

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

## THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

### WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

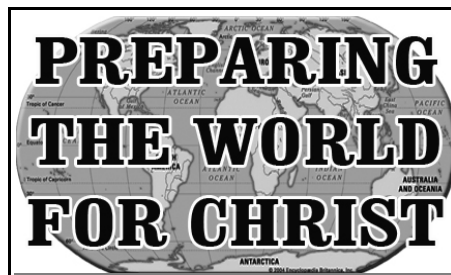
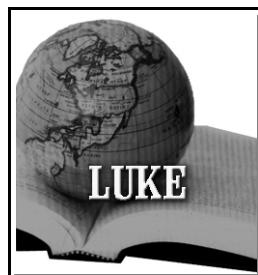
*An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely*

LESSON NUMBER 43

COMMENTARY ON: 12:22-40

### KINGDOM REASONING

As we might expect, Jesus had a special interest in His disciples. They are the only people He extended Himself to teach kingdom manners. It was imperative that they have an understanding of the nature of both God and His Kingdom. They differed significantly from this world, and that difference has to be perceived, acknowledged, and be the consistent framework in which they lived, and moved, and had their being. In our text, the Lord will speak of a number of things that must be seen correctly. These are things about which the disciples must not be wrong, or have inaccurate understanding. While, from one standpoint, these matters are elementary, from another point of view they are so radically different from the world's kind of thinking, that it will require extraordinary effort to take hold of them, and live consistently in view of them. As we proceed through these sayings, this will become abundantly apparent.



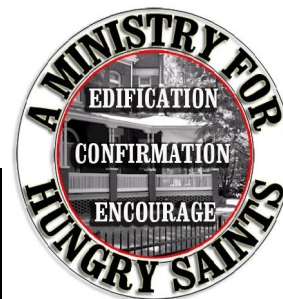
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Luke, 10/14/2016

### Lesson Number 43



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.

#### 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 Standard 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=Literary 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=Rotherham Bible (1999); RPTE=Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952); TNK=JPS Tanakh (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, DANKER,

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.

# KINGDOM REASONING

LUKE 12:22 "And He said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. <sup>23</sup> The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. <sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? <sup>25</sup> And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? <sup>26</sup> If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? <sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? <sup>29</sup> And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. <sup>30</sup> For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. <sup>31</sup> But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. <sup>32</sup> Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. <sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. <sup>35</sup> Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; <sup>36</sup> And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. <sup>37</sup> Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. <sup>38</sup> And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. <sup>39</sup> And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. <sup>40</sup> Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." ..... Luke 12:41-59

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

As we might expect, Jesus had a special interest in His disciples. They are the only people He extended Himself to teach kingdom manners.

Fifty-four times in the Gospels, Jesus is set forth as saying something specifically to His "disciples." Often He called His "twelve disciples" to Himself for special teaching (Matt 10:1; 20:17;

11:1; Mk 9:35; 10:32; Lk 9:1; 18:31; 22:14-15). His most profound instruction was addressed to His disciples. A sterling example of this is the last evening He spent with them.

The teaching of Jesus bears directly upon how a person thinks and lives profitably and acceptably to God— Given O. Blakely

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During that evening He opened to them some of the great things of the

Kingdom with which they would become involved. John devotes about 20% of His Gospel to what Jesus said during that evening (John, chapters 13-16). He then had them accompany Him to the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed (John 17). The only persons on earth who saw His glory partially unveiled were three of His disciples: Peter, James, and John (Matt 17:1-9; Mk 9:2-13; Lk 9:28-36).

It was imperative that they have an understanding of the nature of both God and His Kingdom. Because of Divine choice and privilege, "the twelve" (Matt 20:17; 26:20; Lk 8:1; John 6:67; Acts 6:2; 1 Cor 15:5; Rev 21:24) differed significantly from this world, and that difference has to be perceived, acknowledged, and be the consistent framework in which they lived, and moved, and had their being.

In our text, the Lord will say a number of things that must be seen correctly. These are things about which the disciples must not be wrong, or have inaccurate understanding. While, from one standpoint, these matters are elementary, from another view they are so radically different from the world's kind of thinking, that it will require extraordinary effort to take hold of them, and live consistently in view of them. As we proceed through these sayings, this will become abundantly apparent.

There are things Jesus said that were not intended for the multitudes, and certainly not for the indifferent and inimical. This same kind of preferential treatment continued during the ministry of the apostles. As a delegated group chosen and commissioned by Jesus, they were keenly aware of the fact that they were not being appointed to straighten out the problems of society in general. All of their epistles were written to the saved – those who are in Christ Jesus. All of their expositions of the death, burial, resurrection, and current ministry of Jesus were delivered to the saints.

No unsaved person of Scriptural record was ever told, "Jesus loved you and died on the cross for your sins." That is the simple fact, and everyone has to decide what they will do with it. To successfully negate the statement, we simply need an example of an unsaved person being told those words.

Jesus Himself practiced this kind of discretion in addressing people. He never opened redemptive truth to the multitudes, but left it either unmentioned, or in the domain of mystery. However, He extended Himself to clarify such truth to His disciples, and those who proved to be honest inquirers – which, during His ministry among the Jews, were relatively few.

## HE SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES

LUKE 12:22A "And He said unto His disciples . . ."

Every version of Scripture that I have (56 of them), reads "disciple." The lexical meaning of the word translated "disciple" is, ãa learner, pupil, disciple: universally, one who follows one's teaching, ã<sup>THAYER</sup> ãas one who directs his mind to something, learner, disciple, pupil; (2) in a more technical sense disciple, apprentice; specifically in the NT as one who attached himself to a spiritual leader, such as Jesus, ã<sup>FRIBERG</sup> ãhe is regular in attendance at his studies, for he is eager in acquiring knowledge, ã<sup>VGNT</sup> ãapprentice, disciple,

adherent. ã<sup>GINGRICH</sup>

The English word "disciple" is defined as, ãa personal follower of Christ during his life, especially one of the twelve Apostles; a follower or pupil of a teacher, leader. ã<sup>OXFORD</sup> McClintok & Strong's Cyclopedia defines it as follows: ãone who professes to have learned Certain principles from another, and maintains them on that other's authority. ã

This is one of the common words used for followers of Jesus. It is used two hundred and fifty-six times from Matthew through Acts. It is used

twenty-nine times in Acts. A small percentage of the uses of this word refer to followers of John the Baptist (Matt 9:14; 11:2; Mk 2:18, etc).

