

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

† THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

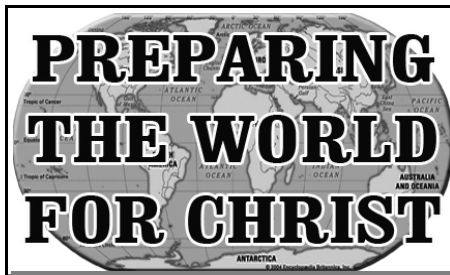
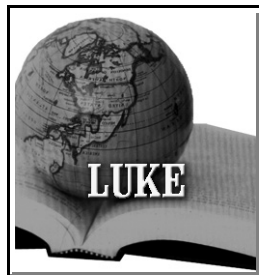
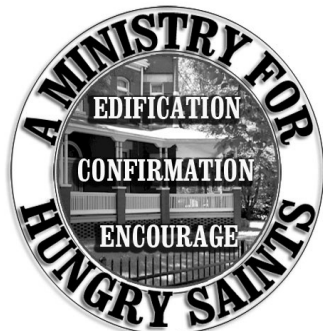
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 42

COMMENTARY ON: 12:1-21

THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE OF LIVING

In His teaching, Jesus gave the first priority to His chosen disciples. They were the ones to which He gave extensive explanations. In this section the Lord delivers a variety of teaching conducive to living by faith and making due preparations for leaving this world and standing before the Lord on the day of judgment. Giving heed to these words will cause the development of a certain perspective of life – a view that stands in glaring contradiction with the manner in which the world thinks. There are “beware’s,” “be not’s,” “whosoever’s,” and certain sure promises. The scope of Jesus’ words is staggering. He is teaching His disciples to think outside of the world’s limited view – with eternity in mind. Serious followers of Jesus will find that require considerable heavenly assistance to actually do what He requires. The glorious news is that life with Jesus and in Jesus is accompanied by all required resources.

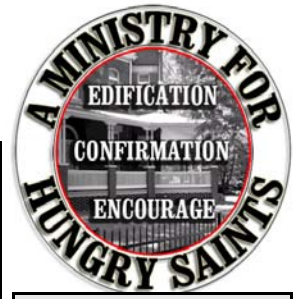


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 9/30/2016

Lesson Number 42



54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polyglot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ETH=Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV=Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LEW=Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MGI=Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT=Idiomatic Version; MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NOY=George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), ROT=Rotheram Bible (1999); RPT=Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH

A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE OF LIVING

LUKE 12:1 "In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. ²For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. ³Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. ⁴And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him. ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? ⁷But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. ⁸Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: ⁹But he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven. ¹¹And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: ¹²For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. ¹³And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. ¹⁴And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? ¹⁵And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. ¹⁶And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: ¹⁷And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? ¹⁸And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. ²⁰But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? ²¹So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12:1-21

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

In His teaching, Jesus gave the first priority to His chosen disciples. They were the ones to which He gave extensive explanations. In this section the Lord delivers a variety of teaching conducive to living by faith and making due preparations for leaving this world and standing

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ A PRESSING CROWD (12:1A)
- ▶ HIS DISCIPLES FIRST OF ALL (12:1B)
- ▶ BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES 12:1C)
- ▶ NOTHING COVERED THAT SHALL NOT BE REVEALED (12:2)
- ▶ SPOKEN IN DARKNESS HEARD IN LIGHT (12:3)
- ▶ WHOM TO NOT FEAR, AND WHOM TO FEAR (12:4-5)
- ▶ YE ARE OF MORE VALUE (12:6-7)
- ▶ TWO ESSENTIAL CONFESSIONS (12:8)
- ▶ TWO DENIALS TO AVOID (12:9)
- ▶ SOMETHING THAT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN (12:10)
- ▶ TAUGHT WHAT TO SAY WITHIN THE HOUR (12:11-12)
- ▶ A DOMESTIC PROBLEM (12:13-14)
- ▶ BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS (12:15)
- ▶ THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN (12:16-21)

before the Lord on the day of judgment. This is in full harmony with the manner and substance of what Jesus taught. He never became absorbed with the issues of ordinary life, or contemporary news events.

AN EXAMPLE

There was a time when a certain reprehensible deed of Pilate was brought up to Jesus. His response is worthy of note. *"There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* (Luke 13:3).

Then, to confirm that Jesus was fully aware of what was going on all about Him, He added, *"Or those*

eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:4-5).

The mission on which Jesus was sent (John 10:17-18), the words He was taught to say (John 8:28), and the works He was given to do (John 5:36-37; 9:3-4) did not allow for Him to become personally involved in the affairs of this world – even though He was keenly aware of them. This has proved a very difficult lesson for many professing Christian leaders to grasp. I have noticed over the years that when "Christians" become "entangled . . . with the affairs of this life" (2 Tim 2:4), those affairs seem to force Divine involvements into a secondary position.

GIVING HEED TO CHRIST'S WORDS

Giving heed to Christ's words will cause the development of a certain perspective of life – a view that stands in glaring contradiction to the manner in which the world thinks. Remember what Jesus said about **His words**.

- ⇒ *"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."* (Mat 24:35)
- ⇒ *"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."* (Mark 8:38)
- ⇒ *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."* (John 5:24)
- ⇒ *"If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed."* (John 8:31)
- ⇒ *"He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."* (John 12:48)

⇒ *"Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."* (John 14:23)

⇒ *"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."* (John 15:7)

Consider the kinds of words Jesus spoke.

- ⇒ BEWARE [warnings]: Matt 7:15; 10:17; 16:6,11-12; Mk 8:15; 12:38; Lk 12:1,15; 20:46
- ⇒ BE NOT [prohibitions]: Matt 6:8,16; 7:1; 10:13; 4:27; 17:7; 23:8; 24:6,20; 25:9; 28:10; Mk 5:36; 6:50; 13:18; 16:6; Lk 11:35; 12:4,26; 21:8-9; John 1:25; 6:20; 8:41; 20:27.
- ⇒ WHOSOEVER [applicable to all]: Matt 5:19,21,22,28, 31,32,18,21 . . . mentioned 82 times.
- ⇒ THINK NOT mental survey]: Matt 3:9; 5:17; 10:34; 24:44; Lk 12:40.
- ⇒ CONSIDER [pondering]: Matt 6:28; 12:24,27; John 11:50
- ⇒ SHALL BE [certainties]: Matt 5:4,6,9, 19,21,22 – mentioned 230 times.
- ⇒ WILL NOT, OR SHALL NOT [certainties]: Matt 4:4; 10:14; 11:6; 12:19,25 – mentioned 92 times.

There are "beware's," "be not's," "whosoever's," "think not's," "consider's," "will not's," "shall not's," and certain "sure promises." The scope of Jesus' words is staggering. Every kind of perspective is covered – every facet of life. When you remember the words of Jesus you are entering the most holy place, as it were. You are being exposed to critical matters that have to do with eternity, and the status and activity of men after death and throughout eternity. **No person can afford to ignore the words of Jesus!**

Jesus is teaching His disciples to think outside of the world's limited view – with eternity in mind. Serious followers of Jesus will find that it requires considerable heavenly assistance to actually do what He requires.

The glorious news is that life with Jesus and in Jesus is accompanied by all required resources – but none of them will be to our advantage if we do not consider them, think upon them, and build our lives on them. The magnitude of the words of Jesus, and receiving them, are encapsulated in two

salient words of the Master.

⇨ *"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."* (John 14:21)

⇨ *"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him."* (John 14:23)

Notice the benefits realized by

keeping, or retaining, the words of Jesus.

- ⇨ The Father will love that person.
- ⇨ Jesus will love that person.
- ⇨ Jesus will make Himself known to that person.
- ⇨ Jesus and the Father will make their abode in that person.

We listen to Jesus with these things in mind. However, we must remember that Jesus also said these things with certain realities in mind. They are not mere philosophical statements.

A PRESSING CROWD

LUKE 12:1A *"In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another . . ."*

IN THE MEAN TIME

"In the mean time . . ."

