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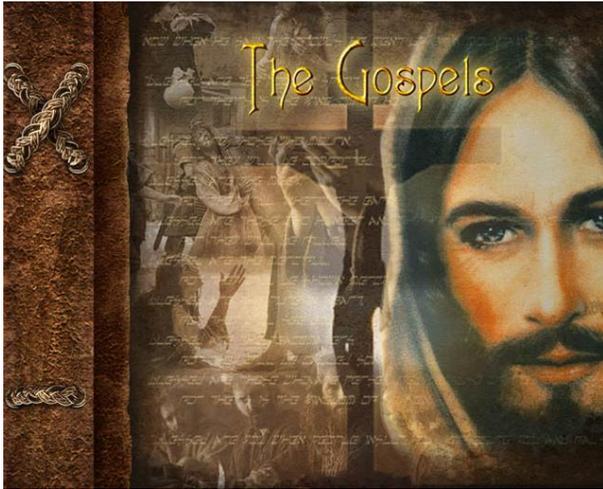
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# Foreword

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Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

**Luke 1:1-4**

This book series is dedicated to the life, ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ as foreshadowed in the Old Testament, presented in the Gospels and explained in the Epistles- letters to the churches in the books of Romans - Revelation. It's formatted in a manner to help facilitate ministry in various venues.

- Many types and shadows, prophecies and promises in the Old Testament point to the Messiah.
- God is a faith God, so He was calling into existence beforehand what He wanted- **Romans 4:17**.
- We find in Scripture that God seldom does anything without speaking it into existence first.

## **1 Peter 1:10-12**

**Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.**

- Even though great detail went into the coming of Jesus, not many recognized His coming.

## **John 1:10-12**

**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.**

- Jesus became a man in order to become our sinless substitute to redeem and ransom mankind.
- Jesus was born as a Jewish man under the Old Covenant, to fulfill and live it perfectly in life.
- What was impossible for man to do on His own, Jesus accomplished- **Hebrews 4:15**.

## **Matthew 5:17-19**

**“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”**

## Luke 24:25-27

He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

- The life, death and resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the Gospel message.
- Jesus came for one purpose only, to take away our sins so we could receive eternal life!
- John 1:29 John the Baptist said, “*Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*”



Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- The word “Gospel” simply means “Good News.”
- When Jesus began His earthly ministry He read from Isaiah 61:1-2 to explain His mission.
- As we study the Gospel books together, we will see this theme fulfilled many times over.

## Luke 4:17-21

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to release the oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

- The Gospel books provide the foundation by which the “Gospel” message is preached today.
- Only through this message can faith come to the sinner to call upon the Jesus and be saved.
- God has given this message to the Church to proclaim to the whole world.

## Mark 16:15-17

He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

- In the book of Acts we see how the Spirit of God led Philip to witness to Ethiopian Eunuch.

#### **Acts 8:29-36**

**The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:**

**“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
and as a lamb before the shearer is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.  
In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.  
Who can speak of his descendants?  
For his life was taken from the earth.”**

**The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?”**

- On another occasion an Angel told a man named Cornelius to ask for Peter to hear the Gospel.

#### **Acts 11:13-14**

**He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, “Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.”**

- This Gospel message is so sacred that tinkering with it brings swift judgment and consequences.

#### **Galatians 1:8-9**

**But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!**

#### **2 Peter 2:1-2**

**But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them — bringing swift destruction on themselves.**

- Only through the simplicity of this message, the “Good News” can people be saved.
- Because saving faith comes by hearing the salvation message of Jesus Christ.

#### **Romans 10:14-17**

**How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!” But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**

### **Acts 5:19-20**

**But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. “Go, stand in the temple courts,” he said, “and tell the people the full message of this new life.”**

- Did you know that the subject of healing is also part of the Gospel message.
- So many only preach and teach a partial gospel, the forgiveness of sins only- important as it is.
- However, Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law in **Galatians 3:13**.
  - o That includes poverty, sickness and death.

### **Acts 14:8-10**

**In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.**

### **2 Corinthians 8:9**

**For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.**

### **Acts 2:36-39**

**“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”**



- The Gospel message is simple enough, that even a child can understand it.
- God made it that way so that as many people as possible can be saved.
- When man adds their religious traditions to the truth they rob people of salvation.
- That is why this study is so important!

### **Luke 10:21**

**At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.”**

### **Luke 11:52**

**“Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering.”**

### **1 Corinthians 1:17-19**

**For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**

- Jesus made it very clear that He is the only way.
- The world will say, “Well you Christians are so exclusive and narrow minded”
- Funny, that is the very point Jesus was making as well.

### **Matthew 7:13-14**

**“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”**

### **Acts 4:12**

**Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.**

### **John 14:6-7**

**Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

- Either Jesus was crazy, a liar or telling the truth- obviously the latter is the case!
- Salvation is found through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**

### **Romans 10:9-11**

**That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.**

The Gospel period of Jesus is the vital link or transition between something old ending and something wonderfully new beginning.

- In the Gospels there is something for everyone.
- For the Old Covenant Law abiding Jew, and the New Covenant born again Christian believer.
- Without the Gospels the Old Testament would be unfilled and the Epistles would make no sense.



- In addition to the Gospel message was the introduction to the teaching about the Kingdom.
- Jesus came to usher in His Heavenly Kingdom on earth in the lives of His disciples.

### **Luke 17:20-21**

**Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is within you.”**

The subject of the “Kingdom of God” or the “Kingdom of Heaven,” is referenced eighty five times in the Gospels as recorded in the New International Version of the Bible.

- It was a central theme that Jesus preached and taught all throughout His earthly ministry.

What is the difference between the terminology “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of Heaven?”

- Well, neither of these terms are ever found in the Old Testament.
- The majority of the references are made by Jesus Himself in the Gospels.
- All the references to the “Kingdom of Heaven” are made in the Gospel of Matthew.
- Consider a parallel passage like **Matthew 5:3** and **Luke 6:20** which reference the same thing.

We can say that the “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of Heaven” mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably.

**Matthew 5:3- “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

**Luke 6:20- “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”**

- In speaking of the Kingdom of God, it was a concept not realized under the OT Period.
- For them it was a future period foretold by the prophets- **Luke 2:25-32**.
- The nation of Israel had their hopes centered upon the coming Messiah.