Today the term "Christian" has been popularized – even though that is not the case in Scripture, where it is only used three times (Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16). In each of those uses, it was the observation of outsiders who viewed believers and concluded they were ãprofessing Christianity or its teachings. ã<sup>OXFORD</sup> The difficulty is that it appears most people identifying themselves as "Christians"

entertain little interest in, or understanding of, the Lord Jesus Christ. If they are followers of Jesus, it is at an obvious instance.

My point here is that these were people who were really following Jesus, and had submitted to His teaching in an obvious way. These are the sort of

people Jesus will teach – in fact, they are the only kind of people He will teach. Even a casual perusal of the Gospels will confirm this is the case.

## THE OBSTRUCTIVENESS OF THE EVOLUTIONARY HYPOTHESIS

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen 1:1); "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Heb 1:10).*

At this point, it is necessary to comment briefly on the representation of God as the Creator and Sustainer of the heavens and the earth. In His teaching Jesus refers to various consistent aspects of nature. Jesus will never present the impersonal creation as ever being chaotic, disorderly, or developed over a immensely lengthy period of time. Something that is theoretically governed by chance cannot be the foundation of staple and primary teaching. To appeal to something in nature as a basis for sound and productive reasoning, there must be solidity and consistency in nature.

With remarkable clarity and consistency, the natural creation is traced back to God in general, and to the pre-incarnate Jesus in particular – specially to the Word of God.

- ⇒ *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Gen 1:1)*
- ⇒ *"O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, Thou art the God, even Thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: Thou hast made heaven and earth." (Isa 37:16)*
- ⇒ *"Hast thou not known? hast Thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding." (Isa 40:28)*
- ⇒ *"Thus saith God the LORD, He that created the heavens, and stretched*

*them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein." (Isa 42:5)*

- ⇒ *"I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." (Isa 45:12)*
- ⇒ *"He hath made the earth by His power, He hath established the world by His wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by His discretion." (Jer 10:12)*
- ⇒ *"But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." (Mark 10:6)*
- ⇒ *"For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." (Mark 13:19)*
- ⇒ *"And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is." (Acts 4:24)*
- ⇒ *"And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." (Acts 14:15)*
- ⇒ *"God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24)*

- ⇒ *"For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Rom 1:20)*
- ⇒ *"But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." (1 Cor 8:6)*
- ⇒ *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Eph 3:9)*
- ⇒ *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds." (Heb 1:1-2)*
- ⇒ *"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb 11:3)*

- ⇒ *"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev 4:11)*

In these few texts, ponder the Divine traits associated with the creation of the heavens and the earth.

- ⇒ His Godhood
- ⇒ Being Creator
- ⇒ Making
- ⇒ Being everlasting

- ⇒ Understanding
- ⇒ Commanding
- ⇒ Establishing
- ⇒ Wisdom
- ⇒ Discretion
- ⇒ Eternal power
- ⇒ Godhead (Deity)
- ⇒ Speaking
- ⇒ His word framing things
- ⇒ Glory
- ⇒ Honor, and power.

Who would dare to associate such Divine traits and capacities with an imagined process of evolution? Does not the very concept of evolution speak of inability. How can you have evolution and orderliness at the same time. Can the superior proceed from the inferior? Let it be clear that when it comes to *"the earth"* and *"the fulness thereof"* (1 Cor 10:26), it all belongs

to God – by virtue of its creation!

Now Jesus will teach of the true God, and of His absolute control over nature, which is His own matchless work through he preincarnate Word. That the words that He delivers, which are truth, cannot be set in the context of evolution, is evident. All efforts to do so are vain, and border in the sin of blasphemy.

## THEREFORE I SAID UNTO YOU

<sup>22B</sup> "... Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on."

### THEREFORE

"... Therefore I say unto you. . ."

Jesus now speaks in view of the affirmations, *"a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"* (Luke 12:15), and *"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."* (Luke 12:21).

These are more than mere statements to be placed into the background of thought. They are pillars of sound reasoning, and are not to be forgotten. The conclusions that are based upon them are relevant to every facet of life in this present evil world. If what is said here is forgotten, life will immediately swerve into vanity, leaving the person unprepared for the inevitable confrontation of God Almighty.

### TAKE NO THOUGHT

"... Take no thought for your life . . ."

Other versions read, *"do not worry about your life,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"do not be anxious for your life,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"Be not careful for life,"* <sup>DARBY</sup> *"be not solicitous for your life,"* <sup>DOUAY</sup> *"stop worrying about,"* <sup>GWN</sup> and *"do not be anxious and troubled [with cares] about your life."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Let us be clear about this. This word applies to the rich and the poor,

the young and the old, the people in Haiti and those in the United States of America. This is a word that cannot be ignored by anyone.

The word *"thought"* comes from a word meaning *to be anxious; to be troubled with cares; to be disturbed, annoyed in spirit,* <sup>THAYER</sup> *to be anxious, be overly concerned about, be worried about,* <sup>FRIBERG</sup> *to have an anxious concern, based on apprehension about possible danger or misfortune - 'to be worried about, to be anxious about,* <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> *to care for, be anxious about, think earnestly upon, scan minutely,* <sup>LIDDELL-SCOTT</sup> *to be (unduly) concerned,* <sup>GINGRICH</sup> and *to be uneasy in mind or spirit.* <sup>DANK</sup>

This kind of thinking – worry, fretting, apprehension, being anxious, or uneasy – is strictly forbidden by the King of glory! This is more than a matter of law. It is undergirded by an unwavering fact: *"God . . . careth for you"* (1 Pet 5:7). The Psalmist wrote, *"The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry"* (Psa 34:15). If we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteous, *"these things"* concerning which men are prone to worry, will be *"added"* to us (Matt 6:33; Lk 12:31). Taking hold of what is *"added"* to us may very well involve the kind of effort expended by the impersonal creation in obtaining what God gives them. It is written of the brute creation, *"These wait all upon Thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good"* (Psa

104:27-28). These creatures are required to hunt in a drought, dig in the snow, and engage in a fervent quest to find what God has given them. However, they do not fret!

This text is declaring the necessity of living by faith. What is *"freely given to us of God"* (1 Cor 2:12), is, so to speak, placed within our reach. However, it will not be so obvious that we do not have to seek – even ask and knock.