Other versions read, *"Under these circumstances,"* ^{NASB} *"Meanwhile,"* ^{NIV} *"At that time,"* ^{BBE} *"In those times,"* ^{DARBY} *"During that time,"* ^{NIRV} *"which times,"* ^{YLT} *"Amongst which things,"* ^{ROT} *"During [this time],"* ^{LEB} and *"By this time."* ^{MESSAGE}

At this time, Christ's had just finished passing severe judgment on the scribes and the Pharisees (Lk 11:51-52). The result was that His enemies were intensely active. It is written of them, *"And as He said these things (Lk 11:46-52) unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge Him vehemently, and to provoke Him to speak of many things: Laying wait for Him, and seeking to catch something out of His mouth, that they might accuse Him."* (Luke 11:53-54).

Still the ministry of Jesus marched forward. He was fulfilling the will of the Father, and nothing could effectively interfere with that work.

AN INNUMERABLE MULTITUDE

" . . . when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people . . ."

Other versions read, *"so many thousands of the multitude had gathered together,"* ^{NASB} *"a crowd of many thousands,"* ^{NIV} *"crowd gathered by the thousands,"* ^{NRSV} *"thousands upon thousands,"* ^{CEB} *"tens of thousands,"* ^{CJB} *"myriads of the crowd,"* ^{DARBY} and *"by the thousands."* ^{ISV}

The word translated *"innumerable multitude"* {moo-ree'-as} means, "plurality of ten thousand" – tens of thousands, or unlimited number." ^{THAYER}

THEY TRODE ONE UPON ANOTHER

" . . . insomuch that they trode one upon another . . ."

Other versions read, *"trampled one another,"* ^{NKJV} *"were stepping on one another,"* ^{NASB} *"they were crushing one another,"* ^{BBE} *"milling about and crushing each other."* ^{LIVING}

There is no record of injuries or deaths caused by this pressing crowd. I can only conclude that the Lord did not allow harm to take place while people were deliberately listening to Jesus. The same type of crowds were involved in the escape from Egypt,

passing through the Red Sea, meeting at the foot of Mount Sinai, and journeying in the wilderness. Aside from Divine judgments, those crowds were never the occasion for harm.

To assist us in obtaining some idea of the size of this crowd, here is a listing of the ten largest recorded gatherings in history. All of them are religious, and most of them in the part of the world in which Israel is located.

THE RECORDED TOP TEN GATHERINGS OF PEOPLE

(Taken from INFERIX)

<http://topyaps.com/top-10-worlds-largest-human-gathering-in-history>

Humans gather for a lot for different reasons. They assemble from all parts of the world for a holy pilgrimage; they gather to show support; they gather to show solidarity; and they also gather to fight for their rights. Whatever the reason, the past has seen some immense gatherings of men and women, and the numbers only continue to grow every year. One interesting thing to note here is that the largest gatherings of humans have been for a religious purpose. With that in mind, here are the top 10 world's largest human gathering in history.

10. World Youth Day 1995 in Manila, Philippines:

The world youth day celebration held from January 10-15, 1995, in Manila, Philippines was

attended by more than **4 million people**. The festival is a catholic one and it was the first edition of this festival held in an Asian nation. The Pope John Paul II presided over this festival which was not only attended by youth from across Asia but all parts of the world.

9. Funeral of Pope John Paul II, April 7, 2005, Rome:

The funeral had more than **4 million people** attending. Besides that the funeral also gathered the largest number of political leaders outside of the United Nations. Pope John Paul II was a loved public figure and his death mourned by people all across the world. His funeral is also the largest gathering of Christians in history. What was also rare about his death was the mourning by followers from different religions.

8. Sabarimala Pilgrimage, January 14, 2007, India:

Sabarimala is a world-renowned pilgrimage center for Hindus. The state of Kerala, India sees more than **40 million** devotees annually making it one of the most visited shrines in the world. The temple, known to be an ancient meditation place of the Lord Ayyappan, stands atop a hill about 450 meters high. On the January 14, 2007 more than **5 million** pilgrims thronged to get a glimpse of their deity.

7. Ayatollah Khomeini Funeral, Iran:

The funeral of Ayatollah Khomeini was held on the June 3, 1989, and was attended by more than 8 million mourners. Ayatollah Khomeini was a prominent Iranian religious and political leader. After the Iranian Revolution where he successfully helped overthrow the Shah, he went on to become the country's highest religious and political figure. He had immense national and international influence and was often heralded as the face of Islam itself in western popular culture.

6. Karbala, Iraq, 2009:

Karbala is one of the holiest cities for Shia Muslims in the world after their two most revered sites in Mecca and Medina. The city of Karbala is located around a hundred miles to the southwest of the capital city of Baghdad in Iraq. In 2009, more than **8 million** Shia Muslims visited the shrine of Imam Hussein. Every year millions of people visit the city but the gathering in 2009 was beyond anyone's imagination. This is one of the largest gatherings of Muslims recorded in history.

5. Mass Gathering of Red Guards, Beijing, 1966, China.

The mass gathering of Red Guards was an important event in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. The gathering of the Red Guards which consisted of people willing to take part in a revolution started on the August 18, 1966, and swelled to around **11 million** people over time. This is one of the largest political gatherings ever recorded.

4. The funeral of C.N. Annadurai in 1969, India:

C.N. Annadurai, otherwise known to his followers as Anna, was one of the most popular political leaders in South India. He was also a well-known public speaker and writer. He is known as one of the most charismatic political leaders of south India and his funeral which was held in the month of February 1969 was attended by more than 15 million people. This is also the world record for the highest number of people attending a funeral. He died of cancer two years after he had formed the first non congress government in his home state of Tamil Nadu. [://cache.wists.com](http://cache.wists.com)

3. Simhastha Kumbh Mela, April 5, 2004, India:

An estimate of more than 30 million people attended the Simhastha Kumbha Mela which was held in April 2004 at the city of Ujjain. This month-long event draws Hindus from all over the world to take part in this unique holy bathing festival. The Kumbh is one of the largest human gatherings in the history of the world.

2. Ardh Kumbh Mela, January 2007, India:

The Ardh Kumbh Mela in January 2007 was the second largest human gathering in history so far. A staggering 70 million pilgrims attended this gigantic fair which was held in the city of Allahabad. The Kumbh grows with every passing year as is evident from the ongoing Kumbh fair at Allahabad.

1. Maha Kumbh, January 2013, India:

Billed as the largest human gathering in the world, the Maha Kumbh has already been estimated to attract more than **100 million people**.

WHAT CAUSED SUCH A LARGE CROWD TO GATHER AROUND JESUS

How is it that such large crowd gathered around Jesus. Jesus explained it when He said to the multitudes. *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:44). And again, *"And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father"* (John 6:65). In the ultimate sense, coming to Jesus refers to believing on Him.

However, this was demonstrated in a visual way by the crowds that gathered to him. With the exception of John the Baptist, this simply was not the manner of Jewish leaders at that time. Later, when Peter and John were

being assaulted by the Jewish leaders, Gamaliel referred to other men the Jews had followed. The crowds were nothing to compare with those who followed Jesus –in the tens of thousands. *"For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed"* (Acts 5:36-37).

THE PROMISED INCREASE

This also accounts for the promised future expansive inquiry into the truth, and coming people to Christ.

⇨ *"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."* (Isa 2:2-3)

⇨ *"For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory."* (Isa 66:18)

⇨ *"And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."* (Micah 4:2)

⇨ *"And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many*

people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." (Zec 8:21-23)

⇒ *"They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."* (Isa 11:9)

⇒ *"For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."* (Hab 2:14)

These promises were all made after Israel was dispersed, and after the judgment of Judah. If Israel had been cut off, these promises would never have been uttered, for they all concerned the involvement of Israel.

CONFIRMED IN JESUS MINISTRY
As you can see from the ministry of Jesus, God is able to produce a climate in which men will seek the Lord, and do so aggressively – just as is seen in the ministry of John the

Baptist. and our text. Multitudes flocked to Jesus, as well as to the harbinger of Jesus, John the Baptist. This was something for which the Jews had never been noted. In fact, they had slain the prophets that had been sent to them. In all the history of the Jews, there was never a time when they flocked to the prophets – any of them!

Here, then, God interrupted the wayward manners of the people. Suddenly, the people were no longer content with the academic approaches of their teachers. They saw that Jesus did not teach *"as the scribes,"* but as one who "had authority" (Matt 7:29).

