

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

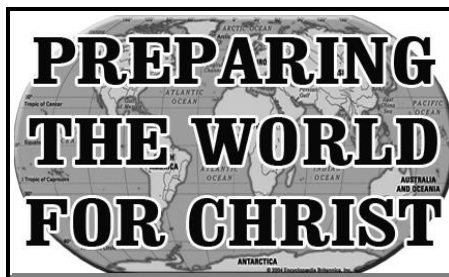
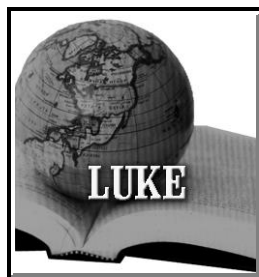
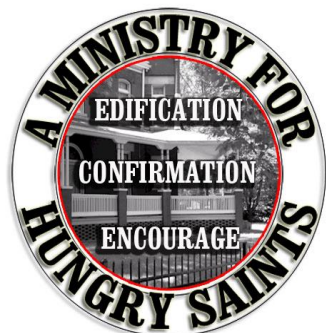
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 53

COMMENTARY ON: 17:1-19

OFFENCES, FAITH, AND TEN LEPERS

Apparently immediately after speaking with some objecting Jews, Jesus addressed His disciples. He first takes up the matter of offences, stating they are impossible to altogether avoid. However He pronounces a "woe" upon those who through whom offences come. He then speaks to them of the readiness to forgive anyone who trespasses against them, then repents. When the disciples asked Jesus to "increase" their faith, He rejoined by speaking of faith "as a grain of mustard seed." He then instructed them concerning the lack of merit that is associated with doing what is right. Because they were in the process of traveling, en route to Jerusalem they passed through a "certain village," where Jesus was confronted with ten lepers. Luke provides a rather extensive account of what took place at that time.

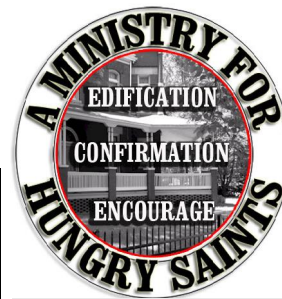


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 3/17/17

Lesson Number 53



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 Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot 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=Liturgical 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 (1995), 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 out to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

OFFENCES, FAITH, AND TEN LEPERS

Luke 17:1 "Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! ² It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. ³ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. ⁴ And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. ⁵ And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. ⁶ And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. ⁷ But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? ⁸ And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? ⁹ Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. ¹⁰ So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. ¹¹ And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. ¹² And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: ¹³ And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. ¹⁴ And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, ¹⁶ And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? ¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. ¹⁹ And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole." Luke 17:1-19

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Apparently immediately after speaking with some objecting Jews, Jesus addressed His disciples. This was done while they were traveling, moving steadily toward Jerusalem. The regular activities of Jesus were remarkably extensive. There is no record of Him wasting time, or being caught up in

incidentals.

⇨ AT A WEDDING. When He attended a wedding feast, He turned water into wine – His first miracle (John 1:2-11).

⇨ IN SOMEONE'S HOUSE. When He ate at someone's house, He taught and

worked in the behalf of His Father (Mk 2:15-22; Lk 14:1-24; 19:1-27).

⇨ WHEN HE WAS WEARIED. When He was wearied and sat on well, He taught (John 4:5-43).

⇨ IN THE TEMPLE. When He went into the Temple, He taught and worked

JESUS SPEAKS CONCERNING OFFENCES AND THEIR SERIOUSNESS, EXPOUNDS THE MATTER OF FAITH, AND HEALS TEN LEPERS – Given O. Blakely

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miracles (Mk 12:35; Lk 19:47; 20:1; John 7:14,28-29; 8:2,20; 18:20).

⇒ IN THE SYNAGOGUE. When He went into a synagogue, He taught and worked miracles (Mk 1:21-27; 3:1-5; 6:2; Lk 4:16-28; 6:6-10; 13:10-17; John 6:69; 18:20).

⇒ BY THE SEA SIDE. Down by the sea side, He taught (Matt 13:1-9); Mk 2:13; 4:1).

⇒ ON THE MOUNTAIN. Upon the mountain, He taught (Matt 24:3-25:46).

⇒ AFTER CROSSING JORDAN. After He crossed the Jordan, people came to Him, and He taught them (Mk 10:19).

We should consider that all of this was necessary to our salvation – not necessary in the sense of being required as a basis for salvation, but essential for preparing Him to lay down His life. As a Man He was beholding what sin had done to humanity. He was going to be required to *"be a merciful and faithful High Priest in*

things pertaining to God," and this required that He be made *"like unto His brethren"* (Heb 2:17).

During His sojourn in the flesh, He would be *"tempted in all points like as we are"* (Heb 4:15). He would face the devil in all of his subtlety and craftiness (Matt 4:1-11; Lk 4:13). He would have the experiences of weariness (John 4:6), hunger (Matt 4:2; 21:18), and thirst (John 19:28).

During his years prior to His ministry, He had to rely upon God, not sin, and maintain His sensitivity to His Father. He could not be distracted into the lower realms, where spiritual productivity was not possible. In fact, when He was but twelve years of age, He confessed with understanding, *"I must be about My Father's business"* (Lk 2:49).

During His ministry Jesus confessed the following. They revealed His dependency on the Father.

⇒ *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise"* (John 5:19).

⇒ *"I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things"* (John 8:28).

⇒ *"I speak that which I have seen with My Father"* (John 8:38).

⇒ *"I can of Mine own Self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me"* (John 5:30).

Nothing could distract Jesus from what He was sent to do. What He Himself actually was, prohibited Him from pursuing unnecessary protracted involvements. Think of some of them:

⇒ NOURISHMENT. *"I am the Bread of life"* (John 6:35).

⇒ ILLUMINATION. *"I am the Light of the World"* (John 8:12).

⇒ ENTRANCE. *"I am the Door of the*

sheep" (John 10:7).

⇒ GUIDING AND FEEDING. *"I am the Good Shepherd"* (John 10:14).

⇒ LIVING. *"I am the Resurrection and the Life"* (John 11:25).

⇒ ACCESS. *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life"* (John 14:6).

⇒ BEARING FRUIT. *"I am the True Vine"* (John 15:1).

These provisional aspects of our salvation did not allow for a waste of time, being drawn aside to unprofitable things, or being slowed down, so to speak, by other interests.

If we are able to see it, our lives are lived in the same manner, with our inheritance in mind. That allows us to do a variety of things – like Jesus did – yet not be distracted by lesser things.