### WHAT YE SHALL EAT OR PUT ON

*"... what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on."*

This is not a word to rich people, as though they were guaranteed the provisions of life. All of their goods could be removed in a moment of time – or they could be removed from the earth and launch out into eternity totally unprepared.

At some point, we must all believe that God will supply our need – even if He has to call for birds to bring our meals to us (1 Kgs 17:4-6). When a serious drought plagued Judea, the Lord stirred up the churches in areas not impacted by that drought to send relief to their brethren (Rom 15:26). He cared for His own – and He still does!

We must not allow difficult circumstances to wash this from our minds, forcing us to live just as though what Jesus said is not true. Satan is cunning in these efforts.



## THE LIFE AND THE BODY ARE MORE

*"<sup>23</sup> The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."*

### THE LIFE IS MORE THAN MEAT

*"The life is more than meat . . ."*

Christians who place the emphasis on health, diet, physical conditioning, etc., must take these words into account. If life is *"more than meat,"* or food, then food cannot be our stress. In Christ, there is a marvelous provision pertaining to eating that has all but been obliterated by our Western "Christian" culture.

Speaking of certain *"doctrines of demons,"* and of those who are *"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron,"* Paul said of their teaching, *"Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For*

*every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer"* (1 Tim 4:3-5). The Amplified Bible reads, *"Who forbid people to marry and [teach them] to abstain from [certain kinds of] foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and have [an increasingly clear] knowledge of the truth. For everything God has created is good, and nothing is to be thrown away or refused if it is received with thanksgiving. For it is hallowed and consecrated by the Word of God and by prayer."* The *"Word of God"* is *"everything God has created is good."* Prayer has to do with thanksgiving, and appropriating the blessing of God upon the food that is eaten. Whatever men may say about foods, they must not be allowed to neutralize this text. There are parts of the world where this text is the only guarantee men have of safely eating

anything. It is really just as necessary in our country, although it may not seem as though this is the case. The fact that *"life is more than meat"* demands the involvement of God in what we eat and drink.

### THE BODY IS MORE THAN RAIMENT

*" . . . and the body is more than raiment."*

Other versions read, *"more than clothing."* <sup>NKJV</sup>

The emphasis here is on Divine provision. He who gave us life, will provide for its sustenance. He who gave us a body, will provide what is necessary to protect and warm it. The same is true of clothing that is said of food – what God gives us is to be appropriated. This is involved in living by faith – doing what one can do, and trusting the Lord for provision.

## CONSIDER THE RAVENS

*"<sup>24</sup> Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?"*

### CONSIDER THE RAVENS

*"Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them . . ."*

There are several places in which the Lord makes known that He cares for the ravens. *"Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God"* (Job 38:41). *"He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry"* (Psa 147:9). In nature, it is not the "fittest" that survive (survival of the fittest), but the ones for whom God provides. The ravens, which are carnivores are cared for by God Himself. That is simply the

way things are!

### HOW MUCH BETTER

*" . . . how much more are ye better than the fowls?"*

Here is a proper comparison. Men are *"better than the fowls!"* Jesus also said a man is *"better than a sheep"* (Matt 12:12). Again, man is *"of more value than many sparrows"* (Matt 10:31). Man is God's chief creation, and the focus of His redemption. That is why he is *"better."*

The point is that the Creator is also the Sustainer – which contradicts the entire ideas of evolution.

God once used a poor widow, who only had enough meal and oil for her and her son to have one last meal, to sustain the prophet Elijah throughout an entire famine (1 Kgs 17:9). For forty

years God *"sustained"* Israel *"in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing"* (Neh 9:21). The Psalmist cried out, *"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved"* (Psa 55:22).

This may appear to some to be rather elementary, but no small number of professing Christians are living in a state of constant fretting and worrying – and it is all because they have allowed this world to define what they need. Whatever believers have in this world should be held lightly. Under the most favorable circumstances it is temporary.

Doctrinally we are told, *"But godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Tim 6:6). Again it is written, *"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content"* (1 Tim 6:8). And again, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content*

*with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5). All of that is certainly clear enough, and faith can*

take hold of it because it is the truth. Now, live that truth out to the glory of God and your own stability. God will

grant you grace, and the Spirit will strengthen you for the task.

## ADDING TO YOUR STATURE

*"<sup>25</sup> And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? <sup>26</sup> If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?"*

Here is an area where mortals have to simply wait. There is nothing else they can do. As powerful as the mind may be, here is something that reveals its actual impotence in certain areas.

### BY TAKING THOUGHT

*"And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?"*

Other versions read, *"And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span?"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?"*<sup>NRSV</sup> *"by taking thought is able to make himself any taller?"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"add a cubit to his height by worrying?"*<sup>CSB</sup> *"by being careful can add to his stature one cubit?"*<sup>DARBY</sup> *Can all your worries add a single moment to your life?"*<sup>NLT</sup>

The lexical definition of "cubit" is a measure of length equal to distance from the joint of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger (i.e. about 18 inches, (.5 m) but its precise length varied and is disputed),

<sup>STRONGS</sup> the forearm i.e. that part of the arm between the hand and the elbow-joint a measure of length equal to the distance from the joint of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger (i.e. about one foot and a half, but its precise length varied and is disputed),<sup>THAYER</sup> equivalent to 17.5 inches, 1.5 feet, or 0.46 meter.<sup>FRIBERG</sup>

The Greek word used here is found six times in the English Scriptures. Four of them are in the English Septuagint: Genesis 6:16; Exodus 26:13; Ezekiel 40:42; 43:13; Matthew 6:27; Luke 12:25. All of them are dealing with a measurement, not a period of time.

So, why do modern versions of Scripture refer to a "cubit" as "life's span,"<sup>NASB</sup> or adding "a single hour" to one's life? <sup>NIV</sup> I will tell you why. Because they felt at liberty to do so. They forgot they were handling the Word of God, so they selected a variant meaning. In my regular exposure to over sixty different versions of Scripture, it appears to me that a number of individuals are involved in the translation of Scripture who are themselves unacquainted with truth. Such people approach Scripture as though it was a mere academic document – which it is not. As it is written, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the*

*man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (2 Tim 3:16-17). The God of heaven, then, is communicating a message to humanity, and the intention is for that message to acquaint men with ultimate reality, correct them where they were the need exists, and that the man of God may be mature, and thoroughly capable of doing works that are Divinely approved. Those are purposes that do not allow for academic experimentation, and the projection of mere human opinion.