HIS DISCIPLES FIRST OF ALL

^{1B} . . . *He began to say unto His disciples first of all . . . "*

Other versions read, *"first to His disciples,"* ^{NIV} *"His disciples first."* ^{RSV}

The word translated *"first"* {pro'-ton}, means "first in time or place 1a) in any succession of things or persons 2) first in rank 2a) influence, honor 2b) chief 2c) principal," ^{THAYER} "of rank and value first (of all), foremost, chief, most important of all." ^{FRIBERG}

Whether you read the text as stating He first addressed His disciples, or that He first said to His disciples, the meaning is basically the same. His first words were spoken to His disciples.

This has more significance than simply the sequence with which Jesus spoke. This was a teaching that applied specifically and particularly to His disciples – those closest to Him. **They were always His focus.** He told them things He simply did not tell anyone else. Thus we read:

⇒ *"And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,"* (Matt 20:17)

⇒ *"But Jesus withdrew Himself with*

His disciples to the sea . . . " (Mark 3:7)

⇒ *"And He called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits."* (Mark 6:7)

⇒ *"And straightway He entered into a ship with His disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha."* Mark 8:10)

⇒ *"And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there He sat with his disciples."* (John 6:3)

⇒ *"Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with His disciples."* (John 11:54)

⇒ *"But without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples."* (Mark 4:34)

⇒ *"And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him."* (Luke 22:14)

⇒ *"And He said unto them, With desire*

I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:" (Luke 22:15)

⇒ *"Then after that saith He to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again."* (John 11:7)

⇒ *"This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to his disciples, after that He was risen from the dead."* (John 21:14)

You will search in vain for a single time when Jesus left His disciples to speak to the multitudes – or to anyone else. The only time He left them is when He was devoting Himself to prayer – and even then, He often took them with Him (Luke 9:18,28; 11:1; Matt 14:32-33).

The obvious preference of Jesus for His disciples, the focus of Almighty God upon the righteous, and the exclusive indwelling of the Holy Spirit within the sons of God, has been greatly obscured by the emphasis of the nominal church. The people upon whom the attention of Jesus and the eyes God were focused are the neglected people by accepted Christian leaders. As a consequence most professing Christians are by no means

noted for their growth up into Christ in all things. Although it may not be categorically said, spiritual growth is generally considered by many to be sinning less, or making some progress in overcoming the world. However, that is not an appropriate understanding of growth. Growing up into Christ in all things is becoming more and more like Jesus – being *“partakers of the Divine nature”* – (2 Pet 1:3).

There is a tendency extant within the church for preachers and teachers to leave the church in order to, as they say *“reach the lost.”* While I would not for a moment entertain the thought that it was not altogether right to strive to preach the Gospel to every creature, I decry that this can be properly done when the church is being neglected. **Effective outreach depends upon the**

prayers and support of the churches – strong churches (Rom 15:30; Col 4:3; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; Heb 13:18). Paul also took fellow laborers with him from the churches (Acts 20:34; 21:16; 27:2; 1 Cor 16:3-4; Gal 1:2; 2:1,3; Phil 2:22; 4:3,15,21; 1 Thess 3:2; 2 Tim 4:11; Tit 3:15; Phile 1:23-24).

The saying, *“Let us get outside the walls of the church”* is a foolish and unlearned statement. It assumes that what is inside the walls is powerful, and will do something when it is released in the world. What people do not realize is that the current state of Christendom is actually the result of what is within the walls of the modern church getting out. It *“gets out”* by means of the members of the church who are so much like the world, they cannot be used for

spiritually profitable purposes by God. The people of God – the REAL people of God – are described as *“epistles of Christ – “known and read of all men”* (2 Cor 3:2-3). Until those epistles are actually written, those within the church cannot possibly exercise any effective influence for the LORD.

Christ’s disciples had priority! All of the epistles are written to them. They are the only ones who were told of the reason and effects of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Doctrinal explanations and expositions are given only to Christ’s disciples. There is a remarkable consistency in this matter. **Untaught disciples are a living contradiction of the Savior Himself, and of the salvation of God.** That kind of condition is a glaring contradiction of the salvation of God.

BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

“^{1C} Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

BEWARE!

“Beware ye . . .”

Other versions read, *“Be on your guard against,”*^{NIV} *“Have nothing to do with,”*^{BBE} *“watch out for,”*^{CEB} *“Take heed to your selves,”*^{GENEVA} *“Protect yourselves from,”*^{MIT} *“More than anything else, beware,”*^{LIVING} *“Be careful of.”*^{IE}

“BEWARE!” – This word is found twenty-eight times in Scripture” twelve times from Genesis thru Malachi, and sixteen times from Matthew thru Second Peter.

It is a solemn warning that speaks of danger that is not apparent. It is something that is contaminating, defiling, and leads to Divine rejection. We are admonished to *“beware”* of something the devil uses, and it is found mostly in religious areas, and among religious people.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES

“...of the leaven of the

Pharisees...”

This kind of leaven was also found in Herod. Mark 8:15 reads of Jesus charging, or giving the following orders: *“Watch out! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod”*^{NASB} (Mark 8:15). Herod was a pretender, feigning interest in John the Baptist (Mk 6:20), and in Jesus Himself (Lk 9:9; 23:8).

The malignancy of this leaven cannot be overlooked. Simply being around those who possess it is attended with jeopardy. That is why Jesus warned His disciples to *“beware”* of their influence.

HYPOCRISY

“ . . . which is hypocrisy.”

Jesus defines *“the leaven of the Pharisees”* – it was *“hypocrisy.”*

As it is used in Scripture, the meaning of the word *“hypocrisy”* is, *“the acting of a stage player,”*^{THAYER} *“pretense, hypocrisy, dissimulation,”*^{FRIBERG} *“To give an impression of having certain purposes or motivations, while in reality*

having quite different ones - 'to pretend, to act hypocritically,”^{LOUW-NIDA} *“outward show.”*^{GINGRICH}

Just as there are professional actors in the entertainment field, there are religious actors in the Christian world – men who are feigning themselves to be “Christians,” JUST AS THE Pharisees feigned themselves to be godly teachers. Jesus wants His disciples to *“beware”* of such frauds. He warns them because such men are not apparent. They are like beautiful tombs that appear as though they were houses to live in, but are actually *“full of dead men’s bones”* (Matt 23:27).

Today there is a system of religion extant which encourages and approves of hypocrisy. In our time, few people think in terms of professing Christians being serious, devoted, and single-hearted. Many people actually think such people are really pretenders. That is because of the prevalence of actors in the church world.

There are “Christian” educational institutions in place that provide a means for hypocrites to develop and

infiltrate the church. It is not that this is the aim of these institutions, but by conforming to the desires of the religious masses, this is actually what they end up doing. Not a few of these schools have considerable trouble with immorality in the student body, and occasionally it even surfaces among the faculty. Further, the churches are, for the most part, so weak and uninformed that, even though they may not desire such leaders, they cannot detect religious pretenders.

The Divine purging of the early church of Ananias and Sapphira caused outsiders to fear to be identified with the church. *"And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them"* (Acts 5:13). In our day, it may well be appropriate to ask the Lord to purge the church of those who have infiltrated its ranks, but are actually children of the wicked one.

THE REASON FOR COMING OUT OF BABYLON THE GREAT

One of the principle reasons for coming out of Babylon the Great – making an exit from an environment that simply is not what it pretends to be – is its defiling effects. Read how the Spirit describes that environment – Revelation 17:1-6.

- ⇒ *"The great whore"* (17:1).
- ⇒ The *"kings of the earth"* have committed fornication with her (17:2a).
- ⇒ *"The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication"* (17:2b).
- ⇒ She was in a wilderness, where nothing fruitful grew (17:3a).

- ⇒ A woman *"full of names of blasphemy"* (17:3b).
- ⇒ She was arrayed like a queen (17:4a).
- ⇒ She was holding a cup *"full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication"* (Rev 17:4).
- ⇒ She wore the name *"MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH"* (Rev 17:5).
- ⇒ She was drunk with the *"blood of the martyrs of Jesus"* (17:6).
- ⇒ All nations drank of the *"wine of the wrath of her fornications"* (18:3).
- ⇒ *"The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies"* (18:3).