PREFACE

As Jesus begins speaking to His disciples, He first takes up the matter of offences, stating they are impossible to altogether avoid. However He pronounces a *"woe"* upon those through whom offences come. He then speaks to them of the readiness to forgive anyone who trespasses against them, then repents. When the disciples asked Jesus to *"increase"* their faith, He rejoined by speaking of faith *"as a grain of mustard seed."* He then instructed them concerning the lack of merit that is associated with doing what is right. Because they were in the process of traveling, en route to Jerusalem, they passed through a *"certain village,"* where Jesus was confronted with ten lepers. Luke provides a rather extensive account of what took place at that time.

Everything that Jesus said and did was deliberately and consciously within the framework of the will of God. In this He set forth a sterling example of how life is to be lived in this world. For us, this kind of life requires being born again, living by faith, and walking in the Spirit. Such a life cannot be lived by a code, methodology, or a humanly devised regimen. It is a life that cannot be mimicked, or emulated by some kind of routine. In all of his intelligence and aptitude, man cannot originate a word or a message that has

moral and spiritual power. By way of explanation, anything that requires repetition or a "habit," cannot possibly

have Divine power – and that is what is needed to say or do anything for the Lord that yields a result that is

acceptable to Him, and enables men to be approved by God. This is a lesson that has proved difficult to learn.

OFFENCES WILL COME

Luke 17:1 *"Then said He unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!"*

THEN SAID HE TO HIS DISCIPLES

"Then said His unto the disciples..."

Other versions read, *"to His disciples,"*^{NASB} and *"the taught ones."*^{TS2009}

Matthew's Gospel reads, *"Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"* (Matt 18:7). The statement as recorded in both Matthew and Luke suggests this word was said to the twelve, instead of the general body of disciples that followed Him. Later in this text, it was *"the apostles"* who responded (Lk 17:5). While there was a vast number of *"disciples,"* there were only *"twelve apostles"* (Matt 10:2-4; Lk 22:14). There are some things Jesus has to say to the ones He has accepted, that are not said to other general followers.

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE

"... It is impossible but that offences will come..."

Other versions read, *"It is impossible that no offenses should come,"*^{NKJV} *"It is inevitable that stumbling blocks should come."*^{NASB} *"Jesus said to His disciples: 'Things that cause people to sin are bound to come,'"*^{NIV} *"Occasions for stumbling are bound to come,"*^{NRSV} *"And He said to His disciples, Temptations to sin are sure to come,"*^{RSV} *"It is necessary for causes of trouble to come about,"*^{BEB} *"It is impossible that snares will not be set,"*^{CJB} *"It is impossible that scandals should not come,"*^{DOUAY} *"It can not be avoided, but that offences will come,"*^{GENEVA} *"Causes*

of falling are sure to come,"^{NJB} *"There will always be temptations to sin,"*^{NLT} *"It is impossible for the stumbling blocks not to come,"*^{YLT} and *"Temptations (snares, traps set to entice to sin) are sure to come."*^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated *"offences"* has the following lexical meaning: *"a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall" (a stumblingblock, occasion of stumbling),*^{THAYER} *"what causes a person to sin, cause of ruin, occasion of falling; figuratively as an enticement to sin or apostasy temptation, offense,"*^{FRIBERG} and *"that which gives offense or causes revulsion, that which arouses opposition, an object of anger or disapproval, a stain, fault."*^{GINGRICH}

This is not speaking an emotional offence–i.e "I was offended by what you said." The word is used that way in Scripture, as in Matthew 15:12: *"Then came His disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?"* (Matt 15:12). Other places the word is used in this manner are as follows: Matt 13:21; Matt 13:57; Mk 4:17; 6:3; Lk 7:23). In those texts "offence" was tripping over Jesus instead of being grounded on Him. As it is written, *"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner, And a Stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed"* (1 Pet 2:8).

As used in our text, the person who causes an *"offence,"* gives a person a reason to act in a way that is unacceptable to God, and therefore of necessity, is vain, and possibly even

condemning. The pinnacle of such stumbling would be not believing on Christ, and refusing to live within the framework of that belief, or faith. It can also refer to a person causing another to act in an unacceptable manner, thinking that it is all right – like eating meat offered to idols, with the idol in mind, and unaware that this is the fact of the matter (1 Cor 8:6-13).

Jesus had just dealt with some offences that were caused by what He said (Lk 15:1-16:31). If anyone in the crowd chose to believe what those men said, they would cease following Christ, and thus come under the condemnation of the God who sent Him.

Jesus plainly says it is not possible to live, particularly for Him, without offences like this arising. In the "Christian world" there are great numbers of false teachings and perspectives that will, if accepted, lead one away from God, and into the snare of the devil. If Jesus said to His disciples, *"Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"* (Matt 16:6), meaning *"the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees"* (Matt 16:12), does He not have a similar warning to those of our time?

Today, at least in our country, it is not a matter of eating meat offered to idols. Now men are hearing certain teachings that are "offences."

CONTEMPORARY OFFENCES

- ⇨ Justification is not *"by faith"* (Rom 5:12).
- ⇨ That baptism has nothing to do with salvation (Mark 16:26).
- ⇨ That grace can be ineffective (Tit 2:11-12).
- ⇨ That sins like sodomy and adultery do not impact upon ones identity

with God (1 Cor 5:1-11; 6:9-10).

- ⇒ That we can learn to live with division within the church (1 Cor 1:10).
- ⇒ That it really is not necessary to be clean and uncontaminated by sin (2 Cor 6:15-7:1).

REVEALED OFFENCES

- ⇒ Some pretentious teachers came to Corinth declaring *"another Jesus," "and another gospel,"* and *"another spirit,"* and all manner of sin and unbelief broke out among them (2 Cor 11:4).
- ⇒ Some false teachers led the Galatian brethren to believe *"another gospel"* that actually caused them to *"remove"* from Him who had called them to embrace a message that was a fraudulent gospel (Gal 1:6).

⇒ Jude wrote of some who crept in among believers unawares, and were leading them away from Christ (Jude 1:4).

These were *"offences"* that caused the people to stumble, sin, and actually become alienated from God. God did not promise that in the ordinary course of life we would cease to face such things, or have to contend with them. We can deliver the truth and expose the fruitful works of darkness (Eph 5:11), but we cannot manage to completely avoid such things.

BUT WOE TO HIM

" . . . but woe unto him, through whom they come!"

