

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

## WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

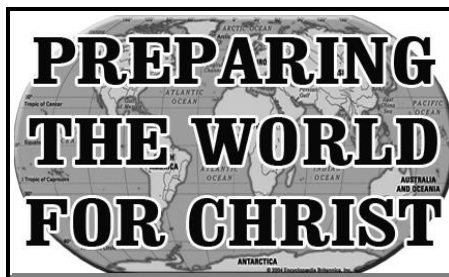
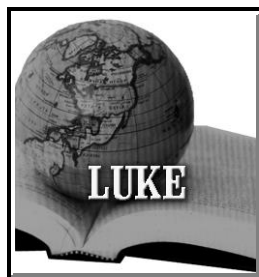
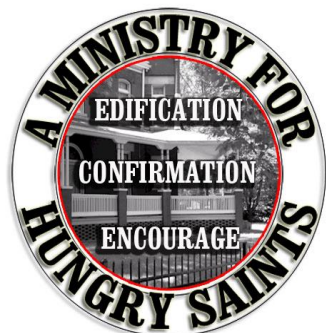
*An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely*

LESSON NUMBER 49

COMMENTARY ON: 14:25-15:10

### WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Although Jesus spoke very clearly concerning the unvarying requirements to be one of His disciples – someone whom He would teach – it appears that most professing Christians either are completely unaware of the requirements, or know them, yet do not believe them. However, Jesus, who Himself is the Truth (John 14:6) cannot not misrepresent, exaggerate, or lie about anything. It is not possible for Him to say something is essential if it is not. Furthermore, it is equally impossible for Him to overlook a person who ignores His stipulation, yet attempts to follow Him anyway, imagining that he will be profited by such a posture. A Lord who cannot lie, cannot possibly treat something He said is requisite as though that was not the case. A failure of a professed representative of Christ to present these requirements is a sin, and one of the highest order.



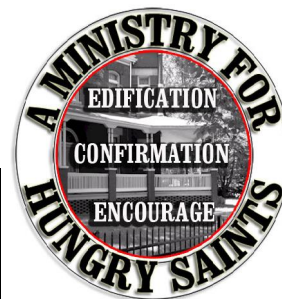
Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ





## The Book of Luke, 1/20/17

### Lesson Number 49



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.

# WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Luke 14:25 "And there went great multitudes with Him: and He turned, and said unto them, <sup>26</sup> If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. <sup>28</sup> For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? <sup>29</sup> Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, <sup>30</sup> Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. <sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. <sup>33</sup> So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>34</sup> Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? <sup>35</sup> It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. <sup>15:1</sup> Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. <sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. <sup>3</sup> And He spake this parable unto them, saying, <sup>4</sup> What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? <sup>5</sup> And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. <sup>7</sup> I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. <sup>8</sup> Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? <sup>9</sup> And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. <sup>10</sup> Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

## INTRODUCTION

### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Although Jesus spoke very clearly concerning the unvarying requirements to be one of His disciples – someone whom He would teach – it

appears that many professing Christians either are ignorant of the requirements, or know them, yet do not believe them. However, Jesus, who is the Truth (John 14:6), cannot misrepresent,

exaggerate, or lie about anything. It is not possible for Him to say something is essential, if it is not. Furthermore, it is equally impossible for Him to overlook a person who ignores His

Commonly known as "The Parable of the Prodigal Son," Jesus expands on the value of backsliders returning to God – Given O. Blakely

## CONTENTS

- ▶ **INTRODUCTION**
- ▶ **GREAT MULTITUDES WENT WITH HIM (14:25)**
- ▶ **IF ANY MAN COME TO ME (14:26)**
- ▶ **WHOSOEVER DOETH NOT BEAR HIS CROSS 14:27**
- ▶ **WHICH OF YOU INTENDING TO BUILD A TOWER (14:28-30)**
- ▶ **WHAT KING GOING TO MAKE WAR (14:31-32)**
- ▶ **WHOSOEVER FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH (14:33)**
- ▶ **IF THE SALT LOSES ITS SAVOR (14:34)**
- ▶ **HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR (14:35)**
- ▶ **THE PUBLICANS AND SINNERS DREW NEAR TO HIM (15:1)**
- ▶ **THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES MURMURED (15:2)**
- ▶ **HE SPAKE THIS PARABLE UNTO THEM (15:3-6)**
- ▶ **THERE IS JOY IN HEAVEN (15:7)**
- ▶ **A WOMAN WITH TEN PIECES OF SILVER LOSES ONE PIECE (15:8-9)**
- ▶ **JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD (15:10)**

stipulation, yet attempts to follow Him anyway, imagining that he will be profited by such a posture. A Lord who cannot lie, cannot possibly treat something He said is requisite as though that was not the case. A failure of a professed representative of Christ to present these requirements is a sin,

and one of the highest order.

On a day when "discrimination" is an unusually sensitive subject, it must be acknowledged that there is discrimination in the kingdom of God. However, it is not based on gender, social status, or ethnicity, and cannot be viewed as a respect of persons. Rather, it is based upon the condition of the heart and spirit of the individual, which are only fully known only to the Lord Himself.

- ⇒ If, for an example, a person does not love the Lord with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength, he will not be viewed or treated as though he did so love the Lord (1 Cor 16:22; Jude 1:21).
- ⇒ If a professed believer is "lukewarm," he will not be treated by heaven as though that was not the case (Rev 3:16).
- ⇒ If one resists the Holy Spirit, he will not be able to receive the advantages brought by the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51).
- ⇒ If professed believers do not "separate" from unbelievers, coming out from among them, God will not be their Father, and they shall not be His sons and daughters (2 Cor 6:17).
- ⇒ Equally true, no person can engage in what God requires without being duly noted and approved in heaven.

Our acceptance by God is strictly owing to our effective connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6) – and that is an association that must be maintained (John 15:4; 1 John 2:28).

These days you hear very little about abiding in Christ, or meeting the

revealed requirements for Divine acceptance. A general attitude has been developed by preachers and teachers that has left people thinking God accepts anyone, with little or no qualification at all.

However, in this text, Jesus will clarify with no uncertain words that this is not the case at all. He will clarify that there are certain qualifications that must be met before one can be His disciple or follower – conditions that must be met if He is going to teach a person – and no person is accepted by God who is not taught by Jesus (Eph 4:20-21).