### THOUGHT FOR THE REST OF LIFE

*"If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?"*

One's height has to do with "the least" of life. King Saul was a man of significant stature. When he was a young man it is written of him, *"from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people"* (1 Sam 9:2). Other versions read *"a head taller"*<sup>NIV</sup> – roughly a foot taller. Yet, it gave him no advantage before God. Although it is true that, among men, being tall can give a person an advantage, it is not so in the courts of the Lord.

One's height cannot give a person the right to either moral and spiritual superiority – even though it often ranks high in the flesh.

## CONSIDER THE LILIES

*"<sup>27</sup> Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>28</sup> If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field,*

*and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?"*

### CONSIDER THE LILIES

*"Consider the lilies how they*

*grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

One cannot behold the LILIES of



the field and conclude they are engaged in some kind of labor that will yield their beauty. They do not “spin,” using looms to weave together their beautiful appearance. Man gets his bread by the sweat of his face, but it is not so with the LILIES of the field.



### SOLOMON IN ALL HIS GLORY

Solomon in all his glory was himself arrayed with beauty, as well as those who surrounded him. The sight of it all took away the breath of the Queen of Sheba. Her reaction is reported in both the Kings and the Chronicles. “And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had

built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard. Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on His throne, to be king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made

He thee king over them, to do judgment and justice” (2 Chron 9:3-8).

### IF GOD SO CLOTH THE GRASS

“If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

Notice how carefully the Spirit assigns the state of nature to the creation and sustaining of God Almighty. What must the Spirit think of those who assign the state of nature to an evolutionary process, stretching over thousands, perhaps even millions, of years?

It is the responsibility of men of God to repudiate the imaginations of men, casting them down to the ground with their spiritual weaponry.

## WHAT NOT TO SEEK PRIMARILY

“<sup>29</sup> And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. <sup>30</sup> For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.”

### DO NOT SEEK

“And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink . . .”

Other versions read, “do not set your mind on,” <sup>NIV</sup> “keep striving for,” <sup>NRSV</sup> “do not give overmuch thought,” <sup>BBE</sup> “ask not,” <sup>GENEVA</sup> “Don’t concern yourself about,” <sup>GWN</sup> “inquire not,” <sup>MRD</sup> “do not be overly concerned about,” <sup>NET</sup> “do not set your heart on,” <sup>NIB</sup> “Don’t chase after,” <sup>CEB</sup> “and “do not seek [by meditating and reasoning to inquire into].” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

### The example of Israel

When Israel set out for Canaan, the Lord assured them they would have sufficient food for the journey – and did so while they were murmuring against Moses and Aaron (Ex 16:2-3). “Then

said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My law, or no. And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily” (Ex 16:4-5).

It was not long, however, until the Israelites were provoked to complain about their diet – even though it was not only adequate, but tailored for their journey. “And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread” (Num 21:5). They had anxious thoughts about what they ate! Jesus instructed His disciples not to have such thoughts. Prior to this occasion, Jesus taught His disciples to pray in this manner: “Give us day by day our daily bread” (Luke 11:3). That is still what Jesus’ followers are to do –

whether they live in Haiti or the United States of America.

### NEITHER BE OF DOUBTFUL MIND

“ . . . neither be ye of doubtful mind. . .”

Other versions read, “nor have an anxious mind,” <sup>NKJV</sup> “do not keep worrying,” <sup>NASB</sup> “let not your mind be full of doubts,” <sup>BBE</sup> “quit worrying about these things,” <sup>GWN</sup> “nor let your mind wander upon these things,” <sup>MRD</sup> and “nor be of anxious (troubled) mind [unsettled, excited, worried, and in suspense].” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Word like “worry,” “anxious,” “troubled,” and “excited” appear to me to be too weak. John Gill (1697-1771) provided an excellent comment on the word translated “doubtful mind” –

ō . . . questioning and distrusting that ye shall have any thing to eat or drink: be not fickle, unstable, and inconstant, and wandering in your thoughts about these things, like the meteors in the air, which are

carried about here and there; let not your minds be disturbed and distracted about them; or be anxiously solicitous for them.ö JOHN GILL, Lk 12:29

The Lord's response to Israel's concern about food and water confirm the seriousness of wavering concerning the adequacy of food, drink, and clothing. Jesus continues to delineate this subject.

### THINGS THE NATIONS SEEK

*" . . . For all these things do the nations of the world seek after . . . "*

Other versions read, *"the pagan,"* NIV *"pagan nations in the world,"* CJB *"the Gentile world,"* CSB *"the people of the world,"* GENEVA *"Everyone in the world,"* GWN *"heathen people,"* TNT and *"the pagan world greedily seeks."* AMPLIFIED

*"The nations of the world"* are *"the Gentiles"* (Gen 10:5; Isa 11:10), or *"heathen"* (Deut 4:27; Neh 5:8; Psa 2:1). These are the people to whom God did not reveal Himself, referred to as *"the Gentiles which know not God"* (1 Thess 4:5). This does not refer to a lack of knowledge even though it was available. God strictly confined the revelation of Himself to Abraham and His offspring. No one else received heavenly tutelage concerning the living God. That is why they sought after food and drink, just as though there was no God.

It is a serious indictment when God charges people, to whom He has made Himself known, for living as though this was not true.

It is confirmed in Israel that even extensive revelation involving the necessity of a new birth is to be comprehended and be profitable. Israel was the first body of people that were told something pertaining to the resurrection of the dead (Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2-2; Hos 13:14); the end of this world, and the commencement of another world (Psa 102:25-27; Isa 24:19-20; 51:6; 65:17; 66:22). Jesus speaks with the greater revelation that has taken place in mind.

The true God was specifically revealed to them, together with His name, and His unquestioned rule (Isa 42:8; 43:12; 45:22; 46:9; Hos 11:9).

The nations did not seek God, because He did not reveal Himself to them. In order to engage in a quest for God, He must first make Himself known, for, by nature, *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God"* (Rom 3:11). For this reason, the heathen, or nations, did not seek for God, but for food, drink, and clothing. Revelation from God, when received, changes that for which men seek.