What a monstrosity! It is nothing less than Satan's fabrication of the church. He has raised up *"another Jesus"* (2 Cor 11:4), or *"false Christs"* (Matt 24:24), and also a false and corrupt church. To fail to heed this call is a serious matter. God is going to judge this perverse representation of the church, and whoever is in it at its time of judgment will be brought down with her.

Accordingly, now, the call comes forth from heaven: *"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."* (Rev

18:4-5). Even if you do not understand all that the Lord has said about Babylon, the very tone of His words tells you that you should seek to know more about her – at least enough to separate from this spiritual prostitute.

First, know that this institution is flying under the banner of "Christian." We know this is the case. Because she is a *"whore"* and a *"fornicator,"* and that is something the heathen world is never called. **She is noted for her unfaithfulness and misrepresentation of God and Christ.** When James referred to some of his readers as *"adulterers and adulteresses"* (James 4:4), he was not addressing the Pilates and Herods of the world, or godless philosophers like those in Athens. He was writing to professing believers who were unfaithful to God, and playing the harlot with the world. The point is that they had to leave God to do this – like a wife leaves her husband to live unlawfully with another man.

Secondly, Babylon cannot be reformed, else her judgment would not be announced, and a call to come out of her would not have been issued. O, there have been attempts to reform her – but none of them have ever worked. She is a whore and a fornicator at heart, and she cannot possibly be changed. Thus her judgment is announced long before it will be carried out. That judgment is an unwavering Divine determination.

All of that is the Lord's response to hypocrisy! Now, the people of God who have aligned themselves with such a fruitless and powerless group, must *"come out!"* That order has been issued from heaven, and must be heeded. It is their business to understand this.

NOTHING COVERED THAT SHALL NOT BE REVEALED

"² For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known."

NOTHING COVERED

"For there is nothing covered, that

shall not be revealed . . ."

Other versions read, *"nothing concealed that will not be disclosed,"* NIV *"nothing covered up that will not be uncovered,"* NRSV *"nothing concealed*

that will not be revealed," NAB *"Everything that is secret will be brought out into the open,"* NIRV and *"Nothing is [so closely] covered up that it will not be revealed."* AMPLIFIED These are most arresting words.

As Jesus nears the time of His appointed death, the animosity of the Jewish leaders begins to accelerate – Given O. Blakely

Here the emphasis is on the things that have been subtly covered up, thus leaving the impression that the person involved is a “Christian,” being exposed, or made public. This kind of thing has happened in our day, when public ministers have been found guilty of adultery. Whether men wish to acknowledge it or not, a religious setting has been created in which sin cannot be recognized. This is what allows for things that have been hidden from the eyes and understanding of men. At this point, the comprehension of these things is not the point, but the

inability of men to comprehend them.

NEITHER HID

“ . . . *neither hid, that shall not be known.*” Other versions read, “*that will not become known,*”^{CJB} “*Everything that is hidden will be uncovered,*”^{NIRV} “*everything now hidden will be made clear,*”^{NJB} “*It will become as evident as yeast in dough,*”^{LIVING} “*anything private which is not going to be made public.*”^{PHILLIPS}

This is not simply another way of saying what has just been stated. Here,

the emphasis is on people perceiving and understanding what has been exposed, or uncovered. There will be no mystery about it, and no need for an interpretation of what is set before the people. However, if they do not perceive these things before God exposes them, they shall have been deceived by them, and thus be judged for it. The awareness of the fact that God will publically judge such people is reason enough to beware of their leavening influence now. **Those whom God will condemn are not to be our friends.**

SPOKEN IN DARKNESS, HEARD IN LIGHT

“³ Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

Also found in Matthew 10:26-27; Mark 4:22, Paul alludes to the same truth in First Corinthians 14:25.

THINGS SPOKEN IN DARKNESS

“Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness . . .”

Other versions read, “*said in the dark,*”^{NASB} “*speak after dark,*”^{MIT} and “*whisper one thing in private and preach the opposite in public.*”^{MESSAGE}

As regards Christ Himself, there had been plots against Jesus – and they would continue. It is written:

⇒ *“And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.”* (Mark 3:6).

⇒ *“And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.”* (Luke 6:11).

⇒ *“Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against Him, how they might destroy Him.”* (Matt 12:14).

⇒ *“And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him; for they feared the people.”* (Luke 22:2).

⇒ *“When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put im to death”* (Matt 27:1).

These were things that were “spoken in darkness” – not in the light, but in the darkness! **There is a certain spiritual environment in which corrupt things can be spoken!** If you have been a believer for some time, you already know of such environments – places where foolish, corrupt, and defiling things can be freely uttered. **We should duly note that no one ever attempted to spread or promote corrupt doctrine in the presence of Jesus.** Such attempts do not take place “in the light.”

HEARD IN THE LIGHT

“...shall be heard in the light...”

Other versions read, “*heard in the daylight,*”^{NIV} “*published in the light,*”^{DOUAY} “*heard when it is day,*”^{CEV} “*be heard in broad daylight,*”^{GNB} and “*shall be heard and listened to in the light.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The environment of light is for hearing as well as seeing. The idea is that what was said will be heard

clearly, together with all of its intentions and implications. All innuendoes and veiled meanings will be stripped away, and the true intentions of the speaker will be made known. The exposure does not take place in the darkness, but “in the light.” If you have ever attempted to correct someone “in the darkness” – which is the native habitat for the devil and his hordes (Lk 22:53; Eph 6:12; Col 1:13) you already know the futility of such efforts. Ultimately, this unveiling will take place when Jesus returns in all of His glory, and the day of judgment commences.

SPOKEN IN CLOSETS

“ . . . and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets . . .”

Other versions read, “*spoken in the ear in inner rooms,*”^{NKJV} “*whispered in the inner rooms,*”^{NASB} “*whispered behind closed doors,*”^{NRSV} “*said secretly inside the house,*”^{BBE} and “*whispered in [people’s] ears and behind closed doors.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

These are things that involve others, but are not spoken directly to them. Gossip, evil plots, and the likes are included. Examples of this kind of communication are as follows:

⇒ CONSPIRACY AGAINST JOSEPH. *“And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now*

therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams." (Gen 37:19-20)

⇒ CONSPIRACY AGAINST JEREMIAH. "Then said they, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah; for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come, and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words" (Jer 18:18).

⇒ CONSPIRACY AGAINST JESUS. "After two days was the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people" (Mark 14:1-2).

PROCLAIMED UPON THE HOUSETOPS

"... shall be proclaimed upon the housetops."

Other versions read, "proclaimed from the roofs," ^{NIV} "made public from the house-tops," ^{BBE} "announced from the rooftops," ^{CEB} and "preached on the housetops." ^{DOUAY}

The public nature of the revelations is underscored. All secrecy will be discarded, and nothing will be hidden. As it is written, the "counsels of the heart" will be made manifested and judged publicly (1 Cor 4:5).

To confirm the reality of this Divine appointment, ponder some of the secret things that have already been made known throughout history – things that were not intended to be made known by the guilty parties. Yet, even now, the whole world knows. Here is a sample of them.

- ⇒ Adam and Eve eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 3:6).
- ⇒ Cain killing Abel (Gen 4:8).
- ⇒ The sin of Onan (Gen 38:9-10).
- ⇒ Aaron making a golden calf (Ex 32:1-4,35).

⇒ Achan taking a Babylonish garment, a wedge of gold, and several pieces of silver from Jericho when Israel plundered it (Josh 7:21-24).

⇒ David committing sin with Bathsheba and arranging for her husband to be slain in battle (2 Sam 11:3-117).

⇒ Judas arranging for the arrest of Jesus (Matt 26:15-16).

⇒ Ananias and Sapphira lying about their gift to their gift to the early church (Acts 5:1-10).

⇒ The evil Alexander the coppersmith did to Paul (2 Tim 4:14).

⇒ The wicked intentions and words of Diotrefes against the John the apostle made known (3 John 1:10).

None of these things were intended by the people involved to be made known. Yet, they were, for the Lord has determined to "both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor 4:5).