### THE REASON FOR QUALIFICATIONS

There is good reason for the qualifications specified by the Lord. In salvation we are not merely adjusting our manner of living in this world. Rather, we are being oriented for another world– "the world to come" (Mk 10:30; Heb 2:5; 6:5). In heart and in manner of living, there must be a separation from "this present evil world" (Ga;1:4). That separation is affected by a death – dying with Jesus (Rom 6:3,8; Col 2:20). A new nature must be obtained (2 Cor 5:17), a fellowship with Jesus established (1 Cor 1:9), and a "communion with the Holy Spirit" realized (2Cor 13:4). One must cease to love the world (1 John 2:15), live by faith (Heb 10:38), and walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,26). This requires a new birth (2 Cor 5:17; 1 Pet 1:23), "the washing of regeneration" (Tit 3:5), and a placement in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:18).

All of these require one being a disciple of Christ – being taught and led by Him. This is the requirement of which Jesus speaks in our text.

## GREAT MULTITUDES WENT WITH HIM

Luke 14:25 *"And there went great multitudes with Him: and He turned, and said unto them."*

### GREAT MULTITUDES

*"And there went great multitudes with Him . . ."*

Other versions read, "large crowds," <sup>NIV</sup> "a great number of

people," <sup>BBE</sup> "great crowds," <sup>ESV</sup> and "huge crowds." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> The expression "great multitudes" means many multitudes, <sup>THAYER</sup> or a multiplication of multitudes. A Scriptural expression denoting such a concept is "ten thousand times ten thousand" (Dan 7:10), and "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" (Rev 5:11).

Previously Jesus had said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John 6:44), and "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father" (John 6:65). I gather, therefore, that this is what was happening at this time –the Father was drawing people to Jesus, bringing them within the

perimeter of His influence. This was being done on a large scale.

This was a prelude to a great ingathering that will occur just prior to the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14). This will not be the result of an evangelistic explosion. The Gospel has been so distorted and convoluted by men that this can never take place by that means. Ever since the last of the first century, this has been demonstrated at an astounding level. However, there is a final harvest that is going to take place. Pentecost was the harvest of the "first fruits," not the ultimate harvest.

To me, our times confirm that we are drawing near to that time. In preparation for the greater harvest, world population is exploding at exponential rates. The following sets the estimated figures before you.

### WORLD POPULATION GROWTH SINCE 1955

1955.....	2,758,314,525
1960.....	3,018,343,828
1965.....	3,322,495,121
1970.....	3,682,487,691
1975.....	4,061,399,228
1980.....	4,439,632,465
1985.....	4,852,540,569
1990.....	5,309,667,699
1995.....	5,735,123,084
2000.....	6,126,622,121
2005.....	6,519,635,850
2010.....	6,929,725,043
2015.....	7,349,472,099
2016.....	7,432,663,275
2017.....	7,515,284,153

(2017 is the projection)

#### Previous Milestones

5 Billion: 1987  
4 Billion: 1974  
3 Billion: 1960  
2 Billion: 1927  
1 Billion: 1804

(from Wikimedia Commons)

Keep in mind that the largest populated countries (China and India)

have limited the number of children being born, and abortions eliminate over a million persons a year in the United States alone – from 1972 through 2011, 53 million; 869,202 in 2012, 983,000 in 2013, and 954,000 in 2014. Since 1972, that is at least 55,806,202. That is 17% percent of the current population numbers of the USA (325,500,000). Without the abortions since 1972, the current population could have been over 386,000,000. Still, world population is growing at hitherto unknown rates.

I see this as the working of God, preparing the world for the final harvest, which will dwarf all other harvests, and will be accomplished by heaven's initiative. Through Isaiah God promised, "He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar, and will whistle to them from the end of the earth; Surely they shall come with speed, swiftly" <sup>NKJV</sup> (Isa 5:26). And again He promised, "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "See, I will beckon to the Gentiles, I will lift up my banner to the peoples; they will bring your sons in their arms and carry your daughters on their shoulders" <sup>NIV</sup> (Isa 49:22).

There will be no doubt about it, "Salvation is of the Lord" (John 2:9). Our text is a small example of the reality of Divine drawing. Until the time of John the Baptist, such a gathering to a man of God was not at all common.

### HE TURNED AND SAID UNTO THEM

" . . . and He turned, and said unto them."

Now the Lord will set the truth squarely before the people, informing them what is required for them to follow Him, be His disciples, and learn from Him.

It should be apparent to us that the disciples of Christ are not comprised of people who merely decide they want to be a follower of Jesus. To be sure, no one will ever be His disciple who does not truly want to be. However, the whole matter is supervised and implemented from heaven, not from earth. These are some things that have been revealed about this matter. Divine working will be confirmed in all of them.

⇒ The new birth is explained in these words: "But as many as received

Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13).

⇒ After informing believers that God is "working all things together for their good" (Rom 8:28), the Spirit explains why this is so: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them he also called: and whom He called, them he also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom 8:29-30).

⇒ The apostolic doctrine on this is, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." (Eph 1:2-6).

⇒ Believers are a creation of God: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph 2:10).

⇒ Believers are told, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess 2:13).

⇒ Believers are "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied" (1 Pet 1:2).

⇒ Whether individually or collectively, the people of God "are a chosen

*generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Pet 2:9).*

Add to these the fact that Jesus said, "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, "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of my Father" (John

6:65). That is the unvarnished truth.

All of these affirmations are at the root of salvation. They are the causes of transformation, regeneration, and the new birth. They are why precious promises can be given to those coming to Jesus.

Admittedly, this is most challenging to the natural mind – namely that God can choose, although it appears that the whole matter was fully accomplished by man. It must be remembered that man is a complicated

creation, not the result of a prolonged evolution by means of lengthy stages. Man is comprised of spirit, soul, and body (1Thess 5:23) – and each of those is characterized by phenomenal complexity. Only God can flawlessly work with such a creation, bringing men into personal and willing involvement in the entire process: "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:31). That is why we "rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil 3:3).. Praise His holy name for such a marvelous salvation.

## IF ANY MAN COME TO ME

<sup>26</sup> *"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."*

We should not expect the Lord Jesus, who Himself is "the wisdom of God" (1 Cor 1:24), to lisp to us in infant-like speech. Solomon once wrote, "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (Prov 1:22). If that was true under the Law, how much more is it true in Christ Jesus.