Other versions read, *"woe to that person,"* ^{NIV} *"woe to anyone,"* ^{NRSV} *"how terrible it is for the person through whom they happen,"* ^{CEB} *"but alas for the one through whom they occur!"* ^{NJB} *"what sorrow awaits the person who does the tempting!"* ^{NLT}

As Jesus will confirm, God will not overlook such offences. There are, for example, some young professing Christians who have caused the one they are with to commit fornication. It is easy for some to speak of *"unwed mothers,"* and those who *"live together"* unmarried. However, this is not something that will be tolerated by God. Many people have sinned because others talked them in to doing so. Someone caused them to offend God.

WHAT WOULD BE BETTER

"² It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones."

IT WERE BETTER

"It were better for him . . ."

Other versions read, *"It were well for him,"* ^{ASV} *"would be to his advantage,"* ^{CJB} and *"would be more profitable for him."* ^{DARBY}

As harsh as the judgment that follows may appear, such a judicial decision would be better, more profitable, and bring a great advantage to the offender than what God will do to him. Remember, this is the Only Begotten Son of God speaking – the Beloved Son in whom God was well pleased. It simply is not possible for him to overstate a case, or to misrepresent the Living God. His word is to be taken just as it is stated. Christ's words are unusually strong.

A MILLSTONE

" . . . that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into

the sea . . ."

Other versions read, *"a heavy millstone,"* ^{NASB} *"a large millstone,"* ^{NIV} *"a great millstone,"* ^{NRSV} *"weighty millstone"* ^{YLT}



A HEAVY MILLSTONE

OTHER GOSPEL WRITERS' USE OF THIS PHRASE

MATTHEW: *"But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea"* (Matthew 18:6).

MARK. *"And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a*

millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42).

I suppose there are some who simply cannot believe the Lord Jesus Christ would say such a word. The view of Jesus that has been cultured within them does not allow for such a view of Him. However, this is what He affirmed, and the thing that compelled Him to do so was the absolute seriousness of causing any of His people to stumble, or sin. Their view of sin, error, transgression, etc. is one that has been toned down so the flesh will not be outraged.

OFFEND ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES

" . . . than that he should offend one of these little ones."

Who are these *"little ones"*? Jesus is not speaking of infants, or very small children. In the first place, it is not possible to offend them in the sense of this text. Their conscience, and a sense of right and wrong, are not yet discerned by them.

The Context of Luke's Statement

Luke records that this saying followed the account of the rich man and Lazarus, which He delivered after the Pharisees chided Him for receiving "*publicans and sinners*" (Lk 16:14), who were like little unlearned children.

The Context of Matthew's Statement

Matthew defines those in question as those who "*humble*" themselves as a little child, then referring to them as "*these little ones which believe in Me*" (Matt 18:4-6). He is speaking of believers, not flesh and blood infants.

The Context of Mark's Statement

Mark states the saying in this context: "*For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward*"

(Mark 9:41). He then adds, "*one of these little ones which believe in Me*" (Mk 9:41-42).

THESE ARE SPIRITUAL LITTLE ONES

These are spiritual little ones – those who have not yet grown up, into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15). Because they are yet in an immature state, they are "*tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine,*" or "*Tossed to and from by every wind of doctrine,*" by "*the cunning and cleverness of unscrupulous men [gamblers engaged] in every form of trickery and inventing errors to mislead*" (Eph 4:14). ^{AMPLIFIED}

When people are in a spiritually immature state, regardless of the length of time they have been in that state, they are subject to these spiritual charlatans. In their immature state, they

do not have full access to the spiritual weaponry that has been given.

Those who continue to feed the church on spiritual pabulum, whoever they are, have either read these words and forgotten them, or have read them and do not believe them.

Not a few Christian families have experienced the falling away of some of their children. What happened in every case was that someone "*offended*" them, causing them to stumble, or commit sin that surprised their parents. Whatever a person may think of those causing that offence, unless they r e p e n t of that action, seek forgiveness, and live unto God, it would be "*better*" for them to have a millstone hung upon them, and cast into the sea.

TAKE UNTO YOURSELVES

"³ Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."

With great spiritual versatility, the Savior leaps to what appears to be another subject. Yet it is related to what He has already said, and His hearers are fully capable of processing what He is saying. Just as His word to the impotent was accompanied with power enabling them to rise up at His word, so a word like this is accompanied with the power required to do it. Faith is the enabling quality.

TAKE HEED TO YOURSELVES

"Take heed to yourselves . . ."

Other versions read, "*Be on your guard,*" ^{NASB} "*so watch yourselves,*" ^{NIV} "*Give attention to yourselves,*" ^{BBE} "*Watch yourselves!*" ^{CEB} "*Pay attention and always be on your guard [looking out for one another].*" ^{AMPLIFIED}

Note the plurality of the word – "*yourselves.*" This is a group admonition, not only a personal, one.

The matter Jesus now addresses is not a personal experience alone, but one that takes place between two or more brethren. This is a matter of keeping the household pure.

IF THY BROTHER TRESPASS AGAINST THEE

" . . . If thy brother trespass against thee . . ."

Other versions read, "*sins against you,*" ^{NKJV} "*sins,*" ^{NASB} "*if another disciple sins,*" ^{NRSV} "*If your brother or sister sins,*" ^{CEB} "*if thy brother transgress,*" ^{ETH} and "*does something wrong.*" ^{NJB}

This is a reference having to do with sin as defined by the Law, or causing a person to stumble. He is not speaking of someone who inadvertently hurt the feelings of another. Believers are admonished to center their lives in the Lord, and not in themselves.

Matthew reports a similar saying, perhaps even the same one. "*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between*

thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 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 18:15-17).

It should be obvious Jesus is not speaking of having oversensitive feelings. This does not give any person the license to be unkind or unduly harsh – but both of those are largely interpreted by the one on the receiving end. It is never in order to rebuke someone who had no intention of offending. The offence of reference is a deliberate one – robbing, stealing, railing, laying a snare for, etc.

REBUKE HIM

" . . . rebuke him . . ."