WHOM TO NOT FEAR, AND WHOM TO FEAR

⁴ And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵ But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."

MY FRIENDS

"And I say unto you My friends . . ."

Other versions read, "My beloved ones," ^{ETH} and "Dear friends." ^{NLT} However the majority of the versions read "My friends."

The Greek word translated "friend" {fee'-los}, means "an associate, opposed to 'servant,' he who associates familiarly with one, a companion," ^{THAYER}

"congenial associate, close companion," ^{FRIBERG} "a person for whom there is affection or personal regard." ^{LOUW-NIDA}

This is not a casual acquaintance, but one who is close, and is a companion in what the one who has befriended him is doing. In short, Jesus said this to the people who were following Him.

Jesus once said to His twelve disciples, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14). Therefore, Jesus is now speaking to those most close to Him, and not the general multitude. He singled these people out, and addressed something special to them.

BE NOT AFRAID OF THEM

"... Be not afraid of them that kill the body . . ."

Other versions read, "Have no fear of those who may put the body to death," ^{BBE} "don't be terrified by those who can kill the body," ^{CEB} "you don't need to be afraid of those who kill the body," ^{GWN} "Don't be bluffed into silence or insincerity by the threats of religious bullies. True, they can kill you, but then what can they do?" ^{MESSAGE}

For those in the United States, this warning is becoming more and more relevant. We must remember that the One saying this had power when He was upon earth, but since His resurrection, He has been given "all

power in heaven and earth" (Matt 28:18). He speaks as the One who is over those who intend to do us evil.

AFTER THAT HAVE NOTHING THEY CAN DO

" . . . and after that have no more that they can do. . . "

Other versions read, "can do no more," ^{NIV} "are not able to do any more." ^{GENEVA}

There is in these words the indication that man's existence extends beyond the veil of death. As long as we are in this world, there is the reality of enmity between the godly and the ungodly, the righteous and the unrighteous, the children of God and the children of the wicked one. **However, after death, we will never again face the enmity and hostility of the wicked, or of their leader, Satan.** The righteous will see them, and will even judge them – but they will have dominion over them until they are thrust out from the presence of the Lord. God will judge the world, and will do it through the Lord Jesus. Jesus, in turn will do it through the saints. As it is written, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest

matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" (1 Cor 6:2-3). Daniel prophesied of this time: "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; **Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom**" (Dan 7:21-22). Through his false Messiah, it will appear that the devil has completely overcome the saints (Dan 7:21; Rev 13:7). That is the reign of Babylon the Great, the great "whore" (Rev 17:1-15; 19:2). Although she became "drunk with the blood of the saints," and with "the blood of the martyrs" (Rev 17:6), her wicked reign does not extend beyond the perimeter of death. At the judgment, however, "the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever . . . and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom" (Dan 7:18, 22). There will be nothing more that the wicked can do, but there will be a whole lot more that the saints will do! Therefore, do not fear those who appear to have power over you now! Their usurpation will be short-lived.

I WILL FOREWARN YOU

" . . . But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him."

Other versions read, "I will show you," ^{NKJV} "I will warn you," ^{NASB} "I will make clear to you," ^{BEBE} and "I will tell you." ^{NJB}

The word translated "forewarn" means, "to show by placing under (i.e. before) the eyes); to show by words and arguments, i.e. to teach," ^{THAYER} "strictly show secretly, give a glimpse of," ^{FRIBERG} and "show, prove, set forth." ^{GINGRICH}

There are things that can only be known by a Divine word. The mind and heart are the only things that can grasp a word. The eyes, ears, touch, and other senses cannot detect the truth of a word. The mind and the heart alone can grasp it, and that is only by Divine appointment.

Those who realize this, place a high priority on hearing, which is the means through which faith comes to us (Rom 10:17), and faith enables men to be persuaded and possess assurance. Let him that has ears to hear, HEAR! Those who hear will learn. That is the appointed means of grasping truth.

YE ARE OF MORE VALUE

"⁶ Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?⁷ But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

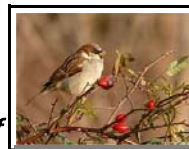
SOLD FOR TWO FARTHING

It looks as though the five sparrows are left to the whims of men, who will sell them for a minuscule two farthings. Other versions read, "two copper coins," ^{NKJV} "two cents," ^{NASB} "two pennies," ^{NIV} "two pence," ^{ASV} "next to nothing," ^{CJB} and "two small coins," ^{NAB} "two assars." ^{YLT}

The point here is not the exact amount, but the smallness of the evaluation of five sparrows. They simply were not considered to be of much value.

NOT ONE OF THEM IS FORGOTTEN

The Almighty God who created the sparrows does not forget them – even five of them. Above that, Jesus affirms of God the Father, "**not one of them is forgotten before God!**" If you have ever wondered if God is interested in small details, ponder His view of a



single little sparrow – one of the smallest of all birds. Yet, our heavenly Father does not forget a single one of them. It is estimated that today there are "billions" of sparrows in existence.

Matthew adds, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (Matt 10:29).

EVEN THE VERY HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD ARE NUMBERED

This type of consideration goes beyond human comprehension. Not forgetting a sparrow, and knowing the count of hairs on a man's head are not

to be compared. The idea here is there is no aspect of human life that is not known and managed by the God of heaven. Appearance itself may not seem to justify such a conclusion, but I know of no other way this text can be viewed. Life is not ruled by circumstance or happenstance, and you must not think of life as though it is characterized by randomness!

YOU ARE OF MORE VALUE

"Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

What a comparison – man with *"many sparrows!"* **The point is that God's care of man is more detailed than His care of sparrows** – which is rather amazing for its detail.

In another place Jesus said, *"And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days"*

(Matt 12:12).

Is it really possible for men to be more mindful of the beasts of the earth than of their fellow man? Indeed it is! What man of sound mind would neglect to feed the animals in his care. Yet, there are professed shepherds of the flock of God that are allowing *"the flock of God"* to starve before their very eyes. Such men will be judged by God, and that judgment will not be according to their reputation among men. Their failure to feed the sheep will be judged.

TWO ESSENTIAL CONFESSIONS

"⁸ Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God."

In this word, the Lord Jesus will teach us to live with the future in mind. By "the future," I mean **AFTER** Jesus comes the second time (Heb 9:28; Matt 16:27; Lk 9:26) **AFTER** the dead are raised (John 5:28-29; 1 Cor 15:52), and **AFTER** the present heavens and earth have passed away (2 Pet 3:10),, as well as at the day of judgment (Rev 20:12-13).

WHOSOEVER SHALL CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN

"Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men . . ."

Other versions read, *"acknowledges Me,"*^{NIV} *"gives witness to Me,"*^{BBE} *"acknowledges Me in the presence of others,"*^{CJB} *"openly declares himself for Me in the presence*

of human beings,"^{NJB} *"acknowledges Me publicly here on earth,"*^{NLT} and *"declares openly [speaking out freely] and confesses that he is My worshiper and acknowledges Me before men"*^{AMPLIFIED} (Also, Matthew 10:32-33).

This is speaking of a confession before enemies – those who have no allegiance to Jesus, and are opposed to those who do. **Confessing Christ is not only acknowledging who He is, but plainly declaring the individual has sided with Jesus, embracing both His Person and His cause.** It is admitting to being a true follower of Jesus, and therefore, not of this world.

HIM SHALL THE SON OF MAN ALSO CONFESS

" . . . him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God."

And what will Jesus do for the person who is not ashamed to confess and acknowledge Him before men? He

will acknowledge that person *"before the angels of God."* That is significant, because the angels are *"the reapers"* who will gather the saints together for the day of judgment (Matt 13:38-49). Speaking of the last day, Jesus said, *"And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And HE SHALL SEND HIS ANGELS with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"* (Mat 24:31). That is the initial confession of the saints before the angels of God. He will also confess them when all of the nations stand before Him and *"He shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."* (Matt 25:33). What lamentation will then arise from those who chose to be ashamed of Jesus in a wicked and slothful generation! Now is the time to side with Jesus!

TWO DENIALS TO AVOID

"⁹ But he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the angels of God."