### IF ANY MAN COME TO ME

*"If any man come to Me . . ."*

This text will teach us that you can "come" to Jesus in an unacceptable state, and thus be refused. Effectively coming to Jesus involves having a proper attitude, the right motives, and an unwavering will.

### AND HATE NOT

*" . . . and hate not . . ."*

Other versions read, "and does not hate," <sup>NKJV</sup> "does not give Me the preferential place over," <sup>MIT</sup> "without hating," <sup>NJB</sup> "you must hate everyone else by comparison," <sup>NLT</sup> and "hate . . . in the sense of indifference to or relative disregard for them in comparison with his attitude toward God." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> The vast majority of the versions use the word "hate."

Before dealing with the etymological meaning of this word, we

must remember to be cautious, and to make no attempt to neuter the word, tone it down, or compromise its meaning. If failing to possess the hatred of reference excludes one from being a disciple and follower of Christ, then it cannot have a simplistic meaning.

Lexically, the meaning of this word is, *ōto* hate, pursue with hatred, detest, <sup>THAYER</sup> *ōhate*; of hostility of people for each other hate, detest; Hebraistically, requiring single-minded loyalty in discipleship, <sup>FRIBERG</sup> *ōdislike* strongly, with the implication of aversion and hostility - 'to hate, to detest, <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup> *ōhate* detest, abhor. <sup>GINGRICH</sup> *ōhave strong dislike for* some pers. or thing, hate. <sup>DANKER</sup>

Thayer adds, *ōNot* a few interpreters have attributed to it Gen. 29:31 (cf. Gen. 29:30); Deut. 21:15f; Matt. 6:24; Luke 14:26; 16:13; (John 12:25); Rom. 9:13, the signification to love less, to postpone in love or esteem, to slight. *ōHowever*, to my knowledge, no Greek scholar presents this as the primary meaning of the word.

The lexical synonyms that are presented are *ōdetest*, *ōaversion*, *ōhostility*, *ōdislike strongly*, *ōand abhor*. *ōThis* is set in the context of competitive influences – when being a disciple of Jesus becomes a choice over someone else. Take due note of who is mentioned.

### HIS

*" . . . his . . ."*

This does not refer to neighbors, political powers, or social acquaintances. Such personalities are not exposed to us

all of the time. But the ones Jesus mentions are close to us – related to us, a consistent part of our life.

### RELATIVES

*" . . . his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea."*

That takes in the totality of one's immediate family. No matter who the person is, a determination to be Christ's disciple may conflict with one's immediate family. That is, the time may come when the family will demand attention be given to them rather than to Jesus. We have of such a preference in the ministry of Jesus. "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house" (Luke 9:61). Jesus responded, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62). When Jesus pointedly said to a particular man, "Follow me," the man said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Jesus responded, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59-60).

Let it be clear that this is involved in saving ourselves from an "untoward generation" (Acts 2:40).

Speaking for myself and my family, we realize that Jesus must never assume second place in our lives – in any sense. That simply is the way it is. We have every right to expect those who are following Jesus to take the word of Christ seriously. Of course,



we can only manage our own lives, not the lives of others – and the Lord Jesus expects us to do so.

### HIS OWN LIFE ALSO

*"...yea, and his own life also..."*

Other versions read, *"even his own life,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"yes, even his own life,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"even life itself,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"he must hate even his own life."* <sup>NIRV</sup> Anything that is unique to you is included – your employment, your pleasures, your interests, your personal objectives, your property, etc – things not immediately related to Jesus. Anything in your person that competes with Jesus, or requires a pulling back from Him is to be hated – despised.

In this matter, only you can make the decision, for only you know yourself well enough to make this conclusion. Neither, indeed, can you make it for someone else.

### HE CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE

*"... he cannot be My disciple."*

What is forfeited is this requirement is not met? Well, it is a very large and significant matter. *"He cannot be My disciple!"* All versions read the same – *"My disciple."*

A *"disciple"* is not a title, but is a function, or occupation. In the Gospels alone, those who follow Christ are referred to as a *"disciple"* or *"disciples"* two hundred and twenty-four times. The book of Acts uses the term twenty-

eight times. It is not used in any of the Epistles. There the emphasis is not coming to Jesus, but living for Him. Those in Christ are taught by Him (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20). All true believers start out as disciples.

### WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

A definition of *"disciple"* is found in McClintok & Strongs Cyclopaedia: *one who professes to have learned certain principles from another, and maintains them on that other's authority.* The Cambridge Dictionary of American English defines a *"disciple"* as *one person who believes in the ideas of a leader, especially a religious or political one, and tries to live according to those ideas.* Whether we are speaking of a *"disciple"* from the Scriptural point of view, or that of language itself, a *"disciple"* has shaped both his thoughts and the manner of his living by a particular person's teaching and example. In the sense in which Jesus used the word, a *"disciple"* is someone whose thoughts and way of living is being shaped by what Jesus teaches. The disciple has made a choice to follow Jesus, listen to Him, obey Him, and live for Him. In our text, Jesus makes clear that He is the One who determines whether or not a person is one of His disciples.

In the days of Jesus, everyone knew the meaning of *"disciple."* There were *"disciples"* of John the Baptist - people who followed him and were taught by him (Matt 9:14; Lk 5:33; 7:18). There were also disciples of the

Pharisees, who followed them and were instructed by them (Mk 2:18; Lk 5:33). There were also *"Moses' disciples,"* who professed to follow his teachings (John 9:28). The disciples of Jesus were noted for being with Him, hearing Him, and following Him.

In our day, there is much reference to modeling, or living out what a person should be. While there is certainly some value to this, during the days of Jesus the mindset was who was the one teaching you. Whose word was directing the individual, and who had they chosen to listen to and follow. Therefore we read of *"disciples of the Pharisees"* (Mk 2:18), *"disciples of John"* (Matt 9:14), *"Moses' disciples"* (John 9:28), and Jesus' *"disciples"* (Matt 5:1; 9:10) – referred to as *"His disciples"* 144 times in the Gospels. Twenty-three times in the book of Acts, followers of Jesus are referred to as *"the disciples."*

Jesus makes clear that it is not possible to be His disciple if there is any individual who is more important to the person that Jesus Himself. If someone chooses to put Jesus in a second, or lower, position, he is, in that state, automatically excluded from the possibility of being Jesus' disciple. Jesus will not teach Him or lead Him. When Jesus speaks, such a person will not understand. When He works, the person will not be able to see it. That person cannot be Jesus' disciple, even though they may appear to be one.