Other versions read, "*rebuken the offender,*" ^{NRSV} "*say a sharp word to him,*" ^{BBE} "*warn them to stop,*" ^{CEB}

"reprove him," ^{DOUAY} *"tell him he is wrong,"* ^{NIRV} *and "solemnly tell him so and reprove him."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated "rebuke" means *ōto* admonish or charge sharply, *ō* ^{STRONGS} *ō*hide, rebuke, reprove, censure severely, *ō* ^{THAYER} *ō*to express strong disapproval of someone - 'to rebuke, to denounce, *ō* ^{LOUW-NIDA} *and* *ō*rebuke, censure, warn. *ō* ^{GINGRICH}

Why is such a strong word used? It is in view of what Jesus said about offending one of these little ones: *"It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should*

offend one of these little ones" (Luke 17:2). The rebuke, of necessity, is strong, for it is a call to the offending one to avoid the unusually strong penalty of offending mentioned by the Lord Jesus. He is speaking of transgression.

IF HE REPENT

"...and if he repent, forgive him."

Other versions read, *"if there is repentance, you must forgive,"* ^{NRSV} *"if he has sorrow for his sin, let him have forgiveness,"* ^{BBE} *"If they change their hearts and lives, forgive them,"* ^{CEB} *"if he turns away from his sins, forgive him,"*

^{NIRV} *"if he is sorry, forgive him."* ^{NJB}

One might ask, "But what if they do not repent, should we not forgive him anyway?" There are some who say such people should be forgiven, even if they do not repent. Jesus said what He meant. Not even God forgives the person who has not repented! However, God is *"ready to forgive,"* whenever repentance takes place (Psa 86:5). That is the posture all believers must maintain – being *"ready to forgive"* whenever those who have sinned against them repent. No person can afford to be unlike God in this matter.

FORGIVE HIM

" 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

Here Jesus will teach His disciples of a fundamental principle. The burden of the responsibility falls upon those who are the strongest. This is also taught in apostolic writings: *"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves"* (Rom 15:1). This is a classic example of that very thing. In this word, Jesus does not address the offender, but the one who has been offended. He has already addressed the offender in the word concerning the penalty for offending (Lk 17:1). Here, Jesus addresses the stronger who is charged with enabling the offender to recover, in order that the worst thing will not happen to him.

IF HE TRESPASS AGAINST THEE

SEVEN TIMES IN A DAY

"And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day . . ."

Other versions read, *"sins against."* ^{NKJV/NIV}

Further, Jesus is not advocating that a special count be made of the trespass – something that those with a propensity to living by Law possess. This is confirmed by a word Jesus addressed to Peter, who asked, *"Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?"* (Matt 18:21). The answer of the Lord is challenging, but must be believed: *"Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven"* (Matt 18:22). The point is not what the weaker brother does. The point is the greater responsibility of the stronger.

AND SEVEN TIMES IN A DAY

" . . . and seven times in a day

turn again to thee, saying, I repent . . ."

As already pointed out, this is not a means of establishing limits, so that a certain count will be made of the trespass. In such a case, when the full count is experienced, then there would be no further need for forgiveness. That, however, is not what the Lord is establishing. In other words, the genuineness of repentance is not established by us, but by God – and we must be willing to let the matter rest there.

THOU SHALT FORGIVE HIM

" . . . thou shalt forgive him."

The mandate is clear; *"you must forgive him."* ^{CSB} *or "you must forgive him (give up resentment and consider the offense as recalled and annulled)."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The requirement is plain, and there is no need to state the case more clearly. This has to be done!

INCREASE OUR FAITH

" 5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith."

How will the apostles respond to this poignant word? Will thy respond by

saying, "That is impossible," or "How is it possible to do such a thing?" or

"Does that mean it is all right to sin against someone often? – especially me?"

First, notice how they believed what He said. They did not push the word of Jesus away from themselves, imagining that it was not doable. They had *"left all"* to follow Jesus when He called them, and they were not about to leave Him now.

It is glaringly obvious that they did not believe themselves capable of doing what Jesus said. But they did not shrink back in unbelief, but rather said, **"INCREASE OUR FAITH!"**

Other versions read, *"Make our faith greater,"* ^{BBE} *"Give more faith to us,"* ^{DARBY} *"Enlarge our faith,"* ^{MIT} *"Show us how to increase our faith,"* ^{NLT} [terrible translation!], *"Add to us faith,"* ^{YLT} *"Give us more belief,"* ^{TS2009} and *"Increase our faith (that trust and confidence that spring from our belief in God)." ^{AMPLIFIED}*

There are some who teach that neither faith, nor the increase of faith come from God. This is dogmatically affirmed. However, we are categorically told that faith *"comes."* The means through which it comes is *"hearing,"* which also *"comes"* (Rom 10:17). The RSV reads, *"So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ."* That is, the ability to believe comes from God, and the ability to hear comes from Him also. Neither faith nor hearing is accomplished by the human will.

Apostolic doctrine informs us of point in time when *"faith came."* *"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster"* (Gal 3:23-25).

This is why it is said of those who

believed, Apollos, *"he helped them much which had believed through grace"* (Acts 18:27). It is also why it is written, *"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Eph 6:23). And again, *"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus"* (1 Tim 1:14). Faith is of such a nature that it cannot originate by means of human activity. It connects man to an unseen God, and an unseen realm. Such a connection cannot possibly be made from earth, but must be initiated from heaven. Faith is not primarily an activity of the mind. It is *"with the heart"* that man believes. As it is written, *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* (Rom 10:10).

The apostles knew they did not have what was required to increase their own faith, yet knew it had to be increased. Therefore, they did not hesitate to seek His help.

FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

"⁶ And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you."

The answer of Jesus reveals the manner of the Kingdom of God. Any kind of increase or improvement within the individual requires the incentive and involvement of the person. Therefore, Jesus does not tell the disciples how to obtain faith, but what faith can do when it is genuinely obtained. The very real potential of faith, when seen, will cause the disciple to aggressively seek it – and those who seek do find (Matt 7:7-8; Lk 11:9-10).

FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED

"And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed . . ."

Here, Jesus is not speaking of the size of faith, but of its potential. Jesus addressed this in one of His poignant sayings: *"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof"* (Matt 13:32). Everything in the Kingdom of God is like this – whether it is *"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, FAITH, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law"* (Gal 5:22-23). There is nothing about the Kingdom that is static – nothing that does not grow, advance, and increase.

Thus Jesus will tell them the potential of faith, so they will not overestimate the difficulty concerning

which they have sought an increase in faith– forgiving a repentant brother.

If a person is going to seek something from the Lord, it should not be something that is only required for a certain area of earthly life. It must be sought for its total potential, not just a part of it. We are called to inherit the whole, not a part. We are *"complete"* in Christ, and that completeness is what is to be sought (Col 2:10). Jesus will speak of a sycamine tree being plucked up by the roots – certainly not something integral to living in this world.