Other versions read, *"disowns Me,"*^{NIV} *"says before men that he has*

no knowledge of Me,"^{BBE} *"tell others that they don't know Me,"*^{GWN} *"rejects Me before others,"*^{CEB} and *"disowns and denies and rejects and refuses to acknowledge Me before men."*^{AMPLIFIED}

When Peter was being sifted by Satan to the optimum of Satan's ability, he denied Christ three times before men: *"Woman, I know Him not"* (Lk 22:57); *"Man, I am not"* [His disciple] (Lk 22:58); and *"Man, I know not what*

thou sayest" [to Peter being a Galilean] (Lk 22:60). However, Jesus had "prayed for" Peter, that his faith would not fail (Lk 22:32) – and it did **not** fail! It only took Jesus turning to face Peter, and looking at him, and "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly" (Luke 22:62). Never again did Peter disown Christ with his mouth! When he conducted himself unwisely in Antioch, withdrawing from the Gentiles because he "feared them which were of the circumcision," he did not disown Jesus with his mouth, but responded favorably to Paul's rebuke (Gal 2:11-16).

Elsewhere Jesus said, "But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt 10:33). And again, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:26). Again, it is written, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us" 2 Tim 2:12).

One of the traits of false prophets is their denial of the Lord who bought them: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Pet 2:1).

John also clarifies the status of those who deny the Son of God: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father . . ." (1 John 2:23). That means "the Father" is not for such a person. He is not pledged to uphold or direct the person who denies His Son – whoever it is.

If any person imagines that it will be better for them to not confess the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ before mere men, they must ponder how Jesus will react to that imagination on the day of judgment. This world is the place where Jesus is to be acknowledged.

It is true, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men

count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:9). However, men must take care not to misrepresent this statement. In it, God is not referring to all men in general. That is not the subject He is addressing. This is speaking about His people – those who are in Christ Jesus. The Spirit speaks with remarkable clarity. "But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering **TO US-WARD**, not willing that any [of "us"] should perish, but that all [of us] should come to repentance" (2 Pet 3:8-9). **God has made no promise to save all men!** In fact, He has told us that all men will NOT be saved – some will perish in total ostracization from God (Matt 7:23; 25:30,41; Luke 13:27-28; John 3:18; Rev 20:15).

GOD'S LONGSUFFERING

When addressing the subject of the "longsuffering" of God, the saints are often the preeminent consideration.

⇒ **1 TIMOTHY 1:16:** "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting."

The longsuffering of God is not set forth as an incentive for the ungodly to repent, but is rather an explanation why the saved were able to repent.

⇒ **1 PETER 3:20-:** "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now **save us** (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good

conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The longsuffering of God accounts for the adequacy of the time the saints spend preparing for eternity, like it accounted for the time Noah was given to complete the building of the ark.

⇒ **2 PETER 3:15-17:** "And **account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."**

Again the longsuffering of God accounts for His patience with the saints as they go about making themselves ready for being married to Christ. God has as much hatred for sin as He has ever had. However, His longsuffering, sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ, allows Him to be patient with us. However, we are warned not to exploit that longsuffering.

As long as we are in the world, and in our present bodies, we sorely require the longsuffering of the Lord. There are things about our natural constitution that are serious liabilities. Were it not for the longsuffering of God, we should have dropped into hell long ago. But because of the sanctifying and atoning death of Christ, God has graciously forgiven us, imputed righteousness to us, and given us an Intercessor and access to Himself. Jesus is really bring us to glory, and is doing so as our "Captain" (Heb 2:10).

In apostolic doctrine considerable time is spent emphasizing the necessity of preparing ourselves to ultimately confront the Lord to give an account of ourselves to Him. Living by faith, walking in the Spirit, resisting the devil, and fighting the good fight of faith are all involved in that preparation. We dare not be slothful in fulfilling these aspects of newness of life.

SOMETHING THAT WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN

“¹⁰ And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.”

Matthew’s Gospel

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” (Matt 12:31-32)

Men are prone to speak loosely about sin—i.e. “God can forgive any sin,” “as long as you can repent, you can be forgiven,” “no sin is so bad it cannot be forgiven,” “no sin is unforgivable,” “the unforgivable sin is rejecting Jesus,” etc. All of this has been fostered by the devil and his hordes to neutralize man’s view of sin. In this text, Jesus provides enough clarification about sin to promote valid and sober thought on the subject.

SPEAKING A WORD AGAINST THE SON OF MAN

“And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him . . .”

Other versions read, “says something against the Son of Man,”^{CJB} “speaks against the Son of Man,”^{NLT} and “makes a statement or speaks a word against the Son of Man.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The words “it shall be forgiven him” presume repentance, and recovery from the snare of the devil.

HIM THAT BLASPHEMETH AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

“ . . . but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.”

Other versions read, “says evil words against the Holy Spirit,”^{BBE} “speaks injuriously against the Holy Spirit,”^{DARBY} “whoever against the Spirit of Holiness shall blaspheme,”^{ETH} “who dishonors the Holy Spirit,”^{GWN} “reproach the Holy Spirit,”^{MRD} “to the Holy Spirit did speak evil,”^{YLT} “insults the Holy Spirit,”^{CEB} and “speaketh profanely,”^{ROT} and “blasphemes against the Holy Spirit [that is, whoever intentionally comes short of the reverence due the Holy Spirit]”^{AMPLIFIED}

Some of the versions do not represent the verse with the kind of tone that is evident in Jesus’ sayings. Such representations as “says evil words against the Holy Spirit,”^{BBE} “speaks injuriously against the Holy Spirit,”^{DARBY} “who dishonors the Holy Spirit,”^{GWN} “reproach the Holy Spirit,”^{MRD} “to the Holy Spirit did speak evil,”^{YLT} “insults the Holy Spirit,”^{CEB} and “speaketh profanely,”^{ROT} are not strong enough.

Mark’s Gospel

“Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.” (Mark 3:28-30).

Notice that Mark records Jesus said this “**Because** they said, He hath an unclean spirit.” He did not specifically say that was blaspheming the Holy Spirit. It was, however, headed in that direction. Thus Jesus added, “is in danger of eternal damnation.” While I am not willing to be contentious about it, I do not know the purpose for precisely defining the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. If there is no forgiveness for it, why would it be specifically, defined? Apparently blaspheming the Holy Spirit is not something that is reached suddenly, or by a hasty word. It seems to me that it is the conclusion of a

hardening process from which recovery is not possible – like Hebrews 6:6.

The word “blaspheme” is a transliteration (letter-for-letter translation) of the Greek word “blasphemo.” That means there is no English equivalent for this word, therefore a new English word was created for it. The lexical meaning of the word is “to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate; absolutely; Specifically, of those who by contemptuous speech intentionally come short of the reverence due to God or to sacred things,”^{THAYER} and “insult,”^{FRIBERG} “to speak against someone in such a way as to harm or injure his or her reputation.”^{LOUW-NIDA} Even these definitions, however, seem to be too mild for the text.

This kind of blasphemy comes from a heart that is beyond recovery – from a person whom God has turned over to reprobacy. The point of this saying is that an evil heart of unbelief, hardness of heart, and loose speech bring about a state of degeneracy – a downward plummet, as it were. Men must maintain sensitive and tender hearts – ones in which it is “hard to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5).

This is why we are admonished, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Heb 3:12). This is why we are warned, “exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13). This is the reason for rebuke, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It is why edification and comfort are essential.

The heart must be kept tender, sensitive, and able to be touched. It is imperative that we do not grow hardened.

PERILOUS TIMES

Perilous times are introduced when the professing church has the traits of the world (2 Tim 3:1-5). The presence of these traits has an anaesthetizing effect upon the human spirit. A downward spiral is set in motion that will, if not aborted, mandate

condemnation to the lake of fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41). In such a case, the people have

become more like the devil than like God, in whose image they were created. In such a case, sin obliterated that image! O, that men

were more aware of the power of sin! It sets spiritual erosion in motion which can finally be unstoppable.

TAUGHT WHAT TO SAY WITHIN THE HOUR

“¹¹ And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: ¹² For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”

We learn here that Jesus did not, and still does not, choose His servants upon the basis of natural aptitude. Although we are not provided with information relative to the occupations of all of the apostles, we have been given some information.