### YOUR FATHER KNOWS

*" . . . and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. "*

The fact that God knows what His children have need of, is [for His people] the guarantee that the need will be met. For those who do not know, God has created and placed men so they will engage in a quest for the true God. As Paul proclaimed in Athens, *"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: For in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring"* (Acts 17:26-28).

It is not that God is merely aware of your temporal needs. He has confirmed in the brute creation that He supplies their need, and what He gives them they *"gather."* The same is true to an even great extent of those He has created in His own image. We can trust Him to give us our daily bread, and see that we are properly clothed.

There are at least two things we are required to do: ask for our daily needs, and gather them.

## WHAT TO SEEK FIRST

*" 31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. "*

### BUT

*"But rather . . ."* These words are translated from a single Greek word which means, *öadverbially*, at the beginning of a sentence, serving either to restrict, or to unfold and expand what has preceded: moreover, besides, so that, according to the requirements of the context, it may also be rendered but, nevertheless,ö

THAYER *öpredominately* used to restrict a previous statement nevertheless, however, in spite of that.ö FRIBERG This is speaking of priority, precedence, or primary.

Here is a stipulation regarding Divine provisions. If you desire for your needs to be guaranteed, here is something that must be done. Our priorities must be right, and in strict harmony with the Divine agenda.

### SEEK YE FIRST

*"...seek ye the kingdom of God..."*

Other versions read, *"strive for His Kingdom,"* NRSV *"let your chief care be for His kingdom,"* BBE *"be concerned about His kingdom,"* GWN *"pursue His kingdom,"* NET *"set your hearts on His kingdom,"* NJB *"seek ye the reign of God,"* YLT and *"strive for and seek His kingdom."* AMPLIFIED

The Kingdom of God is an *"everlasting Kingdom"* (Psa 145:13; Dan 4:3; 7:27; 2 Pet 1:11). It has no beginning, and it will never end.

God's kingdom *"rules over all"*

(Psa 103:19). There is no person or domain over which God does not rule and preside. When Jesus taught His disciples to pray *"Thy Kingdom come"* (Matt 6:10), He was referring to it being revealed, not to its commencement. From a practical point of view, God's Kingdom involves what He is doing NOW – what He is working NOW – how His resources are being used NOW. Now, *"salvation"* is being worked out by God – *"the day of salvation"* (2 Cor 6:2).

Matthew records, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. . ."* (Matt 6:33).

*"His righteousness"* here refers to the righteousness that is imputed, or conferred upon men. Luke excludes this grammatically, but it is an integral part of God Himself, and thus is included in *"the Kingdom of God."*

Here *"first"* does not refer to sequence. It rather refers to priority, which pervades all of life. One does not, as it were, seek the Kingdom of God initially, and then proceed to other things.

Seeking the kingdom of God means endeavoring to be involved in it. Practically speaking, it is endeavoring to be part of what God is doing, which involves being saved and sanctified – or being *"meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work"* (2 Tim 2:21). Other versions read, *"be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work,"*<sup>NRSV</sup> *"sanctified and profitable to the master – to every good work having been prepared,"*<sup>YLT</sup> and *"set apart and useful for honorable and noble purposes, consecrated and profitable to the Master, fit and ready for any good work."*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Let us be clear about this. There is no place in the body of Christ for any other kind of person. Every beginner, or novice, is being prepared, by the ministry of the body of Christ, to

be so described (Eph 4:11-16).

Seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness is not an alternative available to believers. This is an absolute requirement if one is to experience being readied for *"an entrance"* to be *"ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet 1:11). There really is no other acceptable entrance. An individual cannot live in this world with other priorities, and yet enter into the glory to dwell forever with the Lord. Such a thing is simply not possible.

### THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED

*" . . . and all these things shall be added unto you . . . "*

*"These things"* are what is necessary to sustain life on earth: *"what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on"* (Luke 12:22). This does not mean you will not have to work – it does mean your work will not be in vain. The promise is not that you will have a superabundance of *"these things."* Keep in mind that this promise is conditioned upon seeking first the Kingdom of God. God makes no commitment to supply the needs of those who relegate His Kingdom and will to the background of life. There are general blessings, like the rain, which are sent upon both the just and unjust (Matt 5:45). But when it comes to obtaining what is required to sustain life, the guarantee is given only to those who seek His Kingdom first, as well as His righteousness (Matt 6:33).

### YOUR FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE

*" . . . Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. "*

### FEAR NOT

*"Fear not . . ."* This expression is mentioned sixty-three times in Scripture – most of them (48) from Genesis thru Malachi. It is not mentioned as often to believers, *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (2 Tim 1:7).

Again, this is spoken to those who are seeking first the Kingdom of God. This is not addressed to the general populous, or to those who are not seeking the Kingdom of God first. This is another way, or shall I say, a facet of, casting our care upon the Lord (1 Pet 5:7). We actually cast our care on the Lord indirectly, by seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

### LITTLE FLOCK

*" . . . little flock . . . "*

Every version that I have reads the same way – *"little flock."*

This, of course, is a partial view of the actual flock, who will, in the end, be assessed as *"a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues"* (Rev 7:9). Also, keep in mind that multitudes had been following Jesus (Matt 4:25; 5:1; 8:1,18; 9:8,33,36; 11:7; 12:15; 13:2,34; 14:5,14-15,19, 22-23; 15:10,30,32-33; 19:2; 20:29; 21:8-9; 21:46; 23:1). Yet, within that multitude was a remnant of people who would at last stand with the vast multitude of the saved. I am persuaded they knew who Jesus was addressing when He said, *"little flock."* Perhaps you yourself have sensed the promises of God directed to you, while you are part of an obvious minority. Jesus would have us to know that, considering the finality of salvation, smallness in number is strictly a temporary situation. While smallness itself is certainly not something that brings great satisfaction, the fact that it will blend with the whole is comforting.

### THE FATHER'S GOOD PLEASURE

*" . . . for it is your Father's good pleasure . . . "*

Other versions read, *"your Father has chosen gladly,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"has been pleased,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"has resolved to,"*<sup>CJB</sup> *"delights to,"*<sup>CSB</sup> *"is disposed to,"*<sup>MRD</sup> *"gives your Father great happiness."*<sup>NLT</sup>

This is another view of Divine purpose, election, predestination, and determination. Because He is God, the

Lord does what He pleases. Jesus speaks in this manner in order that His disciples might rejoice in hope, which has a stabilizing effect upon them.

### TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM

*" . . . to give you the kingdom."*

Other versions read, *"to give you a kingdom,"*<sup>TNT</sup> *"to give you the reign."*<sup>YLT</sup>

This will be the fulfillment of the

promises given through Daniel the prophet: *"But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever . . . 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 . . . And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High,*

*whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him"* (Dan 7:18,22,27). Doctrinally, this will be fulfilled when the saints *"reign with"* the glorified Christ (2 Tim 2:12).

This reign will commence by the saints judging the world and angels (1 Cor 6:2) – according to God's good pleasure.

## A TREASURE IN HEAVEN

*"<sup>33</sup> Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."*

### SELL THAT YE HAVE

*"Sell that ye have, and give alms. . ."*

Other versions read *"sell your possessions and give to charity,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"Give to the poor,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"Give what property you have in exchange for money, and give the money to the poor,"*<sup>BBE</sup> and *"Sell your material possessions, and give the money to the poor."*<sup>GWN</sup>

This instruction is given against the backdrop of the parable of the rich fool who had a bumper crop, and determined to tear down his old barns and build new ones (Lk 12:18-19). Here Jesus is telling the people how to treat their surplus, or what they can do without. In fact, the early church did this when the need arose. Multitudes of people had come to Jerusalem to observe the Passover, and after the day of Pentecost, those who were baptized into Christ remained, creating a difficult circumstance for themselves. They were not admonished to return to their homeland, for they had just been added to the Lord, and there were no spiritual resources in their homeland. Therefore, those who had *"possessions and goods,"* and *"lands and houses"* sold them, and

distributed the proceeds to brethren who had need (Acts 2:45; 4:34,36-37).

In a measure, we have begun to see things in this manner. A small nucleus of devoted people can actually do more for the Lord than some rather large groups. Because they are not anchored to this world, they are able to live on less, and use their pooled resources to provide for and bless other people.

### Word of Truth Fellowship Experience

Ponder some of the things we have been able to do, even though we are few in number. Six foreign trips with preaching/teaching. Extensive audio and video ministry with worldwide distribution in sixty-eight countries. Three publications. Three printed books. Over forty-five electronic books. Worldwide broadcasts of all gatherings via Livestream. An extensive website reaching over 1,500,000 worldwide. Extensive Facebook ministries, with several brethren offering daily posts.

### PROVIDE FOR YOURSELVES

*" . . . provide yourselves bags which wax not old . . ."*

God told Israel, *"Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it*

*into a bag with holes"* (Haggai 9 1:6). They could not keep what they had!

In referring to *"bags which wax not old,"* Jesus was speaking of making provision for things that can be kept – things that not of this world, which is passing away.

Every believer has capacities that can retain the things of God, so that they do not fade or pass away. It is difficult to explain in human language. We might refer to the human spirit (1 Cor 6:20), or our heart in which Christ dwells (Eph 3:17). Make provision that enables you to keep what you receive from God – a means whereby edification can be kept and maintained and you can grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15). You might refer to this as the culturing of the soul – a process that requires consistent grace, faith, and effort.

### A TREASURE IN HEAVEN

*" . . . a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth."*

Matthew records Jesus saying, *"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal"* (Matt 6:20). We do not want to arrive in heaven with nothing stored up for us there. Our *"Father"* is *"in heaven"* (Matt 5:16). Our *"reward"* is *"in heaven"* (Matt 5:12). God's *"will"* is done *"in*

heaven" (Matt 6:10). The "whole family" of God is "in heaven" (Eph 3:15). Our "Master" is "in heaven" (Eph 6:9). Our "conversation," or "citizenship" <sup>NKJV</sup> is "in heaven" (Phil

3:20). Our "hope" is laid up "in heaven" (Col 1:5). We have a "better and enduring substance" "in heaven" (Heb 10:34). Our names are written "in heaven" (Heb 12:23). Our "inheritance"

is "in heaven" (1 Pet 1:4). Does it not make good sense to have treasures and investments laid up there also? Let us be a heavenly-minded people. Such a posture will not be regretted.

## WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

*"<sup>34</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

Now Jesus reasons upon what He has said about laying up treasures in heaven. One of the traits of truth is that you can reason upon it, or form other valid thoughts upon the basis of truth, or spiritual reality.

### WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

*"For where your treasure is . . ."*

Other versions read, "where your wealth is." <sup>BBE</sup>

Nearly every version reads, "where your treasure is." The word translated "treasure" does not mean "wealth," as represented by the Basic Bible English version. The lexical meaning of the word is, <sup>the</sup> place in which goods and precious

things are collected and laid up; a casket, coffer, or other receptacle, in which valuables are kept, <sup>and the things laid up in a treasury; collected treasures,</sup> <sup>THAYER</sup> <sup>as a place for storing valuables; (a) literally treasury, treasure box or chest,</sup> <sup>FRIBERG</sup> <sup>as a room for the storage of valuables - storeroom, treasure room.</sup> <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

Rather than the precious things themselves, the "treasure," or "treasury" is a container in which they are stored – collected together. What is laid up in heaven will be dispensed in mass to the ones who laid them up – like "ten cities" (Mk 19:17).

### THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO

*" . . . there will your heart be also."*

The place where you are laying up your precious things is where your heart will be also. If your treasury is in heaven, that is where your heart will be set! That is where your affection will be placed, and your interest will be focused.

In our case, an honest assessment is mandatory. No professing Christian can be indifferent about this. It is possible to have a driving compulsion to be right – and, in a sense this is proper. However, it falls short of how we ought to think. It is where we want to spend eternity that makes the real difference, and enables a person to be right. It is where our Lord is, and where we will eventually be. That is where our investments are being made. That is where we long to be.