**2 Samuel 7:4-17; Psalms 2:6; 72:1; Isaiah 11:1; 32:1; 65:17; Jeremiah 33:15; Daniel 7:13-14; Micah 4:1; Zechariah 9:10; 12:1; 14:9.**

- The four Gospels revealed the manifestation of God’s Kingdom- a spiritual one.
- However, the full manifestation of God’s Kingdom on the earth comes at the Second Advent.
- The judgment of God’s enemies is postponed to the not so distant future.

The Kingdom that arrived with Jesus did not include the triumphal victory so longed for by the Jews.

- It arrived secretly like leaven, and inconspicuously like a mustard seed.
- Like a small pearl of great value that can be hidden in one’s pocket- **Matthew 13:31-46**.
- The Jewish people expected the Messiah to defeat the Romans and usher in the Millennium.

The new reality of the Kingdom overlapped the present age, invading it rather than bringing it to an end. The demons reflect this oddity when they ask Jesus in:

### **Matthew 8:29**

**“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”**

Even after the resurrection, the disciples in the beginning misunderstood the timing of God's Kingdom. **Luke 19:11, 41-42; 24:21; John 18:36; Acts 1:6-8.**

- In Jesus' first advent, He came as a Lamb, the Second Advent He comes as a Lion.
  - o **John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:5.**
- Jesus was the full embodiment of the Kingdom of God that He ushered in.
  - o **Matthew 3:1-3; 4:17; Luke 4:17-21; John 18:33-37; 1 Timothy 6:12-16.**

All that Jesus did is related to this claim that the Kingdom of God has dawned through His ministry.

- His healings were manifestations of the presence of the Kingdom.
- Now that Kingdom is within our spirit and is manifest in the earth through our faith.
  - o **Matthew 6:10; 18:18 Luke 10:18-19; 17:20-21.**

### **Matthew 11:12 AMP**

**And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize — a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion].**

### **Luke 11:20 AMP**

**But if I drive out the demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has [already] come upon you.**

- It all began with **John 3:16**, God sending Jesus to bring Salvation to the earth- **Acts 10:38.**

Remember, Adam had committed high treason in the Garden of Eden, and gave his God given dominion as gods of this earth over to Satan- **Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34-35.**

- Jesus came to reclaim what was lost and restore it back to us and defeated Satan- **Ro. 5:17.**
- After the resurrection of Jesus, Satan is still called the god of this age- **2 Corinthians 4:4.**
- This world system is still under his control- **Luke 4:5-7; 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:22; Rev. 12:9.**
  - o **Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:8-9**
- For the time being- **Matthew 8:29; 1 Corinthians 7:31; Revelation 12:12; 20:1-3.**

We are now considered an occupation army in the earth, enforcing Satan's defeat until Jesus returns a second time to rule an reign physically on the earth from Jerusalem- **1Cor. 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:9-10.**

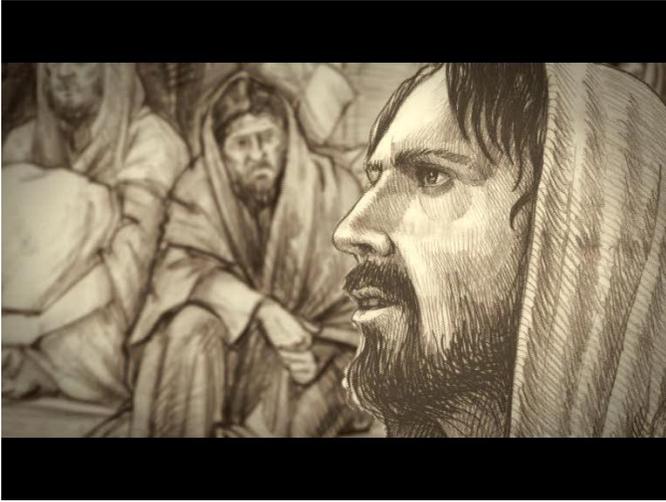
This kingdom within is manifested in our lives and in the natural realm through our faith in God's Word- we bring it out on display for the world to see, it's not automatic- **Luke 17:20-21; Mt. 5:14-16.**

- So how does one enter into this spiritual Kingdom?
- The answer is simple, we are born into it, through faith in Jesus- **John 3:3-8; Ro. 10:9-10.**
- To change kingdoms one must change lords.
- Before Christ we were sold as slaves to sin, Satan was our lord- **1 John 3:10.**
- Through the New Birth, we passed from death unto life- **John 5:24; Colossians 1:13-14.**
- We accept the invitation through the Gospel, only by faith- **Mt. 22:1-14; Luke 13:23-24.**
- Have you ever heard that saying, "You may be the only Jesus someone will ever see?"
- The same goes for unbelievers seeing what the Kingdom of God is like in this earth.
- It can only be seen in our lives; living out our full redemption for all to see how good God is.

# Volume 2

## The Discourses

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**And He descended to Capernaum, a town of Galilee, and there He continued to teach the people on the Sabbath days. And they were amazed at His teaching, for His word was with authority and ability and weight and power.**

**Luke 4:31-32 AMP**

There are various forms or styles that discourses can come in; from Latin *discursus*, meaning “running to and from.”

- **Compound**- contains sections belonging to two or more kinds of discourse. Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians contains both expository and hortatory discourses.
- **Expository**- explains or describes a topic; not primarily interested in events or personalities.
- **Hortatory**- to persuade the audience to fulfill commands that are given in the discourse.
- **Narrative**- an account of events, usually in the past, that employs verbs of speech, motion, and action to describe a series of events that are contingent one on another.
- **Procedural**- to tell someone how to do something; a series of steps leading to a goal.
- **Repartee**- is used to recount a series of conversations between other people.

Jesus had invoked all of these styles throughout His teaching and preaching ministry as an effective means of communication. The purpose was to express and impart grace and revelation truth to the hearers. These were not empty words, but contained power to transform and save those who believed.

**John 6:63, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”**

**Luke 24:32, “They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’”**

- Jesus was more of a teacher of God’s Word (explain) than a preacher of the Word (proclaim).
  - o **Matthew 4:23; Mark 2:13; Luke 4:14-15; John 7:15; 8:2.**

Sound teaching was a concept deeply engrained in the Jewish mind since Old Testament times. Moses and Aaron were considered teachers of God’s commandments- **Exodus 18:20**. Parents were also directed to teach their children about God and His statutes- **Deuteronomy 4:9-10; 6:4-9; Pr. 22:6**.

- So we to will use the whole Bible to expound and further illustrate the Lord’s teachings.