## WHOSOEVER DOTH NOT BEAR HIS CROSS

*" 27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."*

### DOETH NOT

*"And whosoever doth not . . ."*

There are some things that are simply not allowed – they are strictly forbidden. Because *"the flesh"* does not like to be told what to do and not do, it cannot bear the teachings of Jesus. If a professing believer does not *"crucify"* the flesh *"with its passions and desires"* <sup>NKJV</sup> (Gal 5:24), it will cause him to be excluded from Christ Jesus and heaven. No person can afford to

ignore what Jesus said is *"NOT"* to be done!

### BEAR HIS CROSS

*"... bear his cross . . ."*

Other versions read, *"carry his own cross,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"carry the cross,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"take up his cross,"* <sup>ETH</sup> and *"persevere and carry his own cross."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Here there is an allusion to the fact that Jesus carried His own cross: *"Then delivered he [Pilate] Him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away. And He bearing His cross went*

*forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha"* (John 19:16-17).

The cross of Jesus was the place where He *"gave up the ghost,"* commending His soul to God and dismissing His spirit, voluntarily laying down His life (Lk 23:46). He could not return to heaven until this was done. Justification *"from all things"* (Acts 13:39) could not be realized until this was done. His work on earth could not be finished until this was accomplished.

What does it mean to *"bear,"* *"carry,"* or take up one's *"cross?"* This

involves the unpleasant repercussions of discipleship. This includes such things as:

- ⇒ Mortifying *"the deeds of the body"* (Rom 8:13).
- ⇒ Being persecuted *"for righteousness' sake"* (Matt 5:10).
- ⇒ Being *"reproached for the name of Christ"* (1 Pet 4:14).
- ⇒ *"Resisting the devil"* (James 4:7).
- ⇒ Keeping under one's body, and bringing it *"under subjection"* (1 Cor 9:27).
- ⇒ Being *"troubled," "perplexed," "forsaken,"* and *"cast down"* (2 Cor 4:9).
- ⇒ Learning how to be *"abased"* (Phil 4:12).
- ⇒ If necessary experiencing *"weariness and painfulness," "watchings often," "hunger and thirst," "fastings often,"* and *"cold*

*and nakedness"* (2 Cor 11:27).

- ⇒ Being in such circumstances that we even *"despair even of life,"* not knowing if we are going to live or die (2 Cor 1:8).
- ⇒ Experiencing the *"scorning of those who are at ease"* (Psa 123:4).
- ⇒ Having *"snares"* laid for you by *"the workers of iniquity"* (Psa 141:9).
- ⇒ Being *"separated from the company"* of acquaintances, being *"reproached,"* and having your *"name cast out as evil, for the Son of man's sake"* (Lk 6:22).

And what are you to do when you are confronted with such a variety of grievous experiences? Pick them up and carry them – like Jesus carried His cross.

### COME AFTER ME

*" . . . and come after Me . . . "*

Some other versions read, *"follow Me."* <sup>NIV</sup> This means Jesus is leading, and you are focused on Him, not allowing a distance to form between you and Him. Further, you are to do this bearing your cross, not compromising with your enemies, or joining the crowd of the indifferent.

### CANNOT BE MY DISCIPLE

*" . . . cannot be My disciple. "*

Again, Jesus means this. This is not mere oratory, or hypothetical language. Jesus will neither feed nor lead the individual who does not give heed to these words, daily picking up his cross and following the Lamb wherever he leads, heeding what He says, and translating it into life.

## WHICH OF YOU INTENDING TO BUILD A TOWER

<sup>28</sup> *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?* <sup>29</sup> *Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,* <sup>30</sup> *Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. "*

### INTENDING TO BUILD A TOWER

*"For which of you, intending to build a tower . . . "*

Becoming a disciple is likened to intending to build a tower – not intending to start building, but to complete the project. A start without a finish is not valuable anywhere. Who wants a half-naked cake. Of what value is a building with only a foundation.

Of course, it does not appear that modern day "evangelism" leaves people with the awareness that converts are expected to mature, and *"grow up into Christ in all things"* (Eph 4:15), and leave the world ready to meet the Lord and stand before Him at the *"judgment seat of Christ"* (2 Cor 5:10). Few of them are admonished to *"save themselves from this untoward generation"* (Acts 2:40). Hardly a one is told that if they do not grow up, they will fall away – for there is no such

thing as a legitimate beginning of spiritual life that is not intended to advance to maturity (Heb 6:1-6). What crowd attending an athletic event gets up and goes home after the event or game starts? Yet, in modern efforts to "win souls" beginning is the thing that is stressed, not finishing. Who is not aware of this?

### COUNTING THE COST

*" . . . sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? . . . "*

A man who sets out to build a tower is aware that it is going to cost something. The cost will not be the same as laying a foundation, or building a single story house. Such a person is fully aware that an unfinished tower is shameful. So the builder reviews his resources to see if he will be able to finish what he is setting out to do. Even in the world, that is considered the wise thing to do.

### NOT BEING ABLE TO FINISH

*" . . . Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it . . . "*

A lot of work precedes not being *"able to finish"* the building of a tower. It may have consumed weeks, months,

and even years of expensive and tedious labor.

### BEING MOCKED

*" . . . all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. "*

Now, the unfinished tower is a blotch on the landscape. It has no use, yet takes up space, and is an "eyesore" to the community.

So the people begin to mock the man. He was not a competent builder at all. He set out to do something he could not finish.

There is an approach to living that allows for frequent setbacks, and promotes sympathy for those who fail. Nearly all recovery programs are like this. In the Christian arena programs for unfinished towers, so to speak, are regularly developed. However, in becoming a disciple of Christ, there is no allowance for an unfinished life. If a person does fall, it is possible for them to be recovered, but not without considerable difficulty – and there really is no guarantee that recovery will automatically occur. Hear the word of the Lord: *"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness*



*instructing those that oppose themselves; IF God peradventure will give them repentance to the*

*acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken*

*captive by him at his will" (2 Tim 2:26). Coincidentally, the next chapter begins with a warning about "perilous times."*

## WHAT KING GOING TO MAKE WAR

*"<sup>31</sup> Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup> Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."*

### WHAT KING GOING TO MAKE WAR

*"Or what king, going to make war against another king . . ."*

The person who becomes a disciple of Jesus is being called into spiritual warfare. There are fierce, relentless and aggressive enemies that a "disciple" is required to confront.