## LOINS AND LIGHTS

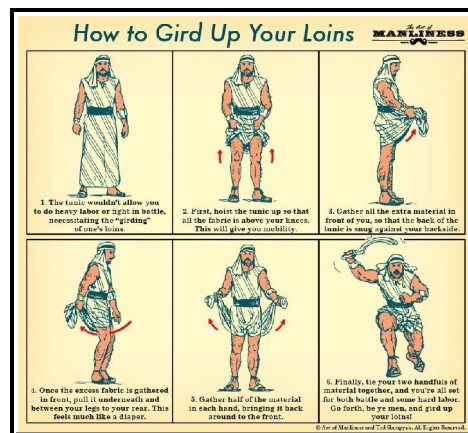
*"<sup>35</sup> Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning."*

### GIRDED LOINS

*"Let your loins be girded about . . ."*

Other versions read, "Let your waist be girded," <sup>NKJV</sup> "be dressed in readiness," <sup>NASB</sup> "be dressed ready for service," <sup>NIV</sup> "be dressed for action," <sup>NRSV</sup> "be ready, dressed as for a journey," <sup>BBE</sup> and "Stay dressed for action." <sup>ESV</sup>

When doing work, or running, a man's garment was prohibitive because it reached to the ground, or close to it. Girding up the loins involved gathering the lengthy portion of the garment, and tucking it near the waist. This freed the



man to move more freely.

Jesus is instructing us to free ourselves from inhibiting manners, in order that we might serve the Lord

more fully. It is true that many professed believers are encumbered with manners and interests that cause them not to be ready when the Lord summons them to be taught, to be engaged in His work, or to give an answer to someone who enquires about their hope, or reason for living.

At the low end, a person can become so involved in appropriating food, clothing, and shelter that they are not ready to serve the Lord. An example of an alert person in difficult circumstances is the widow of Zarephath who, although she was getting ready to prepare a last meal for herself and her son, was nevertheless ready to prepare a little cake for the prophet Elijah (1Kgs 17:7-16). Her

readiness also enabled her and her son to successfully live throughout the famine.

It seems that enough cannot be said about this matter in our time. Many professing Christians waste an enormous amount of time, which renders them *"not ready"* to serve the

Lord. This is something to be remedied.

### YOUR LIGHTS BURNING

*" . . . and your lights burning. "*

Other versions read, *"keep your lamps alight,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"have your lamps lit,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"lamps burning in your hands."* <sup>DOUAY</sup>

This has to do with our influence – the living testimony of the life we have received from God. As Jesus indicated in the parable of the ten virgins, it also has to do with being alert and ready for the coming of the Lord (Matt 25:1-13).

## WAITING FOR THE LORD

*"<sup>36</sup> And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when He will return from the wedding; that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. "*

### LIKE UNTO MEN THAT WAIT FOR THEIR LORD

*"And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord . . . "*

While we are in the world, we are to maintain the posture of waiting – that is, expectantly and eagerly waiting. We are waiting for the coming of the Lord. Then, this present evil world will end (2 Pet 3:10-13). Then we will be done with mortality, and this *"vile body"* (Phil 3:20-21). Then we will receive a crown of righteousness. Then we will begin our reign with Christ (2 Tim 2:12). Then Jesus will confess us before the Father and His angels (Rev 3:5). Then the devil and his angels will be cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10), for which God has prepared it (Matt 25:41).

Here is a much neglected subject in today's preaching – the coming of the Lord. It does not seem germane to what the professed "church" is doing, and the manner in which professed *"Christians"* are living. There are at

least 187 verses concerning Christ's second coming in the Gospels. From Acts thru Revelation we have at least sixty-three verses on the subject.

When the Lord comes, there will be no waiting, striving, resisting, fighting, seeking, opposition, or temptation. No more running, rejecting, crucifying the flesh, or need for comfort. Believers are waiting for their Lord to return, knowing that His reward will be with Him (Rev 22:12).

How does a person live who is waiting for His Lord? He waits tentatively, knowing that waiting itself is a temporary posture in a temporary world. Here we have to live in an environment of opposition, contradiction, hostility, and distraction.

### WHEN HE WILL RETURN

*" . . . when He will return from the wedding . . . "*

Other versions read, *"from the wedding feast,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"from the wedding banquet,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"from the place of festivity,"* <sup>ETH</sup> and *"from the house of feasting."* <sup>MRD</sup>

The term *"the wedding"* speaks of its preparation. Jesus went away to

prepare a place His people. Who collectively are His bride.

Jesus taught of this preparation in one of His parables: *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for His son"* (Matt 22:2). Jesus Himself is involved in that preparation. He said, *"I do to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2-3). He promised, *"I will come again"* – and that is the coming we are waiting for (John 14:3b).

### THEY MAY OPEN TO HIM IMMEDIATELY

*" . . . that when He cometh and knocketh, they may open unto Him immediately. "*

When Jesus comes again, there will be no time to get ready – no time to adjust our posture. Then the saying will be fulfilled in the fullest sense: *"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still"* (Rev 22:11).

*"IMMEDIATELY!"* That is how quickly we are to meet Jesus when He returns, and His great salvation is calculated to enable us to do it.

## THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING FOUND WATCHING

*"<sup>37</sup> Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when He cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make*

*them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. <sup>38</sup> And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find*

*them so, blessed are those servants. "*

### BLESSED ARE THOSE SERVANTS

*"Blessed are those servants,*



*whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching . . .*"

Other versions read, *"Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when He comes,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"It will be good for those servants,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"Happy are those servants who are watching when the Lord comes,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded,"* <sup>NLT</sup> *"Blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) are those servants whom the master finds awake and alert and watching when he comes."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

At the time of Christ's return, the absence of blessing is confirmation of cursing and rejection. Blessing is strictly contingent upon the alertness and readiness of the servants at the time Jesus returns.

The gravity of our condition at the time of Christ's coming demands that we be reminded continually that *"the Lord will come as a thief in the night"* (2 Pet 3:10). There are over two hundred and fifty verses dealing with the second of coming of Christ from Matthew through Revelation. There are detailed parables, doctrinal elaborations, and pointed announcements of His appearance – and they are not without reason. If we live without an acute

awareness of the return of Christ, our lives will become skewed in the wrong direction. That is why it is written, *"We are saved by hope"* (Rom 8:24-25). It is why the grace of God that brings salvation effectively teaches us to live *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"* (Titus 2:13).

### HE SHALL GIRD HIMSELF

*" . . . verily I say unto you, that He shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them . . ."*

Other versions read, *"He will gird Himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"He will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"He will make Himself their servant and, placing them at the table, He will come out and give them food,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"He will put on his work clothes, seat them at the table, and come serve them himself!"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"He Himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat!"* <sup>NLT</sup>

Jesus demonstrated this kind of humility on the eve of His betrayal. At that time, and at the close of the Supper, *"He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a*

*towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded"* (John 13:4-5). That event prefigured what the glorified Christ will do when all of His saints are gathered before Him at His coming.