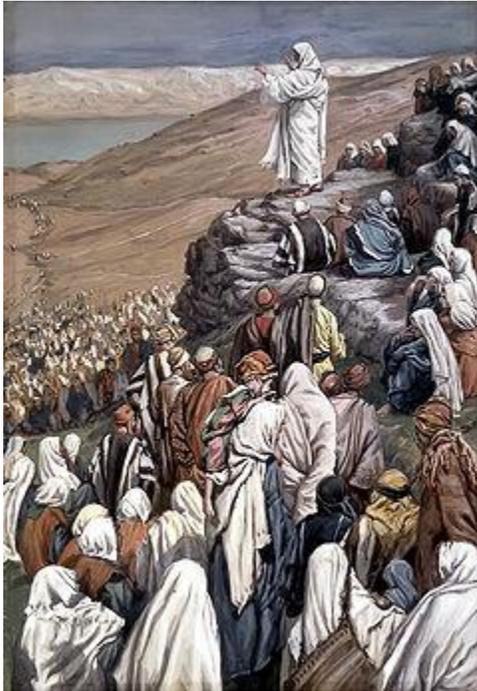
# Discourse #1: The Beatitudes

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Reference: Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:20-26

Theme: The Realities of being a Follower of Jesus – Character and Promises of being a Disciple of Jesus

Context: An introduction to His Sermon on the Mount in the Galilee Region



**Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying:**

**“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.**

**Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.**

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**

**Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.**

**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.**

**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.**

**Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

**Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

**Matthew 5:1-12**

As was Jesus’ custom He would teach the people whenever the opportunity presented itself; since it’s the truth that sets us free, and He is full of grace and truth- **John 1:14-17; 17:17.**

## **John 8:31-32**

**To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

- The word “Beatitudes” comes from the Latin, meaning “Blessings.”
- The Greek word translated blessed means “spiritual well-being and prosperity,” the deep joy of the soul- experiencing a foretaste of heaven on earth.
- As a literary form, the beatitude is also found often in the Old and New Testaments.
  - o **Psalms 1:1; 34:8; 65:4; 128:1; John 20:29; 14:22; James 1:12; Revelation 14:13.**
- These declarations of blessings serve as an introduction to His Sermon on the Mount.
- There are eight of them in Matthew’s account and four in Luke’s along with four woes.
- The beatitudes are not so much promises for Jesus’ disciples as they are a description of their character; as a result of being saved and in a part of His Kingdom.

Without a doubt, the safest and happiest place for the believer to be is in the center of God’s will.

## A. Blessed are the Poor in Spirit

**Matthew 5:3, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”**

- Jesus was not saying, “Blessed are the poor in wallet, financially destitute, and beggars.”
- He was not at all advocating a poverty gospel; to be humble one must be broke.
- Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of God to preach the good news to the poor; that they don’t have to be poor anymore, spirit, soul or body- **Luke 4:17-21.**

I believe the reference Jesus was making concerning the “poor” in **Matthew 5:3** was in reference to Isaiah’s “poor” in **Isaiah 66:2**- this is all about humility and reverence for God.

**Isaiah 66:2**

**“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.”**

**Isaiah 66:2 NKJV, “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.”**

**Isaiah 66:2 AMP**

**“But this is the man to whom I will look and have regard: he who is humble and of a broken or wounded spirit, and who trembles at My word and reveres My commands.”**

- The Bible is clear that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble.
  - o **Proverbs 3:34; 16:5; 18:12; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5.**
- The original sin of Lucifer or Satan was pride- **Isaiah 14:12- 15; Ezekiel 28:12-19.**
- When prosperity comes there is a great temptation to forget God and become proud.
  - o **Deuteronomy 8:6-20; Proverbs 30:9.**
- Remembering what Jesus said in the parable of the wedding feast; addressing those who were jockeying for the best seats of honor for themselves.

**Luke 14:11**

**“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

Jesus was purposeful about referencing little children, not only to illustrate the New Birth, but to also portray the characterization of humility in children as attributes that God greatly esteems.

**Matthew 18:2-4**

**He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: “I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”**

- Humility is reality, it allows us to see things clearly as they really are.
- Like where we would be without Jesus, lost in sin and hell bound- **John 15:5.**
- Pride on the other hand blinds and deceives- **2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 2:9-11.**
- Human nature wants to be first; selfish ambition- **Galatians 5:20; James 3:13-18; 3 John 9.**
- Reminds me of the mother of James and John in **Matthew 20:20-28.**
- In God’s economy, what matters the most is being a servant of all- **Mark 9:35; 10:44**
- It takes humility, character and grace from God to server others before ourselves.
  - o **Philippians 2:1-5, 21; Colossians 4:12.**
- The beauty of humility is what God honors the most- **Daniel 10:12; Hebrews 5:7-10.**

## B. Blessed are those who Mourn

**Matthew 5:4, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”**

- The Old Testament taught on the subject of repentance.
  - o **1Kings 8:44-53; Job 34:33;36:10;42:6; Isaiah 30:15; 59:20; Ezekiel 14:6;18:30-32**
- John the Baptist came, preaching a message of repentance- turning away from sin to God.
  - o **Matthew 3:7-11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3-14.**
- The central theme of Jesus’ message was repentance, obedience through faith in God.
  - o **Luke 5:32; 24:47.**
- The Early Church continued the message of preaching a Gospel of repentance.
  - o **Acts 5:31; 11:18; 13:24-25; 19:4; 20:21; 26:20.**
- Repentance has become a core belief in the Christian Faith as taught in the Epistles.
  - o **2 Timothy 2:25-26; Hebrews 6:1-6; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 5:18**

So as you can see, the subject of repentance from sin is a key issue all throughout the Bible. Which makes sense from the beginning in the Garden of Eden when man fell into sin.

- So what does it mean to repent according to the Bible?
- At its core, is a change of heart; one who hates their sin and esteems the mercy of God.
- The repentant heart turns from sin to God, seeking His mercy and forgiveness.
- Acknowledging a complete helplessness to save oneself, seeking God as their Savior.
- This is done by faith in the promise that God will forgive, restore and heal the sinner.