YE MIGHT SAY

"...ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea . . ."

Now, we are speaking of something impossible to men. A great

faith is to be employed for great things. Keep in mind that Jesus has been speaking to His disciples about forgiving someone who has sinned against them *"seven times in a day."* What kind of power does it take to do something like that? Mind you, the Lord is not speaking about being willing to forget, or being polite, or not losing your temper, or even being indifferent to the person who sins against them seven times in a day. He is speaking about real forgiveness – forgiveness like God gives. It is the kind of forgiveness that does not leave a bitter aftertaste in the soul. It is not pretentious.

That requires faith – a faith that grows and increases like a tiny mustard seed grows into a great tree.

AND IT SHOULD OBEY YOU

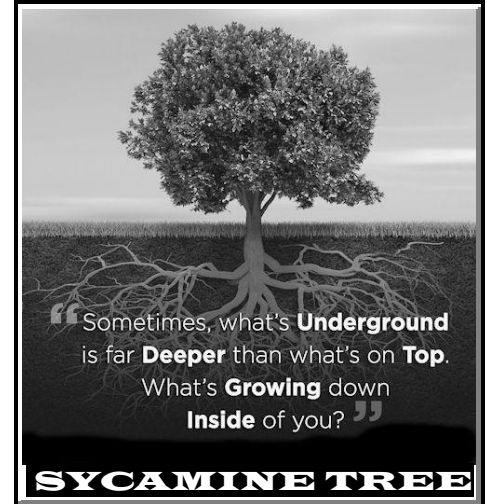
" . . . and it should obey you."

And what if you have that robust and growing faith, and say to a sycamine tree, *"Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea?"* Jesus is quite clear about this: *"It should obey you."* Other versions read, *"It would obey you,"* ^{NKJV} *"it will obey you,"* ^{NIV} *"it would be done."* ^{BBE}

In Christ it is possible to endeavor to do impossible things. However, in order to do so, one must have a robust and growing faith – like a mustard seed. We live in a time when religious culture thinks very little of the effects of genuine faith – faith that

comes from God, and is designed to accomplish what cannot otherwise be achieved. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he had a strong desire for them to mature in their faith. He wrote these words to them: *"For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labors; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly"* (2 Cor 10:14-15). His desire was so strong, that he refused to go into other regions to preach the Gospel until their faith was increased: *"having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand"* (2 Cor 10:15-16). Other versions read, *"as your faith grows."* ^{NASB} *"as your faith continues to grow,"* ^{NIV} *"as your faith increases,"* ^{RSV} *"the growth of your faith,"* ^{BBE} *"your increasing faith,"* ^{DOUAY} *"that your faith will be increased and maximized in abundance according to our standard,"* ^{MIT} and *"when your faith shall mature."* ^{MRD}

That is faith *"as a grain of mustard seed!"* Matthew provides a similar statement of Jesus, referring to a robust faith as enabling the individual possessing it to *"say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder*



place; and it shall remove." He then adds *"and nothing shall be impossible unto you"* (Matt 17:20).

This is the kind of Kingdom to which we have come. The limitations are outside the realm of faith, for with a strong faith nothing is impossible. Men can philosophize about this matter, and say this or that should not be expected. However, our energy is to be expended in the appropriation and growth of our faith. Every person in Christ has already tasted of the impossible. They have been born again (1 Pet 1:23), joined to the Lord (1 Cor 6:17), raised up and made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:6), and enabled to successfully resist the devil (James 4:7) – to name just a few things that can be experienced here – in this world.

WHICH ONE OF YOU

"⁷ But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? ⁸ And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? ⁹ Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were

commanded him? I trow not."

It may appear as though Jesus is again changing subjects – but that is not the case.

WHICH OF YOU

"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down

to meat . . ."

Jesus is providing a picture of the way the Kingdom of God works. In Christ we have come into an exceeding large room (Psa 31:8). Doing what we are supposed to do is necessary, but it is not enough. Remember, the Jewish society was one created by God, and the Son of God is speaking.

Is this what the master of the servant does – congratulate the servant who has done what he was supposed to do. When the servant comes in from the field, is he done with serving, and deserving to be served? Everyone in the Jewish economy knows that this is not the manner of their kingdom. The servant always served.

WILL NOT HE RATHER SAY

" . . . And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? . . . "

First the master is fed, then the servants. See, the servant can never step outside of the role of a servant into one where he himself is served, rather than serving.

Now, in the matter of forgiving the one who has sinned against the person seven times in a day, what is that person really doing when he forgives the one who transgressed against him? He is actually serving the Lord, whom is the Master Forgiver.

DOETH HE THANK THAT SERVANT?

" . . . Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? . . . "

The Amplified Bible reads, *"Is he grateful and does he praise the servant because he did what he was ordered to do?"*

Fulfilling a duty is not a virtuous deed. It is something that must be done – it is an obligation, a responsibility, a duty. Even on earth, the master does

not thank the servant for doing what he was commanded to do. Fulfilling an obligation, is not something that is thankworthy.

I TROW NOT

" . . . I trow not. "

Other versions read, *"I think not,"* NKJV *"does he?"* NASB *"will you?"* CEB *"No!"* CJB *"I judge not,"* DARBY *"Of course not."* NLT

This is not the way our society thinks. At all levels of social involvement, from the home to the place of business, people are rewarded for doing what they are supposed to do. Jesus will make crystal clear to us, that this is not how the Lord does things. Commendation is not given for doing what is commanded. He makes no room for mediocrity.

WHEN YOU HAVE DONE ALL

" 10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. "

WHEN YE SHALL HAVE DONE ALL THOSE THINGS

"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you . . . "

Other versions read, *"done everything you were told to do,"* NIV *"done everything required of you,"* CEB *"when you obey Me,"* NLT *"done all the things directed you,"* YLT and *"done everything that was assigned and commanded you."* AMPLIFIED

Under the Law, if men did everything they were commanded to do, they would *"live"* (Lev 18:5; Ezek 20:11; Lk 10:28; Rom 10:5; Gal 3:12). Of course, no one was able to do this – fulfill all of the commandments all of the time, without any variation or departure.

Now, Jesus speaks from another perspective – the perspective of the New Covenant. The time during which He said this was an interim period between the Law-based Old Covenant, which was *"until John"* (Matt 11:13), and the New Covenant, which would be inaugurated after His death and return to heaven.

Jesus speaks in view of the fact that in justification sin was condemned in Christ, when He died, *"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit"* (Rom 8:4).