In view of that, how must heaven look at those who do not serve Christ after He has clothed them with *"the garments of salvation"* (Isa 61:10).

### AND FIND THEM SO

*" . . . And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."*

The words *"find them so,"* means find them in a state of *"watching"* for His return – anticipating His return, and readying for it. The *"second"* and the *"third"* watches are times when most people are asleep (10:00 PM-4:00 AM). Under ordinary circumstances, people do not make plans for these periods of time. Jesus is underscoring the fact that His disciples are not ordinary people. Rather, they have been enlightened, and walk in the light. They live in the aura of revelation.

#### PERIODS OF THE NIGHT

1 <sup>st</sup> watch:	6:00 PM-9 PM
2 <sup>nd</sup> watch:	9:00 PM- 12:00 AM
3 <sup>rd</sup> watch:	12:00 AM -3:00 AM
4 <sup>th</sup> watch:	3:00 AM-6:00 AM

## IF THE GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE HAD KNOWN

*" 39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through."*

Jesus now reasons with His disciples, confirming how nonsensical it is to be unprepared for the coming of the Lord. Unpreparedness is a condition of spiritual insanity. This is so because the Lord has gone to great extent to inform us of His return, and what will take place at that time. At

that point there will never again be a time when men can repent, change their minds, or resolve to do better.

### IF THE GOODMAN OF THE HOUSE

*"And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come . . ."*

Other versions read, *"master of the house,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"head of the house,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"owner of the house,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"householder."* <sup>RSV</sup>

The lexical meaning of the word translated *"goodman of the house"* is *ōmaster of a house, householder,* <sup>THAYER</sup> *ōmaster of the house, head of the family, householder,* <sup>FRIBERG</sup> *ōmaster of a house (whether owner or steward),* <sup>DANK</sup> In Scripture there were special occasions when someone other than the owner was the head of household matters. Eliezer was the managing steward of Abraham's house (Gen 15:2). Joseph was the head over Potiphar's house (Gen 39:1-4).

The point to be seen here is that

Christ's servants have assigned areas of responsibilities. They do not simply sit in idleness awaiting special orders to do this or that. In the body of Christ, every member is placed where God pleases (1 Cor 12:18). That placement includes a spiritual gift (1 Cor 12), or measure of faith (Rom 12:3), or ability that God gives (1 Pet 4:11). That is an area of Kingdom responsibility. When Jesus comes, He expects all of His people to have guarded their area of responsibility, not allowing the enemy of our souls to disrupt or negate it.

An alert servant of Jesus will watch for possible intruders who will disrupt their ministry. It may be a person, or a

distracting influence, or an opportunity to leave their area of responsibility to serve the interests of others.

Our Lord has warned us of our adversary the devil (1 Pet 5:7-8). He has alerted us to the invasion of disruptive thoughts and imaginations (2 Cor 10:3-5), "*evilworkers*" (Phil 3:2), and the encroachments of "*the flesh*" (Rom 7:15-25). We are to be alert to these influences.

#### HE WOULD HAVE WATCHED

*" . . . he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. "*

This confirms that the Lord will in some way alert His servants to dangers, in order that they might repel them, and conquer would-be intruders. This requires sensitivity and alertness on their part. Right here it is good to remind ourselves that one of the primary reasons for brethren meeting together is to sharpen our spiritual sensitivity. Profitable gatherings help to cleanse our mind of unprofitable thoughts, and awaken us to spiritual alertness. They assist us to be ready to protect what we have from Christ, and not allow any person or influence to rob us or mitigate our role in the body of Christ.

### BE YE ALSO READY

<sup>40</sup> *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. "*

Now Jesus gives a solemn exhortation – one that is not common in our day.

#### BE YE READY ALSO

*"Be ye therefore ready also . . . "*

Other versions read, "*You also must be ready,*" <sup>NIV</sup> "*You also must be ready,*" <sup>ESV</sup> "*Be ye also prepared therefore,*" <sup>GENEVA</sup> "*You too must stand ready,*" <sup>NJB</sup> and "*therefore, be getting ready.*" <sup>ROT</sup>

All believers are responsible for being ready for the return of their Lord. They are not to allow anything to turn them aside from the work of preparation. There will not be an advance warning sent out that allows for last-minute preparation. The trumpet will sound, The Lord will come, and as He does the present heave and earth will pass away the dead will be raised

by a shout from Jesus, and the sinners and the saints will be gathered in two groups. While there is a kind of sequence declared, it will all take place "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*" (1 Cor 15:52). It will be the occasion of eternally disastrous for everyone who is not "*ready*" at that time.

#### FOR THE SON OF MAN COMETH

*" . . . for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not. "*

Other versions read, "*an hour you do not expect,*" <sup>NKJV</sup> "*an unexpected hour,*" <sup>NRSV</sup> "*when least expected,*" <sup>NLT</sup> and "*a moment when you do not anticipate it.*" <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The New Living Translation misrepresents the thought by reading "*when least expected.*" That is not at all the thought being expressed. The idea is that Jesus' coming has not been scheduled with a specific period of time in mind. It cannot be identified with expressions of time, for there will

be no time when Jesus returns. The present heavens and earth will flee away before the face of the glorified Christ, and no place will be found for them (Rev 20:11).

In terms of a period of time, when will that be? Jesus Himself said, "*But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father*" (Mark 13:32). If the Son does not know "*that day and that hour,*" how can man possibly know. Some have said we do not know the day or the hour, but we do know the time. That is just a ignorant statement. "*Day or the hour*" is an expression denoting time itself – in its most minute and definitive sense. Men cannot plan for the coming of the Lord by using a calendar, or a breakdown of days and hours. Our preparation, by design, is to be on a continual basis, not according to a planned schedule. Furthermore, the accent must not be, "He may come today," but rather, "I must be ready today."

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 10/28/16. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The FORTY-FOURTH lesson will cover verses 41 thru 59 of chapter 12: "CONCLUSIVE REASONING FOR DISCIPLES." After Peter asks Jesus who He had been addressing, Jesus speaks to His disciples concerning Divine objectives, and what they are to expect. These things will shape how the disciple lives, and what his expectation must be. There will be a marked difference from how life was lived under the Law. Under the Law, one lived to avoid the curse. In Christ, one lives to obtain the determined blessing.