- ⇒ Satan is "seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5:8).
- ⇒ Resisting the devil is required (1 Pet 5:9).
- ⇒ Wrestling "against principalities and powers" (Eph 6:12).

- ⇒ Fighting "the good fight of faith" (1 Tim 6:12).
- ⇒ Warring a "good warfare" (1 Tim 1:18).
- ⇒ Wearing "the whole armor of God" (Eph 6:10-17).
- ⇒ Provided with spiritual weaponry for our "warfare" (2 Cor 10:4-5).
- ⇒ Doctrines of demons (1 Tim 4:1).

### WHETHER HE BE ABLE

*" . . . sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?... "*

According to appearance, the "disciple" is inferior to the opponent. Now, to follow Jesus and be taught by Him, it must be discerned if the individual possesses enough resources to follow, while confronting adversaries that appear to be greater than himself.

### OR ELSE

*" . . . Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an*

*ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace."*

While in the world this is a valid condition, it is not an option for in confronting the enemy of our soul. Instead of seeking conditions of peace from the devil and his hosts, the disciple seeks peace with God, from whom adequate resources are obtained.

The point here is that the disciple must be resolved to engage the foe with adequate resources, and thus to overcome any temptation to linger at a distance from Christ, or attempt to remain in His classroom while maintaining the status of a novice. Neither of these options is available to the would-be disciple. That is why it is imperative that the cost of discipleship be counted. When believers attempt to recruit other disciples, it is imperative that these things be kept in mind, and apprise the people of them. What is involved in following Jesus must be perceived by those coming to Him.

## WHOSOEVER FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH

*"<sup>33</sup> So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."*

### WHOSOEVER HE BE OF YOU

*"So likewise, whosoever he be of you . . ."*

Other versions read, "any of you," <sup>NIV</sup> "every one of you," <sup>CSB</sup> and "not one of you." <sup>NET</sup>

This is another example of the unwavering applicability of the teaching of Jesus. Here, the word is to anyone who aspires to be one of His followers. It makes no difference if they are Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free. There is no special class of would-be followers of Jesus that are exempt from this requirement. Anyone and everyone who wants to follow Jesus, be taught by Him, or obtain the advantages only

He can give, must meet this qualification.

### FORSAKETH NOT ALL THAT HE HATH

*" . . . that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."*

Other versions read, "give up all his possessions," <sup>NASB</sup> "give up everything he has," <sup>NIV</sup> "renounce all that he has," <sup>RSV</sup> "are unwilling to give up all of your possessions," <sup>CEB</sup> and "does not say good-bye to all his possessions." <sup>CSB/AMPLIFIED</sup>

One called St. Francis de Sales once said, "We must live in this world as though the soul was already in heaven and the body mouldering in the grave." <sup>PULPITCOMMENTARY</sup>

The idea here is that when Jesus calls us, there must be nothing that

holds us back – no competing interests; no cherished possessions that would keep us from being taught and led by the Son of God. Jesus does not demand a "vow of poverty," like the Catholic Church does of its ministers and servants. However, a disciple of Jesus must be resolved to follow Him at all costs.

It is in the heart and mind that this forsaking takes place. Jesus does not offer men a preeminent position, a good salary, and a secure financial future. That is not how men are drawn to Him. His salvation demands a separation from the world. Nothing must be allowed that anchors the individual to "this present evil world."

This is not a rule to be imposed on others by the supposed elite in the Kingdom. This can only be achieved by

the individual himself, and cannot be imposed on anyone else. That, of course, is the nature of spiritual life.

## IF THE SALT LOSES ITS SAVOR

<sup>34</sup> *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?* <sup>35</sup> *It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out.*

The Lord will now elaborate on why all must be forsaken to be His disciple. Undue attachment to other things will erode both the abilities and the ministry of a disciple of Jesus.

### SALT IS GOOD

*"Salt is good . . ."*

Other versions read, *"Salt is excellent,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"Salt is useful,"* <sup>MIT</sup> and *"Salt is good [an excellent thing]."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Salt is good for taste (Job 6:6), medicinal (Ezek 16:4), purification (2 Kgs 2:20-21), and has the spiritual significance of preservation—i.e. *"A covenant of salt"* (Num 18:19). In scripture, there was a city named *"Salt"* (Josh 15:62). Speech that is characterized by grace is said to be *"seasoned with salt"* (Col 4:6). There were many uses of salt. When destroying a city, it was sown with salt so it would not rise again (Judges 9:45). I would suppose this is the final utility salt can have.

Salt was a key ingredient in the sacrifices offered under the Old Covenant (Lev 2:13).

Therefore, for many different uses, *"salt is good."*

### IF THE SALT HAS LOST ITS SAVOR

*" . . . but if the salt have lost his savor . . ."*

Other versions read, *"lost its flavor,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"become tasteless,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"loses its saltiness,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"become insipid,"* <sup>ETH</sup> *"has lost its strength and has become saltless (insipid, flat)."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The most precise meaning is *"lost its strength."* <sup>THAYER</sup> The word *"taste"* is not thorough enough. The salt used in sacrifices was not tasted. Salt used for preservation is not tasted. Salt used for the destruction of vegetation is not tasted. The idea here is that the salt has lost its pungency, potency, or effectiveness. It cannot flavor or preserve food, and cannot destroy vegetative life.

### WHEREWITH SHALL IT BE SEASONED?

*" . . . wherewith shall it be*

*seasoned?*

Other versions read, *"how can it become salty again?"* <sup>CEB</sup> *"made salty,"* <sup>CSB</sup> *"how shall its saltiness be restored?"* <sup>ESV</sup>

It is apparent that there is no process in which saltiness can be restored to salt that has lost its saltiness. That is, it cannot be restored to usefulness.

### IT IS NOT FIT

*"It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill . . ."*

Saltless salt is not even *"fit for the land."* Indeed, it is not even fit *"for the manure heap."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> i.e.—*"to mix with dung, and help it, that it may be the more serviceable for the earth."* <sup>JOHN GILL</sup>

### MEN CAST IT OUT

*" . . . but men cast it out."*

Other versions read, *"throw it out,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"no one has a use for it,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"People will just trash it."* <sup>MIT</sup>

Such salt is simply useless, and will not be kept by the one possessing it. Whatever purpose it once served is served no longer, so it is discarded.

## HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR

<sup>35</sup> *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

### HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR

*"He that hath ears to hear . . ."*

Other versions read, *"Let anyone with ears to hear"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"ears for hearing,"* <sup>MIT</sup> *"ears for listening."* <sup>NJB</sup>

This saying, therefore, has not been for everyone – only for those with the ability to hear such words. There are some today like some in Israel of whom it was said, *"Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day"* (Deut 29:4). There are some people

who grow harder and more obstinate when they hear words from God. As it is written, *"And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed"* (Isa 6:10). This hardening was accomplished by repeated words – i.e. *"But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and*

*snared, and taken"* (Isa 28:13). These are not the kind of people Jesus bids to *"hear."* Rather, He speaks to those who will know what He is talking about.

### LET HIM HEAR

*" . . . let him hear."*

Other versions read, *"Listen,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"pay attention,"* <sup>CEB</sup> *"had better listen!"* <sup>NET</sup> *"listen and understand!"* <sup>NLT</sup> and *"let him listen and consider and comprehend by hearing!"* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Sixteen times from Matthew thru Revelation we read the words, *"Let him hear"* (Matt 11:15; 13:9; 13:43; Mk 4:9,23; 7:19; 8:8; 14:35; Rev

2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 13:9).The Lord expects His people to understand and heed what He says to them.

This is particularly true of the things

He had just said to the people. The things that exclude people from being a disciple of Jesus – being led and taught by Him – are things that deplete their spiritual resources – like salt losing

its saltiness. If that happens – and only the Lord fully knows when that it is, there is no more place for that individual in the favor and purpose of God. The gravity of that is apparent.

## THE PUBLICANS AND SINNERS DREW NEAR TO HIM

<sup>15:1</sup> *Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him."*

### THEN

*"Then . . ."*

The word translated *"then"* means "but," or "moreover"; by way of opposition and distinction; it is added to statements opposed to a preceding statement, <sup>THAYER</sup> most commonly to denote continuation and further thought development, taking its specific sense from the context and; contrast but; transition then, now. <sup>FRIBERG</sup>

In this text, the individuals mentioned are contrasted with *"great multitudes,"* to whom He had just finished identifying who could be His disciple (14:25-35). His words suggested that there were those in that multitude that needed to hear those words. Perhaps they were nothing more than curious people, who had no real intention of being Jesus' disciples – at least that is the insinuation. Now, a different kind of people gather around Him, intrigued by what He had been saying.

### SOME DREW NEAR TO HEAR HIM

*" . . . drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him."*

Other versions read, *"were coming near,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"were all gathering around to hear Him,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"were coming near to listen to Him,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"were all drawing near,"* <sup>RSV/ESV</sup> *"were all crowding round to listen,"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"often came to listen to Jesus teach."* <sup>NLT</sup>

This was not said of the multitude to whom He had been speaking. Of them it was said, *"And there went great multitudes with Him"* (Luke 14:25). It does not say they were anxious to hear what Jesus had to say, although there were no doubt many among them that were interested. Now,

however, we are exposed to a crowd who pressed in close to Jesus, desiring to hear what He had to say.

### PUBLICANS AND SINNERS

Other versions read, *"the tax collectors and the sinners,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"tax-gatherers and the sinners,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"tax-takers and sinners,"* <sup>MIT</sup> *"Tax collectors and other notorious sinners,"* <sup>NLT</sup> and *"tax collectors and [notorious and especially wicked] sinners."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Jesus once pointed out that the *"publicans"* were not noted for being paragons of virtue: *"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?"* (Matt 5:46-47). He also said of being unable to correct a brother, *"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican"* (Matt 18:17).

Yet, everyone occupying this position was not locked into the reputation for which they were noted. Jesus said of John the Baptist, *"For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him"* (Matt 21:32).

When the apostles of Jesus were named, Matthew was identified as *"Matthew the publican"* (Matt 10:3). In fact, Jesus called him while he was doing his work, and Matthew left all and followed Jesus (Matt Mk 2:14-15). Further, when Matthew prepared a feast for Jesus, *"many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him"* (Mark 2:15). Zacchaeus was a rich *"publican,"* yet *"sought to see Jesus, who He was."* Jesus did not shun him because he was

a publican, but went to his house. Before the visit was over, it is written of that household, *"And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:9-10).

What a marvelous confirmation that being part of, what is known as a sinful class, does not mean the individual is a slave to it. Jesus delivers men *"from this present evil world"* (Gal 1:4) – even if they are *"publicans."*

Keep in mind that prior to Jesus' ministry, the publicans were drawn to John the Baptist, and *"justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John"* (Luke 7:29). Now, they come to Jesus, the Savior of the world. Consider also that the preaching of both John and Jesus was strong, and made no allowance for continuing in sin. Both called for their hearers to *"repent"* (Matt 3:2; Matt 4:17).

### WHAT CAN BE SEEN HERE?

The words of Jesus resonated with those who were not pleased with their own conduct. Like the Word of God, His words pierced into them, dividing between the spirit and the soul, and revealing the intents of the heart (Heb 4:12). It discovered what no man could discover, and they came to Jesus as a result.

Their inner condition is what was used of God to draw them to Jesus. They did not come to Him to obtain a new earthly status, but to satisfy a longing heart. The testimony and message of godly people still has that effect on certain kinds of people – people who are fully known, only to God Himself, and the Lord Jesus Christ. The Pharisees came to Jesus and were rejected. The publicans and sinners came to Him, and were accepted. Both reactions were Divine, not human.

## THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES MURMURED

*"<sup>2</sup> And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."*

### THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES MURMURED

*"And the Pharisees and scribes murmured . . ."*

Other versions read, *"complained," "began to grumble,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"muttered,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"were angry,"*<sup>BBE</sup> *"kept carping about this,"*<sup>MIT</sup> *"were whispering among themselves,"*<sup>NIRV</sup> *"kept muttering and indignantly complaining."*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Jesus *"came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Tim 1:15) – but these Pharisees and scribes did not entertain such a thought. They had, I suppose, taken the words of the Law, and used them to justify themselves. They were living by their own agenda, and thus violating God's revealed will. They claimed to be Moses' disciples, yet Moses prohibited their manners.