With that in mind, Jesus speaks of *"when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you."* How will such an accomplishment be viewed by the Lord? Remembering that this is the Lord of glory speaking, take to heart what He says. He is showing us the *"manner of the kingdom"* (1 Sam 10:25).

SAY

" . . . say, We are unprofitable

servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. "

"We Are Unprofitable Servants"

Other versions read, *"unworthy slaves,"* NASB *"unworthy servants,"* NIV *"worthless slaves,"* NRSV *"We servants deserve no special praise,"* CEB *"We're just ordinary slaves,"* CJB *"We are good-for-nothing slaves,"* CSB *"unworthy of commendations,"* MIT *"undeserving of special praise,"* NET *"useless servants,"* NJB and *"We are unworthy servants [possessing no merit]."* AMPLIFIED

"Unprofitable" means *"unmeritorious, worthless."* STRONG'S In God's Kingdom doing what must be done is does not bring glory to God – that is why Jesus said these words. Under the Law, everything that the people were to do was spelled out in meticulous detail. All of their holy days were spelled out, and were mandatory (Ex 23:14-17). They were told what they could eat, and what they could not eat (Lev 7:19; Deut 12:15-18); how to plow their fields (Deut 22:10); how to sew garments (Deut 22:11), when to

rest (Ex 35:2), what to do with their firstborn (Ex 22:29), what a mother giving birth to a child was to do (Lev 12:2-8), what to do with male newborns (Lev 12:3); instructions for a leper (Lev 13:2-14:57; 22:4-6) . . . etc.

There was no merit in doing these things; they were duties, and God does not reward men for doing what they are supposed to do – much less if they fail to do what is required of them.

“We Have Done That Which Was Our Duty To Do”

Other versions read, *“we have done only that which we ought to have done,”* ^{NASB} *“we have only done our duty,”* ^{NRSV} *“we have only done what we were ordered to do,”* ^{BBE} *“what we were obligated to do, (that) have we done,”* ^{ETH} *“that which we owed to do – we have done,”* ^{YLT} and *“for we have not gone beyond our obligation]; we have [merely] done what was our duty to do.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Because the Law provided no power to do what it required, doing everything that was requisite would be a major accomplishment – so major, indeed, that no one but Jesus ever did such a thing. The epitaph over humanity is *“All have sinned!”*

It is altogether different in the New Covenant, or under the grace of God. In Christ all of the power is freely given not only to do what is required, but what is the result of Divine fellowship (1 Cor 2:9). Those who are saved are now yoked with Christ, and are privy to the purpose God has put in works. The power that is vouchsafed to them now provides for much more to be done than is required: *“Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us”* (Eph 3:20). This is the kind of power that successfully neutralizes *“principalities and powers”* (Eph 6:12). We have been provided

with weaponry that is *“mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”* (2 Cor 10:4-5). Jesus spoke of a spiritual economy in which *“nothing shall be impossible unto you”* (Matt 17:20). Those in Christ can truthfully say, *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Phil 4:13). In an arrangement like that, we are not to be thinking about what we have to do, or what is required of us. We can cry out like Isaiah, *“Here am I; send me”* (Isa 6:8).

With that word, the narrative of the Lord stops, and He proceeds on His way to Jerusalem. He certainly left His disciples, and us, with something to think about – something that will, if discerned, alter the way we live.

HE PASSED THROUGH SAMARIA AND GALILEE

¹¹ *And it came to pass, as He went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.”*

Jesus had *“steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,”* for the time had come when *“He should be received up”* (Luke 9:51) – that is, when He would be received up into heaven. After He had died and risen from the dead, and had spoken to His disciples, *“He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God”* (Mark 16:19).

At that time, He would have *“finished”* the work God gave Him to do – just as He had pledged Himself to do. He affirmed to His disciples, *“My*

meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work” (John 4:34). And again He said, *“But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me”* (John 5:36).

On the eve of His betrayal, Jesus prayed to the Father, *“I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest Me to do”* (John 17:4).

This is a Kingdom manner of thinking – not of tomorrow, but of when our work is finished. We must begin well, but we must also finish well! Our hope – a hope that saves us

(Rom 8:24) – has to do with finishing our work, not commencing it.

When the time of Paul’s death arrived, he confessed, *“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith”* (2 Tim 4:7). Now, therefore, Jesus begins the last leg of His earthly tenure, determined to finish the assignment given to Him by the Father: *“Therefore doth My Father love me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father”* (John 10:17-18). That was the work He was determined to, and would, finish.

THERE MET HIM TEN LEPERS

"¹² And as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: ¹³ And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

HE ENTERED A CERTAIN VILLAGE

"And as He entered into a certain village . . ."

Now, Jesus will show us what it means to do more than one is required to do. He will confront a situation that does not bear directly upon Him laying down His life, and taking it up again.

THERE MET HIM TEN LEPERS

" . . . there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off . . ."

In keeping with the Law, these lepers *"stood afar off."* The Law said, *"And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be"* (Lev 13:45-46). And again, *"Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: Both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps, in the midst whereof I dwell"* (Num 5:2-3).

It is written of Uzziah, who was stricken with leprosy because of his sin, *"And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land"* (2 Chron 26:20-21).

Therefore, these lepers stood afar

off, unwilling to conduct themselves contrary to the Law. They knew they had a condition that limited them.

JESUS, MASTER, HAVE MERCY ON US

" . . . And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us."

Notice how they addressed Jesus – "Jesus, Master," Here, the word translated "Master" means, ^öany sort of a superintendent or overseer...a teacher;^ö ^{THAYER} ^öas a person of high status master, lord;^ö ^{FRIBERG} and ^öHe who is set over, a commander.^ö ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

These men recognized that Jesus was a Man with authority – one who was set over the thing that had dominated them. Any individual who can actually see Jesus as being over what has disabled or handicapped them has made some meaningful progress, which will be honored by the Lord. This was not an academic insight, but one of the heart. They were convinced in their hearts that Jesus could do something about their situation.

Other versions read, *"have pity on us,"* ^{NIV} *"show us mercy!"* ^{CEB} *"have compassion on us,"* ^{DARBY} and *"take pity and have mercy on us!"* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Fourteen times in the Gospels, people asked Jesus to *"have mercy"* on them (Matt 9:27; 15:22; 17:15; 20:30,31; Mk 10:47,48; Lk 8:13,38-39). The word *"mercy"* is not mentioned in the book of Acts in any version I have. However, in the letters to the churches, it is mentioned thirty-eight times. Doctrinally we are told:

⇨ *"For He saith to Moses, I will have MERCY on whom I will HAVE MERCY"* (Rom 9:15)

⇨ *"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that SHOWETH MERCY."* (Rom 9:16)

⇨ *"And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of MERCY, which he had afore prepared unto glory,"* (Rom 9:23)

⇨ *"For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now OBTAINED MERCY through their unbelief: Even so have these also now not believed, that through your MERCY they also may obtain MERCY."* (Rom 11:30-31).