**2 Chronicles 7:14, “If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”**

- It has to be more than just lip service or good intentions- it’s a rending of the heart- **Joel 2:13**
- Many are sorry for the consequences of sin, or sorry for getting caught, but they are not yet sorry for the sin; acknowledging sin for what it is, a wicked offense against a Holy God.
- To repent from sin is to turn and renounce sin as John the Baptist points out- **Luke 3:3-14.**
- When a person truly repents from sin, there will be corresponding fruit as a result.
- We see the clear evidence of godly repentance in **2 Corinthians 7:10-11.**

**1 John 3:9, “No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.”**

**Acts 20:21- “they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.”**

**Acts 26:20- “they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.”**

- Without repentance (a willingness to turn from sin to God) there is no salvation.
- The purpose of the law is to reveal and show our sinfulness- **Ro. 3:19-20; 7:7-7; Gal. 3:16.**
- The sinner must be convinced of their need for a Savior and want to turn from sin. Otherwise they should just continue on in their life of sin- **Revelation 22:11.**
- When we repent of sin, saint or sinner, we have the promise of being comforted/restored.
  - o **2 Corinthians 1:3-7.**

**James 4:9-10, “Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.”**

## C. Blessed are the Meek

### **Matthew 5:5, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.”**

- Many confuse meekness as being a doormat Christian; naïve, cowardly and spineless.
- Nothing could be further from the truth, The Bible encourages self-defense and to act wisely in the world- **Matthew 10:16; Luke 22:36-38; 1 Corinthians 15:32; Colossians 4:5.**
- To be sure, meekness is not weakness- it takes a lot of character to walk in love.
- It’s easy to be self-serving, to act ugly, selfish, and vindictive towards perceived injustices.
- The Greek word *praus* for meekness denotes strength brought under control- self-control.
- The ancient Greeks used this term to describe wild horses tamed by a bridle.

I believe that Jesus was probably referring to Psalms 37:11 when He made the statement in Matthew 5:5.

- Jesus Himself was the perfect example of meekness, He was not a push over- **Mt.11:28-30.**
- When challenged, He spoke the truth boldly in love- **John 8:12-59.**
- Jesus exercised great restraint, perseverance & self-control during His trial **John 18:19-24.**
- Jesus was completely submitted to the Father’s will- **Matthew 26:51-56.**

### **Hebrews 5:7, “During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.”**

- A meek person is not looking to their own interests, but to fulfill something greater.
- A meek person does not take offense, is not argumentative- **Php. 2:14-16; 2 Tim. 2:23-26.**
  - o **Proverbs 17:9; Proverbs 19:11; 20:3.**
- It’s not easily angered, endures unfair circumstances patiently.
- It is not a victim but a victor, knowing that God is our judge and will vindicate us.
- A key aspect of meekness is humility- **Zephaniah 3:12; 2 Corinthians 10:1.**
- It’s a beautiful characteristic that is of great worth in God’s sight- **1 Peter 3:1-4.**
- I like how the love chapter, 1 Corinthians chapter 13 puts it in the Amplified version.

### **1 Corinthians 13:4-8 AMP**

**Love endures long and is patient and kind; love never is envious nor boils over with jealousy, is not boastful or vainglorious, does not display itself haughtily. It is not conceited (arrogant and inflated with pride); it is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God’s love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end].**

Depending on your version of the Bible, meekness is often translated as Gentleness and Humility.

King James Version (Meekness), NIV = Gentleness

Mt. 21:5; 1 Cor. 4:21; Gal. 5:23; 6:1; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25; Tit. 3:2; 1 Pet. 3:15.

King James Version (Meekness), NIV = Humility

Titus 3:12; James 1:21; 3:13

## D. Blessed are those who Hunger & Thirst for Righteousness

**Matthew 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”**

- Hunger and thirst represents intense desire or great human need to sustain life.
- Jesus makes the parallel towards righteousness and the things of God- **Acts 17:28.**
- Our greatest passion in life must be for our God and His Kingdom- **Matthew 6:33.**
- When it comes to priorities, the Lord is to be number one in our life.
- Not just a slice of the pie of our lives, but the whole pie.

**Matthew 22:35-38**

**One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.”**

This kind of desire for God must be cultivated and developed in order for it to be sustained. There are too many distractions in the world that seek to diminish this passion- **Mark 4:19; Revelation 2:4; 3:16.**

### 1. Only The Lord Satisfies the Heart of Man

I love this promise the Lord provides for those who hunger/thirst after Him, “... *for they will be filled.*”

- I like how the Amplified translation puts that part, “*for they shall be completely satisfied!*”
- Where else can we go, Jesus alone has the words of eternal life- **John 6:63-69.**
- God is our source, apart from Him we have nothing- **Psalms 16:2; 34:10; 84:11; 107:8-9.**

**Psalms 42:1-2**

**As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?**

**Psalms 63:1**

**O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.**

- Only the Lord can satisfy the deep longings of the human heart, nothing else will do.
  - o **Psalms 17:15; Isaiah 55:1-2; John 4:7-14; 7:37-39; Acts 3:19; Ephesians 5:15-20.**
- The Lord becomes our one and all consuming desire; greatest treasure- **Matthew 13:44.**
  - o **Psalms 119:20, 81, 127.**
- People are looking for love in all the wrong places, leaving them empty- **1 Peter 1:18.**
- Bread is used as a metaphor to describe God’s Word, to crave and consume it.
  - o **Job 23:12; Psalms 119:103; Mt. 4:4; Luke 11:3; John 6:35, 57-58; 1 Peter 2:1-2.**
- When people come to God, they are never disappointed or leave empty handed.
  - o **Psalms 16:11; 84:10; Mt. 7:7-11; Ro. 8:31-32; Eph. 3:20; 1 Tim. 6:17; Jas. 1:17.**
- I love how Psalms chapter 23 depicts the Lord as our Shepherd- **John 10:1-30.**

**Psalms 103:1-5**

**Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.**

## E. Blessed are the Merciful

**Matthew 5:7, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”**

- God is a merciful God, that’s where it begins, like everything else that is good.
  - o **Daniel 9:9, 17-19; Luke 1:67-79; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:3; 2:10**
- It’s a lot easier to show mercy when we realize the mercy God has shown to us.
  - o **Ephesians 2:1-4; 1 Timothy 1:12-16**
  - o Luke 6:36, “*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*”
- It is in response to God’s mercy for us that we respond in obedience to His Word- **Ro. 12:1.**

**Hebrews 4:16**

**Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

When Jesus was eating at Matthew’s house, when he was still a tax collector at the time, the religious elite criticized the Lord for eating with sinners- **Matthew 9:9-13.** Notice the Lord’s response to this:

**Matthew 9:12-13, “On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”**

- The opposite of mercy is condemnation and a judgmental disposition towards others.
  - o **Hosea 6:6; Matthew 12:7; 23:23; Mark 4:1-5.**
- Some of Jesus’ parables illustrate being merciful; mercy and forgiveness go hand in hand.
  - o **Matthew 18:21-35:** The Unforgiving Servant
  - o **Luke 10:30-37:** The Good Samaritan
  - o **Luke 18:9-14:** The Repentant Sinner
- Did you know that healing and mercy are also closely related- healing mercies.
  - o **Matthew 15:21-28; 17:14-18; 20:29-34; Mark 5:19; 10:46-52.**
- Walking in the love of God shed abroad in our heart is the key to being merciful- **Ro. 5:5.**
- KJV uses “Mercies” while NIV uses “Love/Compassion”- **Ps. 6:4; 51:1; 119:41; Col. 3:12.**
- Wicked men do not show mercy, but respond instead in acts of cruelty- **Proverbs 12:10.**

**Micah 6:8**

**He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.**

- Showing mercy to others is something all Christians are charged with, but some believers have a special ministry of mercy to help and serve the weak- **Romans 12:8; Jude 22-23.**
- Mercy is one of the big three: Grace, Mercy and Peace- **1 Tim. 1:2; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 John 3.**
- We need to show mercy towards one another, serving and helping each other.
- **2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:16, 19-20; 1 John 5:16-17; Jude 22.**

We reap what we sow, if we are merciful to those who fail, we in turn will receive mercy when we need it; which in fact is every day- **Lamentations 3:22-24.** We reap what we sow, so let’s be merciful!

**James 2:12-13, “Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!”**

## F. Blessed are the Pure in Heart

**Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”**

- What makes us pure before God? It’s our faith in the blood of Jesus alone!
  - o **Romans 3:25; Hebrews 10:19-22; Revelation 7:14.**
- Through the washing of the water through the Word- **Ephesians 5:25-27.**
- Through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit- **Titus 3:4-8; 2 Th. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2.**
- This is what makes us clean and righteous before God- **2 Corinthians 5:21.**
- Being born again, becoming a new creation is what makes us pure.
  - o **John 3:3-8; 13:10-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17.**

**Psalms 73:1, “Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart.”**

- The Bible is clear in that God’s puts a high premium upon the heart or spirit of a person.
- Too often we look to the natural and assess or judge a person by the outward appearance.
  - o **1 Samuel 16:7; Mt. 23:27-28; Romans 2:28; Gal. 2:6; 2 Cor. 2:16; 1 Peter 3:3.**
- Our priority should be in developing godliness, saved unto good works, not by them.
  - o **1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:8; 2 Timothy 3:16.**
- This is done by God’s grace and our faith in the Word; not dead religious works of tradition.
  - o **Acts 15:9; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:16-23; 1 Peter 1:22-23.**
- Once we are saved, we have something to do with purity in our lives.
  - o **Ephesians 5:1-14; 1 Timothy 5:1-2.**

**Proverbs 15:26**

**The Lord detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him.**

- Purity is greatly influenced by what we think on and what we look at. If we would just avoid the very appearance of evil we can save ourselves a lot of trouble.
  - o **Luke 11:34-36; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; Titus 1:15; James 1:6-8.**
- Hate what is evil and cling to what is good- **Proverbs 8:13; Amos 5:15; Romans 12:9.**
- God wants us free from an unbelieving heart, one who does not rebel and harden their heart.
  - o **Hebrews 3:12-13; James 4:8.**
- Holiness and sanctification should be a priority for the disciple of Jesus Christ.
  - o **John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8.**
- We can’t expect to be used by the Lord if we are still dominated by sin as Christians.
  - o **1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; Hebrews 6:1; 1 John 3:2-3.**
- To be free from the contamination of sin, without divided interests or loyalties.
  - o **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Timothy 5:22; Hebrews 12:14.**

To see the face of someone, to be in their presence, to have access or audience in ancient times denotes great favor. It was regarded as a very high honor to be in the presence of kings and princes, and to be permitted to see them- **Proverbs 22:29.** Those who saw the face of the king were privileged.

- So to see God means to be His friends or His favored ones, it is the highest of all honors.
  - o **Exodus 33:18-23; Numbers 12:4-9; John 15:13-16.**
- This promise of seeing the face of God will be fulfilled for all believers- **1 Corinthians 13:12**
- Sin separates us from God, as Christians we have **1 John 1:9** to restore our fellowship.
- There should be nothing that we desire more than to be in His presence- **Revelation 1:12-18.**

**Exodus 24:9-11; 1 Kings 19:11-12; Psalms 84:10; Daniel 7:9-10; Ezekiel 1:25-2:2; Isaiah 6:1-8.**

## G. Blessed are the Peacemakers

**Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”**

Before we can become peacemakers, we must first have peace with God through Jesus. There is no peace except that which God gives us through the New Birth- **Romans 5:1; Galatians 5:22.**

**Isaiah 57:20-21**

**But the wicked are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. “There is no peace,” says my God, “for the wicked.”**

- God of Peace: **Ro. 15:33; 16:20; 1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Th. 5:23; Heb. 13:20.**
- Peace be with you: **Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 21, 26; Romans 15:33.**
- The words “Grace and Peace” are often used together to form a greeting.
- **Ro. 1:7; 16:20; 1 Cor. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:2; Gal. 1:3; Eph. 1:2; Php. 1:2; Col. 1:2; 1 Th. 1:1; 2 Th.1:2; 1Tim.1:2; 2Tim.1:2; Tit.1:4; Philemon 3; 1Pet. 1:2; 2Peter 1:2; 2Jn. 3; Rev. 1:4.**
- What an indescribable gift Jesus has given us, the Prince of Peace Himself- **Isaiah 9:6.**
- In the midst of the greatest storms of life we can have peace, quietness and rest- **Isaiah 32:17**
- It reminds me of the time when Jesus was sleeping during a storm on the lake- **Mark 4:35-41**
- Jesus is our good Shepherd, we can be at peace and rest in His presence- **Psalms 23; John 10**
  - o **John 14:27; 16:33; Romans 14:17-18; 2 Thessalonians 3:16.**

Peace is a tangible and spiritual substance from God that can be transferred, transmitted and released into homes, people and stressful situations- **Matthew 10:12-13; Luke 10:5-7; Romans 1:11-12.**

### 1. We Have a Part to Play

Even though God has provided so many great promises in His Word concerning peace, not to mention it is also included in our redemption (**Isaiah 53:5**), we have a part to play to ensure that we get to enjoy it.