⇨ *"After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."* (Lev 18:3)

⇨ *"And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nation, which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them."* (Lev 20:23)

Likewise, the Psalms and the prophets instructed of, and warned against, certain manners.

⇨ *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."* (Psa 1:1).

⇨ *"Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at*

*them."* (Jer 10:2)

### THIS MAN RECEIVETH SINNERS

*" . . . saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. . . ."*

They equated receiving sinners with approving of them. They forget, if they ever knew, that the Psalmist had said, *"Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will He teach sinners in the way"* (Psa 25:8). That is precisely what Jesus was doing – teaching sinners. David said that the the joy of God's salvation was restored to him, *"Then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee"* (Psa 51:13). Jesus, of course, had no need for the restoration of the joy of salvation, but He was, indeed, teaching transgressors the ways of the Lord. The text does not say so, but Jesus must have groaned within when He knew they were murmuring, complaining, and finding fault with Him. His tender spirit was not impervious to the sinful expressions of men (Mk 3:5; John 11:13).

## HE SPAKE THIS PARABLE TO THEM

*"<sup>3</sup> And He spake this parable unto them, saying, <sup>4</sup> What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? <sup>5</sup> And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. <sup>6</sup> And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost."*

### HE SPAKE THIS PARABLE UNTO THEM

*"And He spake this parable unto them . . ."*

There were certainly other people around Jesus. Yet, He addressed this parable to the Pharisees and scribes who had been murmuring – probably under their breath. Of course, Jesus' words were never intended to only be known by those to whom they were addressed. The rest of the people

around Him would hear these words, and they would also be passed down to following generations – by our time at least fifty generations. They have also, at some time, been passed to every segment of the world (Col 1:23). Jesus spoke with this in mind, informing us that His words would *"not pass away"* (Matt 24:35).

### IF HE LOSE ONE OF THEM

*" . . . saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them . . ."*

The parable is not of a man finding some stray sheep, but of finding one of his own sheep who had become lost, and separated from the fold. Jesus had come into the world to save sinners – particular the Jews, who were *"His own"* (John. These publicans and sinners were Jews who had, for whatever reason, wandered away from the fold.

No owner of a flock will remain

indifferent to one of them being lost. Therefore, Jesus continues.

### HE LEFT THE NINETY AND NINE

*" . . . doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? . . ."*

Now, this is a parable, and is not precise in every detail. Jesus will not abandon His flock to go after a wandering One. That is because He is now omnipresent, being everywhere at once. Man however, is not so described. Rachel, for example, kept her father's sheep (Gen 29:9). David went to Bethlehem to feed his father's sheep (1 Sam 17:15). It was his father's sheep that he protected when he killed an attacking lion and bear (1 Sam 17:34). Jesus is by no means is advocating the neglect of one's fold. Here He is accenting the value the shepherd has placed upon all of His sheep.

### WHEN HE FOUND IT

*" . . . And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. . . "*

The shepherd did find his sheep – not a wild sheep (if there is such a thing), but his own sheep. It appears as though it had been caught in a thicket, or something similar – like the ram of Abraham's experience when he was commanded to offer up Isaac as a burn offering (Gen 22:13).

The sheep was apparently wounded, requiring that it be carried home. How joyful was the owner when he found his sheep. He *"joyfully puts it on his shoulders"* (Luke 15:5). Isaiah prophesied of the *"Great Shepherd of the sheep"* (Heb 13:20) in these words, *"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young"* (Isa 40:11).

Jesus is revealing His care for His sheep. At the time, that care was focused upon *"the Jew first."* These Publicans and sinners were Jewish sheep, as it were, and Jesus had come

to save them.

### REJOICE WITH ME

*" . . . And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. "*

The shepherd had found his sheep, and returned home. This depicted Jesus finding His lost sheep and returning to the fold, where the sheep lived. Jesus found the sheep, the sheep had not find Him. Jesus said, *"I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine"* (John 10:14) – and it is in that order. This is why Paul wrote, *"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God"* (Gal 4:9). How blessed it is to know that even though the faith *"of some"* is overthrown, *"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."* (2 Tim 2:19).

Even as in the parable, the

exalted Christ desires that we rejoice with Him when lost sheep are found, and restored to the fold. This suggests that the other sheep were glad to have the lost sheep restored to the fold.

The great God of heaven says of Himself, *"I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment"* (Ezek 34:16). What a glorious reality! God seeking, bringing again, binding up, strengthening, and removing the enemy. That is something of what is involved in being *"found."*

In some sense, those in the body of Christ can participate in such rescues. Paul writes, *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"* (Gal 6:1). Isaiah prophesied, *"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees"* (Isa 35:3). Whenever anyone is restored to the fold, we are to rejoice.

## THERE IS JOY IN HEAVEN

*"<sup>7</sup> I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."*

Jesus now gives us a glimpse of the heavenly realms, and what occurs there when a sinner repents. Even though *"the heavens do rule"* (Dan 4:26), there are responses there to things that take place in the earth.

### I SAY UNTO YOU

*"<sup>7</sup> I say unto you . . . "* One hundred and twenty-one times in the Gospels Jesus is described as saying, *"I say unto you."* Twenty times He said, *"Verily, verily I say unto you."* The words *"Jesus said"* are found sixty-five times in the Gospels. This clearly places an accent on what Jesus said. In this case, Jesus will tell the people something they could not possibly have known if it was not told to them.

### JOY SHALL BE IN HEAVEN

*" . . . that likewise joy shall be in heaven . . . "*

This is the only place in the Scriptures where this phrase is mentioned – *"joy shall be in heaven."* When Babylon the Great is depicted as falling, the exhortation was shouted, *"Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her"* (Rev 18:20). When the ark of the covenant was restored to Israel, the people said, *"Let the heavens rejoice"* (1 Chron 16:31). The Psalmist wrote, *"Let the heavens rejoice"* (Psa 96:11). When the accuser of the brethren was cast down, and the saints overcame him, the word went out, *"Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them"* (Rev 12:12).

Heaven is not indifferent when the work of God is made known in the earth.

When Jesus says *"shall be in heaven,"* it is possible that He is

speaking of the final day, when all sinners who have repented will be presented to Jesus.

### OVER ONE SINNER

*" . . . over one sinner that repenteth . . . "*

Here is how perceptive and sensitive heavenly personalities are. They are not depicted as rejoicing when a multitude of people repent – although they must certainly do so. Jesus said there was *"joy in heaven over ONE sinner that repenteth."* That tells us what a great work has been done when a sinner repents. It reveals how God and the exalted Christ are involved with men down to the individual level.