FISHERMEN. Four of the men were fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Matt 4:18-22).

TAX COLLECTOR. Matthew (Matt 9:9).

ZEALOT. Simon (Matt 10:4, ^{NASB}), also translated “Canaanite.” ^{KJV} The term “zealot” means “a zealot in general, especially in behalf of Jewish law and institutions.” ^{McCLINTOK & STRONG’S}

PHARISEE. Paul (Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil 3:5).

As is obvious, there was no common occupation among the apostles. Yet, Jesus told the twelve, “But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My name’s sake.” (Luke 21:12). Years later, the glorified Christ told Ananias, who was chosen to inform Paul of his calling, heal him of blindness, and that he might be filled with the Holy Spirit, “But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15). The only thing that was common was that they were Jews – devout Jews – and none of them had been accustomed to addressing “kings.” Paul had not been noted for

speaking to Gentiles. With the possible exception of Paul, none of them were noted for verbal presentations. Even with Paul, he would be required to do something he had never done before – speak before kings and Gentiles.

WHEN THEY BRING YOU

“And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers . . .”

Other versions read, “magistrates and authorities,” ^{NKJV} “rulers and authorities,” ^{NASB} “ruling powers and the authorities,” ^{CJB} “rulers and Princes,” ^{GENEVA} “chiefs and men in authority.” ^{MRD}

This was the kind of experience for which they could not prepare themselves. Their experience could not be a reference point, because they had never stood before such people prior to this commission. First, the Lord Jesus tells them what NOT to do.

TAKE NO THOUGHT WHAT YE SHALL SAY

“. . . take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say. . .”

Other versions read, “do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say,” ^{NKJV} “do not become anxious about how or what you should speak in your defense, or what you should say,” ^{NASB} “don’t worry about how to defend yourself or what you should say,” ^{CEB} and “do not be anxious [beforehand] how you shall reply in defense or what you are to say.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is the sort of thing faith can handle. As soon as the word of Jesus is believed, enablement is on the way!

IN THE SAME HOUR

“. . . For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”

Other versions read, “the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what needs to be said,” ^{NLT} “For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour and moment what [you] ought to say.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

What is needed by the children of God is not given in storable quantities, or in escrow. It is given like the manna was given to Israel – when it is needed. There are things that are needed daily, and that is why they are received daily–i.e. “Give us this day . . .” Solomon spoke wisely when he said, “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth” (Prov 27:1). James developed the thought further: “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:13-15).

When it comes to unscheduled confrontations related to life in Christ Jesus, every believer is doing right to rely on the Lord doing precisely what Jesus here affirms. When required, He will direct the person concerning an appropriate response. Of course, this postulates alertness and sensitivity on the part of the one being directed actually walking in the Spirit.

This kind of word requires faith on the part of the hearer. The only thing th individual can actually do is trust that the Lord will do exactly what He has said. Further, this applies to circumstance where we have no knowledge of the involvements being faced. In such a case we must believe this word: “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Prov 3:5-6).

A DOMESTIC PROBLEM

¹³ And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. ¹⁴ And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?"

ONE OF THE COMPANY SAID

"And one of the company said unto Him . . ."

Here was a man, presumed to be relatively young, who saw in Jesus an answer to a personal problem. This type of person remains to this very day. Further, Jesus is regularly presented as being eager to assist us in such things. All of this is done under the imagined heading of "relevancy." The difficulty is that relevance is defined by mortals, not the immortal One. This occasion will promote a proper understanding of why Jesus has been made accessible to the people – **and it has NOT been to solve their self-defined personal problems.** Now, let us listen in to this very brief conversation. **The entire dialog, both question and answer, consumed about ten seconds.**

SPEAK TO MY BROTHER

". . . Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. . ."

Other versions read, *"Tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me,"*^{NKJV} *"the family inheritance,"*^{NASB} *"share with me the property we inherited,"*^{CJB} *"give me my share of the inheritance that our father left us,"*^{GWN} and *"order my brother to divide the inheritance and share it with me."*^{AMPLIFIED}

Observe the insistent tone in the man's words: **"speak to my brother," "tell my brother,"**^{NKJV} and **"order my brother."**^{AMPLIFIED} The word translated "speak" has the following lexical meaning: "command, tell,"^{FRIBERG} "accost one."^{LIDDLE-SCOTT} The man was asking Jesus to speak authoritatively to his brother, ordering him to fulfill his request.

Today, many are representing Jesus as having a compelling desire to be a part of our lives, helping us to realize our dreams and wishes. **This is a completely erroneous view of the Lord Jesus Christ.** Rather than Jesus wanting to share our lives, **He is calling us to**

share His life. He did not come to be a part of what we are doing, but for us to be a part of what He is doing. He does not share our lives, but we share **His life.**

Jesus made it clear that His commission was not to settle domestic disputes! *"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household"* (Mat 10:35-36). Again He said, *"Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death"* (Mark 13:12). And again, *"And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death"* (Luke 21:16).

Mind you, this kind of circumstance brings no pleasure to the Lord, and that is not the reason for Him speaking in such a manner. However, salvation in all of its scope has eternity in mind, standing before God the Judge, and finally being forever with the Lord. Remove those realities from your consideration, and Jesus has no relevance.

WHO MADE ME A JUDGE OVER YOU?

". . . And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?"

Other versions read, *"a judge or an arbitrator,"*^{NKJV} *"a judge or a maker of decisions,"*^{BBE} *"Who appointed me to be your judge or to divide your inheritance"*^{GWN} and *"who made me a judge over you to decide such things as that?"*^{NLT}

It is not that there are never occasions when civil matters have to be resolved – such as the Corinthians suing one another at the law. Paul admonished them, *"Does any of you dare, when he has a matter of complaint against another [brother], to go to law before unrighteous men [men neither upright nor right with God, laying it before them] instead of before the saints (the people of God)? Do you not know that the saints*

(the believers) will [one day] judge and govern the world? And if the world [itself] is to be judged and ruled by you, are you unworthy and incompetent to try [such petty matters] of the smallest courts of justice? Do you not know also that we [Christians] are to judge the [very] angels and pronounce opinion between right and wrong [for them]? How much more then [as to] matters pertaining to this world and of this life only! If then you do have such cases of everyday life to decide, why do you appoint [as judges to lay them before] those who [from the standpoint] of the church count for least and are without standing? I say this to move you to shame. Can it be that there really is not one man among you who [in action is governed by piety and integrity and] is wise and competent enough to decide [the private grievances, disputes, and quarrels] between members of the brotherhood, But brother goes to law against brother, and that before [Gentile judges who are] unbelievers [without faith or trust in the Gospel of Christ]? Why, the very fact of your having lawsuits with one another at all is a defect (a defeat, an evidence of positive moral loss for you). Why not rather let yourselves suffer wrong and be deprived of what is your due? Why not rather be cheated (defrauded and robbed)? But [instead it is you] yourselves who wrong and defraud, and that even your own brethren [by so treating them]! Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? (1 Cor 6:1-6).^{AMPLIFIED}

You can see that there are matters that are to be settled properly. However, it is done by the wise within the church.

Today there are religious careers that are devoted to solving marital and family problems. Whatever their reason for choosing to do such things, **they are doing something Jesus refused to do.** Let it be clear, that Jesus did not come to relieve men of the responsibility of working out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). We are to seek zealously to avoid unequal yokes, and where they do exist to resolve them in a godly manner. Whatever interferes with our preparation for glory is not to be allowed to continue.

BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS

“¹⁵ And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

TAKE HEED AND BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS

“And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness . . .”

This statement was prompted by the request for Jesus to tell a certain man to divide the inheritance with his brother. Jesus declined to do so, and then addressed “them” – the people who were with Him. The man asking for this favor was not interested in justice, or fairness, but was expressing his covetous heart. Jesus discerned it, and warned the others to see to it that such a heart was not found in them. By saying “beware,” He was indicating that no man is free from this kind of temptation. “Covetousness” by definition, is “marked by inordinate desire for wealth or possessions or for another's possessions.” MERRIAM-WEBSTER As used in Scripture, its means “greedy desire to have

more, covetousness, avarice,” THAYER “a disposition to have more than one's share greed,” FRIBERG “a strong desire to acquire more and more material possessions or to possess more things than other people have, all irrespective of need - 'greed,'” LOUW-NIDA and insatiableness.” GINGRICH

Covetousness is marked by several unlawful frames of mind.