- When tempted to yield to worry, anxiety and fear, we must resist it in Jesus’ Name.
  - o **James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9.**
- We must meditate and speak the Word of God so our minds stay on the Lord at all times.
  - o **Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:4-9; Colossians 3:1-2, 15-16.**
- Avoid complaining, arguing, and quarreling; for they are sure to rob us of peace and joy.
  - o **Proverbs 17:14; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; 2 Timothy 2:23-26; James 4:1-2.**
- There is nothing quite as bad as strife, especially in the home- **Proverbs 14:30; 17:1.**
- As far as it depends on us, we must do our part to be at peace with people.
  - o **Romans 12:18-20; 1 Cor. 7:15; Galatians 5:14-15; 1 Th. 5:13; Hebrews 12:14.**
- Our behavior, character and attitude has everything to do with being a peacemaker!
  - o **Pr. 29:17; Isaiah 54:13; Mark 9:50; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; James 3:13-18; Heb. 12:11.**
- If we would love life and see good days we must do the following in **1 Peter 3:8-12.**
- Being a peacemaker is an important ingredient to maintaining unity- **Ro. 14:19; Eph. 4:3-4.**
- Peace is also necessary to create an environment conducive for the Gospel- **1 Timothy 2:1-4.**

Notice the promise Jesus made in connection to being a peacemaker, “... *they will be called sons of God.*” According to **Galatians 3:26**, we become sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ alone. So what Jesus is talking about here specifically is the characteristics or fruit of being a son of God. Being a peacemaker is part of walking in love, that’s how we know we are children of God- **1 John 3:7-18.**

## H. Blessed for being Persecuted for Righteousness

### Matthew 5:10-12

**“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”**

Persecution does not sound like a very comfortable thing does it? It would be a natural reaction to shun, recoil and avoid it due to the unpleasant nature of it.

- Who wants to experience the pain of rejection, scorn or worse martyrdom? **Heb. 11:35-38.**
- Yet as disciples of Jesus Christ, it's an unavoidable circumstance of life.
- Fortunately the New Testament provides ample passages of scripture to prepare us for it.

**John 15:18-21, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.”**

- There is nothing more controversial today in the world than the Name of Jesus.
- When we stand and proclaim that Name above every name, it will draw attention; the good, the bad and the ugly- **Acts chapter 4; 5:40; 26:9; Philippians 2:10.**
- People either hate it, love it or dismiss it as mere folklore- **Hebrews 2:1-4.**
- The big question for us is, will we be ashamed of Jesus?
  - o **Mark 8:38; Romans 1:16; 2 Timothy 1:8-12, 16; 1 Peter 4:16.**
- Will we shrink back and become a closet Christian, keep our light/witness a secret?
  - o **Mark 5:14-16; Luke 11:33; Hebrews 10:39.**

However, we should not be found guilty of any moral or ethical failures on our part that would contribute to needless hardships and trouble or even acting foolishly by being judgmental and critical. **Romans 2:17-24; 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:7; Titus 2:8; 1 Peter 2:11-20; 3:16; 4:15.**

- If we have done our part and have avoided being a part of the issue (by drawing needless problems due to our lack of wisdom), there are some principles that will help us overcome.
- God wants us to be victors not victims when facing trials and persecutions about our faith.
- We can grow and be blessed under the fire of persecution in spite of what the devil means for evil to destroy us, God can turn it around for our good for His glory- **Romans 8:28-39.**

### 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

**But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

No doubt the enemy is not going to stand idly by as we systematically rob him, and turn hell bound souls for heaven’s gain. Like Paul’s thorn, demonic entities will try to stir up trouble for us in an attempt to discourage and get us to quit- **Acts 13:50; 14:2, 19; 17:5; Philippians 1:17.**

## 1. Don't Be Surprised

When we are being persecuted for the Gospel's sake as credible witnesses to the truth, not everyone is going to accept it; deceived by Satan they will oppose the truth- **John 16:1-4; Acts 19:23-40; 26:9.**

### 2 Timothy 3:12

**“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted...”**

### 1 Peter 4:12

**Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.**

### 1 John 3:13, “Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.”

What kind of a reception do you think Jesus had when He began to minister as a great light in a dark world? Did they roll out the red carpet for Him, as their sins and dark secrets were exposed?

- **John 1:1-13**- Jesus, the Word of God came as a light that darkness could not overcome.
- **John 3:19-21**, the light exposes the darkness of sin in our lives, so men must make a choice.
- Repent of their sin and be forgiven and set free, or stay in darkness- **Luke 20:18; John 3:36.**
- So being persecuted for being a Christian comes with the territory- **1 Thessalonians 3:4.**

One important side point that needs to be made, when Christians are being attacked with sickness, poverty or any other kind of oppression, that is not to be confused with persecution for being a believer. We are not to suffer for things that Jesus had already suffered for us as our substitute in redemption.

- I have never found any Scripture in the New Testament that indicates suffering sickness and disease is suffering for Jesus.
- As a matter of fact, the Bible is specific about suffering according to the will of God.
  - o **1 Peter 2:18-23; 5:12-19.**
- Paul's thorn in the flesh was not sickness, the context in **2 Corinthians 11:22-12:10** is clearly a demonic entity stirring up persecution and hardship for Paul.
- Even in our main text of **Matthew 5:10-12**, is there any reference to disease or being ill?

## 2. Count it all Joy

The Bible is clear that our attitude towards trials, tests, temptations and persecutions is to be full of joy and experience the victory we have in Jesus Christ.

### James 1:2-4

**Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**

- James goes on to say in verse 5 to ask God for wisdom, so as to know how to overcome it.
- If the Bible calls us more than conquerors, then what are according to **Romans 8:31-39?**
- God has already secured victory in Jesus- **1 Cor. 15:56-57; 2 Cor. 2:14-17; Col 1:13; 2:15.**
- We are just called to be witnesses to the truth, if they reject it, that's between them and God.
- So let's be like Paul and Silas, when they were in prison, having been flogged severely, instead of having a pity party they had a praise and worship service- **Acts 16:16-34.**

- Actually being persecuted for Jesus becomes a badge of honor, not of shame.
- When Peter and John were flogged for preaching the Gospel, they rejoiced over it!