### MORE THAN OVER NINETY AND NINE

*" . . . more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."*

This is spoken to the Pharisees

because there were more of them than of the publicans and sinners. He was by no means suggesting there are really any just persons who need no repentance – but that is what they thought. It is written, *"The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God.* They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psa 14:2-3; Rom 3:10-18). And again, *"For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not"* (Eccl 7:20). And again, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). *As long as we are in the*

*world, we will not reach the point where we will never again have to repent.* This is because *"the flesh is weak"* (Matt 26:41), and the warring *"law of sin"* remains within our flesh – even though we can gain the victory over it. So far as heaven is concerned, one sinner that repents is worth more than ninety-nine pharisees who imagine they are righteous. Of course, no one who is knowledgeably before the Lord will contend that he no longer has any need to repent. God's attitude toward His people – those who are in the fold – is stated in these words: *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is*

*longsuffering to us-ward* [toward you <sup>NASB</sup>], *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet 3:9).

The Pharisees, however, were ignorant of this, and so Jesus spoke to them just as though they were what they thought themselves to be. While they looked at themselves as superior to others, and even able to monitor Jesus Himself, they would not give any occasion for the heavens to rejoice in them. They were walking on a course that would never produce any joy in heaven, not then, or at any other point in time.

## A WOMAN WITH TEN PIECES OF SILVER LOSES ONE PIECE

*"<sup>8</sup> Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?<sup>9</sup> And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."*

Jesus continues to accent the fact that what belongs to the Lord is precious to Him. The prophet Malachi said of those who were precious to the Lord, *"And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him"* (Mal 3:17).

One of the strong New Covenant affirmations of this care is expressed in the epistle to the Ephesians: *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Eph 2:4-6).

### A WOMEN WITH TEN PIECES OF SILVER

*"Either what woman having ten pieces of silver . . ."*

Other versions read, *"ten silver coins,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"bits of silver,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"ten drachmas,"* <sup>CJB</sup> *"ten [silver] drachmas [each one equal to a day's wages]."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

In those days, the value of *"pieces of silver"* was not determined by an identifying word or inscription on the money itself. Rather, it was determined by weight, which identified its true worth. Thus Zechariah prophesied of Judas' betrayal of Jesus by saying, *"And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they WEIGHED for my price thirty pieces of silver"* (Zech 11:12).

Therefore, the loss of this woman was of precise value.

### IF SHE LOSE ONE PIECE

*" . . . If she lose one piece . . ."*

These ten pieces of silver were not like artificial pieces of cheap jewelry. They must not have been very small, or of minimal value. We have no idea if each of the ten pieces had the same value, or were of varying degrees or worth represented when weighed. In fact, it is quite possible that this was the most valuable piece.

### SWEEPING DILIGENTLY

*" . . . doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? . . ."*

Lighting a candle so she could clearly see, she went through the house, sweeping carefully and diligently for the piece of silver. This was sweeping for cleaning, not a casual sweeping. It was intended to find anything that was loose on the flooring, and was not a part of the floor itself.

### WHEN SHE HATH FOUND IT

*" . . . And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost."*

This was not a mere trinket, but something of value – something precious. Perhaps she had told her neighbors about her loss. However, whether she did or not, she wanted to share her joy with them, for she had found that which was lost.

Of course, Jesus is establishing to them, although they cannot grasp it, that He is refreshed by the fact that the publicans and sinners had come to Him to hear what He had to say. We must exercise ourselves to remember the joy Jesus has when we come to Him.

## JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD



<sup>10</sup> *"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*

#### LIKEWISE

*"Likewise . . ."*

Other versions read, *"in the same way,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"Just so,"* <sup>NRSV</sup> *"even so,"* <sup>ASV</sup> *"thus."* <sup>DARBY</sup>

Jesus is establishing that just as there are certain consistent responses among men, so in heaven there are unvarying responses to certain things that occur on earth. The Pharisees lacked this kind of consistency. They rejoiced only when their own carnal objectives and preferences were met. They had respect of persons, which is nowhere present in the glory.

#### JOY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE ANGELS OF GOD

*" . . . I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God*

*over one sinner that repenteth."*

In His first parable, Jesus said *"I say unto you, that likewise joy SHALL be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth"* (Luke 15:7). This accented the trait of godly expectancy – *"shall be."* That is, we should expect this to happen when a sinner repents.

Now, however, speaking of the same phenomenon, Jesus says *"there IS joy in the presence of THE ANGELS OF GOD over one sinner that repenteth."* This accents the unvarying reality of the situation. That is, when a sinner repents, this is what is happening in heaven. Further, it is happening *"in the presence of the angels of God,"* or *"before the angels of God."* <sup>RSV</sup> Some versions do not make this clear—i.e. *"Among the angels of God."* <sup>BBE/NJB</sup> Most of the versions read *"in the presence of,"* or *"before."*

That is, the angels are

represented as spectators, not participants. This because the reality of *"repentance"* has never been experienced among them, nor as anything like this ever been seen in heaven. Peter points out that angels desire to look into things related to *"the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"* (1 Pet 1:11). Without making too much of this, In all of Scripture, the words *"angel"* or *"angels"* are never joined to the words *"rejoice," "rejoiced," "rejoicing," "glad,"* or *"gladness."* They are noted for praising God and giving glory to Him (Lk 2:13), but are never themselves represented as rejoicing. However, as Jesus made known in His first parable, *"there shall be joy in heaven"* over every sinner that repents. That fact alone, should induce rejoicing among us when one repents. I gather that in heaven, when every sinner that has repented and continued in the faith, is present, there will be an outburst of joy that has never before been heard.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/3/17. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The forty-ninth lesson will cover verses 11 thru 32: *"THE MAN WITH TWO SONS."* This text is commonly known as *"The parable of the Prodigal Son."* It concerns a man with two sons, quite different from each other. One demanded his inheritance, went away, and squandered it. After hitting the bottom of the pit, he resolved to return home and request to be a servant of his father. He was gladly received, and a feast was prepared for him. The eldest son objected, saying he had faithfully served his father, yet no feast had been prepared for him. The father gave an extended answer to him. Jesus provided no explanation of the parable. It was too obvious to do so. We will begin our meeting at 6:30, which will be followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.