much higher source—God Himself.
 - 2) An authority—they had refused to properly respect.
 - 3) Luke 19:46—"***It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.***"
3. The question of religious authority needs to be explored further.

DISCUSSION

I. WE NEED A STANDARD OF AUTHORITY TODAY.

- A. All of life is dependent upon some standard of authority.***
 - 1) Business, Government, the Home, the Armed Services—and even Religion.
 - 2) Someone has to be able to say:
 - a) What the value of money is.
 - b) How many ozs. make up a pound.
 - c) How many inches in a foot.
 - d) etc.
- B. Such a standard is just as crucial in religion (if not more so.)***
 - 1) It is evident that we have a divided religious world about us.
 - a) It is also obvious that something is wrong—for this was not God's intentions concerning His church.
 - b) John 17:21—"***that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.***"
 - 2) But why all the division?

- a) The answer can be found in the realm of Authority!
 - b) We should ask: **"By what authority do you teach & practice such things?"**
 - 1) "Do you have authority for sprinkling babies?"
 - 2) "Do you have authority for partaking of Lord's Supper once a month or once a year?"
 - 3) "Do you have authority for using Instrumental Music in your worship?"
 - 4) "Do you have authority for teaching 'faith only' salvation?"
 - c) Can religious groups give Authority from God for such?
 - d) Or, do they care?
- C. It should be quite obvious that many things have been accepted as authoritative, rather than the word of God.**
- 1) Oral Traditions:
 - a) Things that have been handed down from generation to generation.
 - b) Such as special days of observances.
 - c) "Its always been done this way or by religious people."
 - 2) So-called inspired writings:
 - a) Mormon religious books.
 - b) Christian Science.
 - c) "The Holy Spirit told me..."
 - 3) Religious councils & synods:
 - a) Conclusions of men in councils.
 - b) Passed on as authoritative creeds for men to believe & follow.
 - 4) Miscellaneous Ones:
 - a) What my parents believes.
 - b) What my preacher says.
 - c) My personal feelings about the matter.
 - d) What the majority believe.
 - 5) As long as people accept another Authority than God's—Division!
- D. A common standard of Authority is badly needed.**
- 1) One that all can accept & put absolute trust in.
 - 2) Such has been given to us—THE BIBLE.
 - a) It is the Only Standard given by God.
 - b) It is perfect as a Standard for all men ("Perfect Law of Liberty")
 - c) It is able to make us perfect or complete. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
 - d) It has the power of God behind it. (Matt. 28:18)

II. PROPER RESPECT NEEDS TO BE SHOWN TO THIS ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY.

A. Must be more than lip service.

- 1) Luke 6:46—**"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."**
- 2) Must not only claim it—but let it be in truth & reality.
- 3) Jesus strongly condemned lip service to God. (Matthew 15:7-9)

B. Many respect God's authority until:

- 1) It requires some changes in their beliefs or their lives.
 - a) Rich young ruler was told: **"Go sell all you have...."**
 - b) He went away sorrowfully.

- c) Why? Required some dramatic changes.
 - d) What do we do?
 - 2) It contradicts our reasoning process.
 - a) City of Jericho:
 - 1) *March around city walls 13 times—blow trumpets—shout—walls will fall down.*
 - 2) *No evidence for them to believe that would happen.*
 - 3) *Faith in God—respect for His authority—obeyed!*
 - b) When Jesus started to teach people some hard sayings.
 - 1) ***"...the people turned and walked no more with him."*** (Jn. 6:66)
 - 2) *Lack of faith—no respect for His authority.*
 - c) Immersion in water in order to have sins washed away.
 - 1) *Acts 22:16;*
 - 2) *Romans 6:4*
 - 3) *This doesn't make sense to some—reject it!*
 - 4) *Why? Do not respect God's authority over their lives.*
 - 3) We think we have a better way to do it.
 - a) Illustration:
 - 1) *Peter & companions had fished all night—caught nothing.*
 - 2) *Jesus, the carpenter, said: "cast your nets in this spot."*
 - 3) *They were the fishermen—and a carpenter is telling them how to fish.*
 - 4) *Peter said: "At thy word."*
 - 5) *They respected Jesus' authority.*
 - b) Some feel they can improve on God's way to worship.
 - 1) *God said, "Sing and make melody in your heart." (Eph. 5:19)*
 - 2) *Also, "Sing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16)*
 - 3) *Instrumental music may sound beautiful.*
 - 4) *We may like it—even desire it.*
 - 5) *But this isn't the kind of music that God Authorizes.*
 - 6) *After all—He is the authority!*
 - 7) *It is respect for his authority that causes us to do what He says.*
 - 8) *A lack of respect is seen—when we think we have a better way.*
 - 4) Until it brings persecution.
 - a) *Matt. 13:21—"Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended."*
 - b) *We listen, believe and obey—as long as it doesn't really cost us.*
- C. Respect for God's authority is far more than lip service.**
- 1) *Tit. 1:16—"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."*
- D. When Christianity is robbed of its reverence & respect for God's authority—it becomes vain, empty, and worthless.**
- 1) When strict obedience is removed:
 - a) *It robs Christ of His Headship & Authority over us;*
 - b) *It robs Christianity of its practicality.*
 - 2) *And God's attitude towards disobedience is well illustrated through-out the Bible:*

a) Heb. 10:26-31

E. *Men are urged to respect & obey God's Authority.*

1) Matt. 7:21-23

2) 2 John 9-10

3) Gal. 1:6-9

CONCLUSION

1. One of the greatest lessons any child can learn is:
 - a) Respect for proper authority;
 - b) Obedience to that authority;
2. Jesus' life was an example of that respect for authority. (Heb. 5:8-9)
3. How about our lives as adults?
 - a) Do we recognize God's authority over us?
 - b) Do we do more than pay lip service to that authority?
 - c) Do we really want to show respect for Christ's headship?