#### **Acts 5:41-42**

**The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.**

- The religious leaders tried to shut them up through fear, intimidation and punishment- failed!
  - o **Acts 4:21; 5:40; 9:1.**
- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit gives us boldness and a fire to preach the gospel fearlessly.
  - o **Acts 1:4-8; 9:27; Ephesians 6:19-20; Philippians 1:14.**

#### **Acts 4:13**

**When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.**

**Acts 5:29-30, “Peter and the other apostles replied: ‘We must obey God rather than men!’”**

### **3. Remain Faithful**

#### **Matthew 10:17-20**

**“Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”**

- The great test that comes with persecution is whether we will remain faithful to Jesus.
  - o **Mark 13:13; Revelation 14:12.**
- There is great danger if we shrink back and denounce the Lord.
  - o **Matthew 10:32-33; 2 Timothy 2:11-13; Hebrews 10:32-39.**
- Peter promised the Lord not to disown him in **Matthew 26:31-35.**
- Jesus gave Peter an opportunity to make good on the promise by preparing himself in prayer ahead of time in the Garden of Gethsemane- **Matthew 26:36-46.**
- If we endure by grace through faith, we have a great promise from God- rewards in heaven.
  - o **Revelation 2:10, 13, 26.**

#### **Revelation 3:10**

**Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.**

There is a false sense of security that ministers will try to project upon believers that no matter what they do or how they behave they are guaranteed heaven; the false notion called “Once saved always saved.” **Hebrews 6:4-12; Hebrews 10:26-31; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 1 John 5:16-17.**

- The goal here is to stay sharp, engaged and faithfully, to preserve and endure persecution.
  - o **Mark 13:33; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:5; Eph. 6:18; 1 Th. 5:6; 1 Peter 5:8.**
- To not play around with the things of God- **1 Cor. 15:2; Php. 2:12-13; Col. 1:23; 2 John 8.**
- If we obey the Word and keep pressing for the prize, no concerns- **1Cor. 9:24-27; Php. 3:14.**

# Discourse #2: Salt and Light

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Reference: Matthew 5:13-16; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34-35

Theme: Make a Difference in this World by letting what's on the inside Come on the Outside

Context: Jesus was teaching a Large Group of people on a Mountain side in the Galilee Region



**“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”**

**Matthew 5:13-16**

Salt and light, that is what Jesus has called all of us to be in the world; when we cease to be these powerful influences, we have lost our great purpose upon the earth, and thus have become irrelevant.

- Light reveals humanity's great need for Jesus and salt makes them thirsty to receive Him!

Being a salt and light certainly includes being moral and upright in character, attitude and conversation, but it's much more than that.

Even Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses and other religious people can portray the same image of uprightness, but they are still going to hell, even with all their good works- **Proverbs 14:12.**

It's the truth of God's Word coming out of our mouths, backed up with a godly lifestyle, confirmed with signs and wonders that sets us apart from all the cults and false religions of the world- **Mark 16:20.**

- It takes power evangelism to penetrate the deep darkness of spiritual blindness in this world.
- Ministering with power, the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction!

## **1 Thessalonians 1:4-5**

**For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.**

- To be salt and light is to be on the offensive, not defensive.
- That does not mean we are turning people off with brash fanatics- **Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9.**
- We are not ashamed of the Gospel; bold and fearless in the Lord- **Eph. 6:19-20; Php. 1:14.**
- Like salt and light, the Lord mixes us into the world, society and culture to influence, infiltrate and infect them with the love and power of God unto salvation- **Romans 1:16-17.**

## A. Salt of the Earth

All throughout the Bible we see God's people protected from harm; it's our relationship with God that acts as a preservative for all those around us- **2 Corinthians 2:14-17.**

- Salt preserves and adds flavor to those things that are rubbed with it- **Colossians 4:6.**
- When we rub shoulders with the world, we are to influence them with the Love/Word of God

### **Romans 9:29**

**It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah."**

- Noah was a preacher of righteousness, he was salt in his generation.
  - o **Genesis chapter 6; Luke 17:26-27; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:18-20; 2 Peter 2:4-9.**
- Remember the story about Abraham's Nephew, Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - o **Genesis 18:16-19:29; Luke 17:28-33.**
- The best thing for any nation is to have as many on fire Christians as possible, which invokes the blessing of God in the land.

### **Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."**

When true Christianity is in operation, light, life, peace and prosperity prevail to bless and prosper multitudes. It's part of the Church's mission to intercede for nations- **1 Timothy 2:1-4; 1 Peter 2:5, 9.**

- Remember, Satan is the deceiver and agitator, he wants wars, death, famine and suffering.
  - o **Job 1:6-2:7; Luke 4:6; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 2 Th. 2:10; Heb. 2:14; Rev. 7:1; 20:1-3, 7-8.**
- It is our prayers that is holding back the possibility for even more death- **2 Thessalonians 2:7**
- At a minimum, Christians can at least act like a Christian and be a salt and light to the world.
  - o **Matthew 5:13-16; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Th. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 3:7; 5:10.**
- Sadly, many out of fear hide their faith in secret and live double lives- **Revelation 3:16.**
- God will judge people not merely for doing wrong, but for not doing the right things as well.
- So there is no excuse for doing nothing for God, and not investing His grace into others.

### 1. When Salt Loses its Saltiness

When salt loses its saltiness it neither preserves or flavors, and so has lost its purpose; becoming useless, not even good as a fertilizer.

### **Luke 14:34-35**

**"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."**

### **Mark 9:50**

**"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with each other."**

- So who is responsible for having salt in themselves?
- We are, we must stay in close fellowship with the Lord- **Hebrews 10:22; James 4:8.**
- Be quick to forgive and quick to repent- **1 John 1:9.**
- We lose our flavor or distinctness when we become lukewarm- **Revelation 3:16.**

## B. Light of the World

- Many make reference to Jesus being the light of the world, and rightly so- **John 8:12; 9:5.**
- But Jesus has also made us to be lights as well, to continue His works today- **John 14:12-14.**
- We are chips off the ole block as the old saying goes. That is what being a Christian is all about- little Christ's, being made in His image. We are anointed with the Holy Spirit.
  - o **Luke 4:17-19; Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20, 27; 3:8.**
- Light describes what God's Word does in our lives- **Pr. 20:27; Eph. 1:17-19; 2Tim. 3:16-17**

**Psalms 119:130, "The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple."**

Light is also used as a figure of speech to represent: truth and knowledge or ignorance for darkness.  
**Psalms 119:130; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Ephesians 1:17-18; Hebrews 6:4; 10:32.**