⇨ *"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might HAVE MERCY upon all."* (Rom 11:32)

⇨ *"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his MERCY; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."* (Rom 15:9)

⇨ *"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have RECEIVED MERCY, we faint not"* (2 Cor 4:1)

⇨ *"And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and MERCY, and upon the Israel of God."* (Gal 6:16)

⇨ *"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)."* (Eph 2:4-5)

⇨ *"For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God HAD MERCY on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."* (Phil 2:27)

⇨ *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I OBTAINED MERCY, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."* (1 Tim 1:12-13)

⇨ *"The Lord GIVE MERCY unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain."* (2 Tim 1:16)

⇨ *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY He saved us, by the washing of*

regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus 3:5)

⇒ *"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may OBTAIN MERCY, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16)*

⇒ *"Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is*

very pitiful, and of TENDER MERCY." (James 5:11)

⇒ *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his ABUNDANT MERCY hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet 1:3)*

⇒ *"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of*

God: which had not obtained MERCY, but now have OBTAINED MERCY." (1 Pet 2:10)

Notice that in all of these instances, "mercy" is associated with accomplishing something – doing something that could not otherwise be done. The mercy of God is not a feeling, or an attitude, but is an aspect of Divine Power. These lepers sensed that truth and pled for mercy.

GO SHOW YOURSELVES TO THE PRIESTS

"¹⁴ And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

SHOW YOURSELF TO THE PRIESTS

"And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests . . ."

The text does not say when Jesus heard them, but when He "saw them." Jesus was always aware of His surroundings, for He knew that hidden in them were some of the works His Father had empowered Him to do.

Jesus does not step forward and "touch" them, as He did another leper (Matt 8:3). His Word has power as well as His touch! He does not tell them they are whole, and to go their way. Rather, He instructs them to do what the Law required – show themselves to the priests (Lev 13). The priests were to confirm the leprosy was no longer present, and thus pronounce the person "clean."

This established that what God does is to be confirmed by someone

who is knowledgeable. In our time, sometimes people are too quick to say a person is "saved," or has been born again. While the person himself may be aware to some degree of what has happened, someone who is spiritually informed knows "their state" (Phil 2:19). As Paul said of the brethren in Rome, "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Rom 15:14).

AS THEY WENT THEY WERE CLEANSSED

" . . . And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed."

Other versions read, "as they were going, they were cleansed," ^{NASB} "as they went they were made clean," ^{NRSV} "while they were going, they were made clean," ^{BBE} "as they went along, they were cleansed," ^{NET} and "as they went, they were cured and made clean." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This also is a manner of the Kingdom. In the very act of obedience that God works. Take, for example, our baptism. While we were in the act of being baptized, the following took place:

- ⇒ Our sins were "washed away" (Acts 22:16).
- ⇒ We were put into Christ's death (Rom 6:3-4).
- ⇒ We were put into Christ (Rom 6:3; Gal 3:27).
- ⇒ We were circumcised by Christ (Col 2:11-12).
- ⇒ We "put off the body of the sins of the flesh" (Col 2:11-12).
- ⇒ Our "old man" was "crucified" (Rom 6:6).
- ⇒ We were put into "One body" (1 Cor 12:13).
- ⇒ We were "added to the church" (Acts 2:47).
- ⇒ We were "added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14).
- ⇒ We were risen with Christ through "faith in the operation of God" (Col 2:12).
- ⇒ We were "quickened together with Him," God "having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col 2:13).
- ⇒ We obtained a "good conscience" (1 Pet 3:21).

It should come as no surprise to us, who have been baptized into Christ, that the work of God occurred while the lepers were in the process of obeying Jesus. We should expect good things while doing the will of God.

HE SAW THAT HE HAD BEEN HEALED

"¹⁵ And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back,

and with a loud voice glorified God,¹⁶ And fell down on his face at his feet,

giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan."

First, there is something to be noted here. When both Jew and Gentile were clean, they could not walk together (Matt 10:5; Acts 10:28). However, when they had infirmities, they could walk together— like this Samaritan was with nine Jews. This was a vivid portrayal of a deeper truth: *"for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:22-23). That is common among all people.

ONE OF THEM

"And one of them, when he saw that he was healed . . ."

As they were journeying to the priests, one of them *"saw that he was healed."* Other versions read, *"saw that he was clean,"* ^{BBE} *"seeing that he was cured,"* ^{DARBY} *"realizing he was healed,"* ^{MIT} and *"Finding himself cured."* ^{NJB}

Some of the symptoms of leprosy are as follows:

- ⇒ Disfiguration
- ⇒ Granulomas of the nerves, so that there is no feeling.
- ⇒ Respiratory difficulty.
- ⇒ Poor eyesight.
- ⇒ Loss of parts of the extremities (fingers, toes, etc).

Therefore, knowing that one had been healed of leprosy could have involved:

- ⇒ Disappearance of disfiguration.
- ⇒ The return of a sense of feeling.
- ⇒ No difficulty in breathing.
- ⇒ Clarity of vision.
- ⇒ Restoration of extremities that had been lost.

The point is that just as there are symptoms of debility, so there are symptoms of restoration. In the case of salvation, there are evidences of lostness, and evidences of being found; attestation of deadness, and attestation of life; confirmation of enmity with God, and confirmation of being reconciled to God. Just as surely as that leper could see that he was healed, so the redeemed can perceive that they are saved.

It is not common for professing Christians to look for evidence of the Lord's mercy and grace toward them. It is quite common for self examination to be an effort to discover faults. However, it is also advantageous to look for evidences of Divine workings.

HE TURNED BACK

" . . . turned back . . ."

Other versions reads, *"returned,"* ^{NKJV} *"came back,"* ^{NIV} *"went back,"* ^{DOUAY} *"returned to him,"* ^{ETH} and *"came back to Jesus."* ^{NLT}

The former leper went back to Jesus, whom he knew had healed him. In a sense, he did not rejoice in his healing, but in the One who healed him. That is the proper kind of response for us also. We are called to *"rejoice in the Lord"* (Phil 3:1; 4:4), not only in what He has done in us.