- ⇨ Discontentment.
- ⇨ A desire for what is not actually needed.
- ⇨ A spirit that never has enough.

Our time has made covetousness an especial danger.

- ⇨ What is actually luxurious in most countries of the world, is common in our culture.
- ⇨ Plunging into debt is made easy.

The warning of our Lord must be taken seriously. There are influences in this world, both seen and unseen, that promote discontentment and greed. We are to beware of them.

LIFE DOES NOT CONSIST OF

“ . . . for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. . . .”

Other versions read, “for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions,” NASB “a man's life is not made up of the number of things which he has,” BBE “Life is not measured by how much you own,” NLT and “for a man's life does not consist in and is not derived from possessing overflowing abundance or that which is over and above his needs.” AMPLIFIED

By this saying, Jesus means a man's life cannot be prolonged because of the possessions that he has. The length of our days is not determined by the number of goods that we possess. An abundance of wealth cannot of itself guarantee health, well being, or even a minute more of longevity. Jesus will illustrate the truth of this by one of His matchless parables. He will show that an enlargement of ones possessions cannot postpone his death for even a single night.

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN

“¹⁶ And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: ¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? ¹⁸ And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. ²⁰ But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? ²¹ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

Turning his attention from the young man, Jesus delivers a special word to the crowd around him.

AN UNUSUALLY PLENTIFUL HARVEST

“And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully . . .”

Because the teaching was in the form of a parable, the people with no understanding will not be able see its association with the petition of the young man whose request Jesus refused to grant. Parables did not enhance the truth for those who had no understanding in the first place.

WHAT SHALL I DO?

“ . . . And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits . . . ?”

The plentiful harvest caught the man off guard. He had not expected such a

circumstance, and therefore made no plans for it. The prophets had spoken of the Lord giving a plentiful harvest that would attend their return to Him: “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month.” (Joel 2:21-23). However, this man had not thought of such a working of the Lord. He had not reckoned on the blessing of the Lord, and, consequently, the Lord was not in His thinking.

HIS DECISION

“ . . . And he said, *This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. . .*”

The Lord had taught Israel to consider the stranger and the poor when they had more than they needed (Ex 23:11; Lev 19:10; 23:22; Deut 15:11). But this man apparently gave no thought to the poor and the needy, thinking only of himself.

HIS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

“ . . . And I will say to my soul, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. . .*”

A self-centered person takes too many things for granted. This man assumed he was going to live for “*many years*.” He did not consider the brevity and uncertainty of life itself. If he knew what Solomon said on the matter, he did not ponder it: “*Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*” (Prov 27:1). He did not consider that there is such a thing as “*a day of trouble, and of rebuke*” (Isa 37:3). Shining an even greater light on the subject, James wrote to unstable Christians, “*Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that*” (James 4:13-15).

Life and the things associated with it are not to be taken for granted, for they are not certain. The world markets its goods, and its counselors advise their subjects as though life was certain. But it is not, and to plan as though it was will now be exposed by what Jesus affirmed God said to this man.

HE PROVED TO BE A FOOL

“ . . . But **God said** unto him, *Thou fool . . .*”

Other versions read, “*Fool!*”^{NKJV} “*foolish one,*”^{ASV} “*Reasonless (man)!*”^{ETH} “*O devoid of understanding,*”^{LEW} “*void of reason,*”^{MRD} and “*Unthinking one!*”^{YLT}

“*Simple one!*”^{ROT}

The lexical meaning of the word translated “*fool*” is “without reason; senseless, foolish, stupid; without refection or intelligence, acting rashly,”^{THAYER} “not using common sense foolish, senseless, silly,”^{FRIBERG} “pertaining to not employing one’s understanding, particularly in practical matters - foolish, senseless,”^{LOUW-NIDA} “without sense,”^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} “ignorant.”^{GINGRICH}

The candidness of the Lord is certainly worthy of note. I do not doubt that the man of reference is being depicted as someone who thought he had the answer to anything he faced. However, whoever does not think with God and the brevity and uncertainty of life in mind, is a fool – senseless, ignorant, without reason, and sorely lacking in understanding. To some that may be offensive, but better to be offended now than on the day of judgment.

THIS NIGHT

“ . . . *this night thy soul shall be required of thee . . .*”

Other versions read, “*your soul is required of you,*”^{NASB} “*your life will be demanded of you,*”^{NIV} “*I will take your soul from you,*”^{BBE} “*you will die!*”^{CJB} “*this night will they fetch away thy soul from thee,*”^{GENEVA} “*the demand will be made for your soul,*”^{NJB} “*This very night they [the messengers of God] will demand your soul of you.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

As “*the Father of spirits*” (Heb 12:9), God has a right to do this – and He does do it. When the call goes forth for a person’s soul, there is absolutely nothing that person can do about it. In this representation, the call went forth the very instant the rich man reasoned as though he was going to live for a long time, and therefore made what he thought were appropriate plans. Some see this as evil angels being commissioned to take the persons soul to hell, like Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham’s bosom.

JOHN GILL commenting on the Ethiopic version

I do not question that angels, as the reapers, remove the soul from the body – but the decision belongs to the Lord Himself. That angels are instrumental in the death of wicked people is indicated in the account of Herod’s death (Acts 12:21-23).

WHAT THEN??

“ . . . *then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? . . .*”

David wrote, “*Surely every man walketh in a vain show: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them*” (Psa 39:6). Solomon also reasoned, “*But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth of his mother’s womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath labored for the wind?*” (Eccl 5:14-16).

In view of this, what folly it is to be driven by a covetous spirit! Far better to lay up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust does not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal (Matt 6:19-20). Those are riches you can obtain after you die, or have finished your time on earth.

NOT RICH TOWARD GOD

“ . . . *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*”

Here is a much neglected, but essential, perspective: being “*rich toward God!*” Other versions read, “*wealth in the eyes of God,*”^{BBE} “*rich in God,*”^{GENEVA} “*rich in his relationship with God,*”^{GWN} “*rich in what matters to God,*”^{NAB} “*rich in the sight of God,*”^{NJB} and “*rich [in his relation] to God [this is how he fares].*”^{AMPLIFIED}

it, is certainly not a sin to have riches – if they are handed properly. Job was rich (Job 42:12). Abraham was rich (Gen 13:2). Isaac was rich (Gen 26:12-14). Jacob was rich (Gen 30:43). David was rich (1 Chron 29:26-28). Solomon was rich (1 Kgs 10:23; 2 Chron 1:12). Boaz was rich (Ruth 2:1). Jehosphat was rich (2 Chron 17:5). Hezekiah was rich (2 Chron 32:27). Joseph of Arimathaea was rich (Matt 27:57). Zacchaeus was rich (Lk 19:2). Several in the early church were “*possessors of lands and houses*” (Acts 4:34).

Yet, “riches” are accompanied by things that have to be overcome. It is more difficult for those who have them to enter the kingdom of God, than for a camel to go

through a needle (Matt 19:24). Also, we are warned, *“But they that will [to] be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1 Tim 6:9-10).

For this reason, riches, or wealth, is referred to as *“unrighteous mammon,”* or wealth (Lk 16:11), and *“filthy lucre”* [profit or gain](1 Tim 3:3,8; Tit 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2).

Thus the man of this parable was snared by riches, which robbed him of the hope of glory. He thought of how much he had in this world, and gave no productive

thought to what He had laid up in the world to come, being *“rich toward God.”*

May none of us be viewed in heaven as a *“fool,”* who possesses no *“true riches”* (Lk 16:11), but only those vanities that cannot be transferred to the world to come, having no lasting value. My we be acutely conscious of how we will fare after death.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/13/16. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The Forty-third lesson will cover verses 22 thru 40 of chapter 12: **“THE PROPER INCENTIVE FOR LIVING.”** The role of the end of the world and the second coming of Christ is accentuated, and the necessity of preparing for those events. Our meeting will begin at 6:30 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.