GLORIFIED GOD WITH A LOUD VOICE

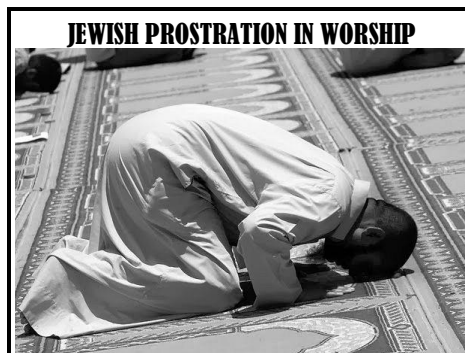
" . . . and with a loud voice glorified God . . ."

Other versions read, *"praising God in a loud voice,"* ^{NIV} *"shouting praises to God,"* ^{CJB} *"praising God at the top of his voice,"* ^{NJB} and *"recognizing and thanking and praising God with a loud voice."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The healing must have taken place almost as soon as the lepers began returning to the priests. This man has not yet arrived at Jesus, but is praising God on the way. He recognized what had been done, and knew who had done it.

FELL ON HIS FACE

" . . . and fell down on his face at His feet . . ."



Other versions read, *"threw himself at Jesus' feet,"* ^{NIV} *"prostrated himself at Jesus' feet,"* ^{NRSV} *"fell face down at His feet,"* ^{CSB} *"did reverential prostration at Jesus' feet."* ^{MIT}

This is not the manner of the Western world – but it still is the manner of the East. To this very day religious people in the Eastern world prostrate themselves in worship. Scripture records a number of people who fell on their face.

- ⇒ Joseph's brothers before him (Gen 50:18).
- ⇒ Moses before the Lord (Deut 9:18).
- ⇒ The woman of Tekoah before the king (2 Sam 14:4).
- ⇒ Ezekiel before the glory of the Lord (Ezek 3:23; 9:8).
- ⇒ Daniel before an angel (Dan 8:18; 10:9).
- ⇒ The woman healed of an issue of blood before Jesus (Mk 5:33).
- ⇒ The women who came to the empty tomb, before an angel (Lk 24:4).
- ⇒ The Philippian jailor before Paul and Silas (Acts 16:29).
- ⇒ John before the glorified Christ (Rev 1:17).
- ⇒ John before an angel, who told him not to bow to him (Rev 19:10; 22:8-9).

The point is that there is a genuine reverence for the Lord that is caused by the recognition of His work.

GIVING HIM THANKS

" . . . giving Him thanks . . ."

Other versions read, *"gave the credit to Him,"* ^{BBE} *"thanking Him for what He had done,"* ^{NLT} and *"thanking Him [over and over]."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Giving thanks is not merely saying *"I thank you."* It is an expression of gratitude, deep appreciation – an insightful expression of advantage and benefit. As used here, the expression *"giving thanks"* has the sense of giving thanks over and over.

HE WAS A SAMARITAN

" . . . and he was a Samaritan. "

The Spirit makes special note of

the fact that this was a Samaritan, generally disdained by the Jews. Here, however, the Samaritan is more responsive than the Jews, who had

been given all of the advantages. You may be sure that the Lord Jesus will take due notice of this circumstance, and comment on it.

It is also important to note that in Christ there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile (Gal 3:28).

WERE THERE NOT TEN CLEANSED?

"¹⁷ And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? ¹⁸ There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. ¹⁹ And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

Here we are exposed to Divinity. This is not a mere human response. Men may be pleased when just a few respond, but that is not always the case with God. Here is a classic example of that fact.

WERE THERE NOT TEN CLEANSED

"And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? . . ."

THE FACT– Ten were cleansed. THE UNPLEASING RESULT – Nine did not return to give thanks. Some naive soul will say, "Well, at last one came back." But that is not what the Son of God said. He asked, *"Where are the nine?"* What excuse could they possibly give for not returning to the One who healed them, giving thanks to Him. Did Jesus really expect them to do so? Yes, He did! He takes note of a lack of gratitude. Further, He did so publicly, for the word delivered to the ten lepers was a public one.

SAVE THIS STRANGER

" . . . There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger . . ."

What a word is this! He refers to the man bowing before Him as *"this stranger."* Other versions read, *"this foreigner,"* ^{NKJV} *"this one from a strange land,"* ^{BBE} *"this, who is from a strange people,"* ^{ETH} *"who is from a foreign nation,"* ^{MGI} *"this outsider,"* ^{NIRV} *"this alien,"* ^{YLT} and *"of another race."* ^{TS2009}

The Samaritan's were living in the promised land – in between Judaea and Galilee. They were a mixed race of people, resulting from heathen people who were brought into the land by the king of Assyria, after the dispersion (2 Kgs 17:6,23-29). The Samaritans were the upshot of mixed marriages that resulted from placement of heathen in the land.

This admixture of people were not considered Jewish, and were not included in the Old Covenant. God did not provide a prophet for them, and Jesus Himself said they were ignorant, not knowing the true God (John 4:22).

We learn from this that when the unaccepted is merged with that which is accepted, it defaults to being unacceptable. When the clean is mingled with the unclean, the result is unclean. When the wisdom of men is

mingled with Scripture, the result is the commandment is made *"of none effect,"* (Matt 15:6), and worship becomes *"vain"* (Mk 7:7).

All of this makes this Samaritan all the more remarkable.

THY FAITH HATH MADE THEE WHOLE

" . . . And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

The phrase *"thy faith hath made thee whole"* is mentioned six times in Scripture – Matthew 9:22; 15:28; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 17:19). Twice we read, *"Thy faith hath saved thee"* (Lk 7:50; 18:42).

All of the lepers were cleansed, for Jesus said, *"Were there not ten cleansed?"* The written record is, *"And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as THEY went, THEY were cleansed"* (Luke 17:14).

This was not referring to the healing of his body, but to the healing of the soul (Psa 41:4), or the forgiveness of sin (Lk 5:20; 7:58). Jesus, as He Himself affirmed, had *"power on earth to forgive sins"* (Matt 9:6). The other lepers missed this.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/31/17. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The fifty-fourth lesson will cover verses 20 thru 37 of the seventeenth chapter: "THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE COMING OF THE LORD." Jesus is asked when the Kingdom of God will come. He responds by saying it is in their very midst. He then tells them there will come a time when they will desire to see just one of the days of the Son of Man, but shall not be able to do so. He then parallels the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to His coming. We will begin our meeting at 6:30, which will be followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.