- Many Christians are asleep in the light, oblivious to eternal implications going on around them.
- We have a tremendous responsibility to be faithful stewards of the truth we have received to minister it to others as the Holy Spirit leads us- **Luke 12:47-48; 1 Corinthians 4:1-7.**

### **2 Corinthians 4:3-4**

**And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.**

- The problem with spiritual darkness is that it blinds people from seeing the truth- **1 John 2:8-11.**
- In the natural, without light we would stumble around in the darkness not knowing where we are.
- One major consequence to walking in darkness, disobedience to the Lord, is that it blinds folks.
  - o **1 John 2:9-11** makes this very point, stumbling around in the darkness.
- To walk in the light of God's Word is to be obedient and in fellowship with God.
  - o **John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:4-5; 12:35-36; Ephesians 5:8-9; 1 John 1:5-7.**
- Walking in the Light allows us to see things coming, so we are not taken by surprise.
- Another analogy can be drawn from people sleeping when it is dark, and awake when it is day.
  - o **Ephesians 5:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8.**

So the Bible uses light and darkness as metaphors to represent the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. Our allegiance to one or the other is demonstrated by our choices and corresponding behavior.  
**Romans 13:12-13; Colossians 1:12-13; Revelation 3:15-16.**

### **John 15:8**

**This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.**

### **John 13:34-35**

**"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

- Failure to do so causes us to lose our purpose and distinctness among people.
- Being a light in the world, is having our lives on display, revealing the Grace of God in us.
- Resulting as a tremendous witnessing tool- adds credibility to the message of the Gospel.
- **Acts 20:34-35; Romans 14:16-18; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-2.**
- So the purpose of light is to benefit others and bring glory to God- **2 Cor. 9:13; 1 Peter 2:12.**

# Discourse #3: The Fulfillment of the Law

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Reference: Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 16:17

Theme: The integrity of the Scriptures can Never be Compromised or Fail, they are Eternal

Context: Jesus was teaching a Large Group of people on a Mountain side in the Galilee Region



**“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

**For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.”**

**Matthew 5:17-20**

- The Old Testament writings are full of rich Messianic prophecies- **Genesis 3:15**.
- Either as direct references to specific events or types/shadows, revealing analogies to some truth about the Messiah, Jesus Christ. For example, consider Joseph in the book of Genesis.

The Bible records that Joseph saved his brothers from death even though they had tried to kill him and had, when they arrived in Egypt, failed to recognize him. Many consider this a picture, or analogy, of how the Messiah was received by the Jews, God’s chosen people, when He came 2000 years ago.

- The Old Covenant was in force until the end of John the Baptist’s ministry.
- The 3½ years of Jesus’ ministry was a transition period between the Old and New covenants.

**Matthew 11:12-13,**

**From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.**

- We now live under a new and better Covenant through faith in Jesus- **Hebrews 8:5-6**.
- As a matter of fact, in light of the New Covenant, the Old one is obsolete- **Hebrews 8:13**.
- That does not mean that Old Covenant and Old Testament stories have lost value. They are still rich in truth, acting as a foundation for our faith- **1 Cor. 10:1-13; 2 Peter 1:19; 3:2**.

**Hebrews 10:1**

**The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.**

## A. Jesus Came to Fulfill the Law and the Prophets

**Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”**

There are numerous passages in the Gospels and in the Book of Acts that have the words “fulfill” and “Fulfilled” in reference to Jesus fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself.

- Consider the coming of Jesus Christ to the earth
  - o **Matthew 1:22-23-** Jesus born of a virgin.
  - o **Matthew 2:14-22-** Jesus as a small child called back from Egypt.
  - o **Matthew 2:23; Mk. 16:6; John 1:45; Acts 24:5-** Jesus being raised in Nazareth.
- The mode and location of Jesus’ ministry- **Luke 4:17-21; John 6:45.**
  - o **Matthew 4:13-16-** He would minister in the Galilee area.
  - o **Matthew 8:16-17-** Jesus healing the sick.
  - o **Matthew 12:15-21-** Anointed with the Spirit, humble servant to care for people.
  - o **Matthew 13:13-15, 35-** The fact that Jesus would speak to the people in parables.
  - o **Matthew 21:4-7-** The triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
  - o **John 12:38-41; 15:25-** The spiritual blindness of the Jews and rejection of Jesus.
- Even the prediction of Judas betraying Jesus.
  - o **Matthew 27:3-10; John 13:18-19; 17:12; 18:9; Acts 1:15-22.**
- The life of Jesus culminated in His Death, Burial, Resurrection and ascension to heaven.
  - o **Luke 18:31-34; 22:36-37-** Jesus foretold His suffering in advance to His disciples.
  - o **Luke 24:25-27, 44-** Written in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.
  - o **Mt. 26:53-56; John 18:31-32-** Jesus refused to be delivered from being crucified.
  - o **John 19:23-24-** The fact that Jesus’ garment was gambled for by the soldiers.
  - o **John 19:28-30-** Jesus carefully fulfilled every detail to the very end.
  - o **John 19:31-37-** The fact that Jesus’ legs were not broken, but was pierced.
- The Early Church infused the Gospel message along with fulfilled Old Testament Scriptures.
  - o **Luke 1:1; Acts 15:15-18; 28:23-31; Romans 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-2.**
  - o **Acts chapter 7; 13:14-41-** Lengthy references made to the Old Testament.
  - o **Acts 3:18; 10:43-** The fact that Jesus would suffer for the forgiveness of sins.
  - o **Acts 3:17-26; 24:14-16; 26:7-8-** A message that the Jews would understand.
  - o **Acts 13:46-48; 26:22-23-** A message not only for the Jews, but the Gentiles too.
- Many of God’s people under the Old Covenant longed to see the days we are living in today.
  - o **Matthew 13:17; 1 Peter 1:10-12.**
- Love is the fulfillment of the Law- **Mt. 7:12; 22:35-40; John 13:34-35; Romans 13:8-10.**
- When we walk in love, there is no need for a Law- **Galatians 5:23; 1 Timothy 1:8-11.**

### **John 1:17**

**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

Jesus did not come to destroy the Law, but to fulfill it, for the purpose of the Law was to lead us to Him. It was meant to be a temporary institution until the ultimate answer to sin came- **Galatians 3:19-29.**

### **John 1:29-31**

**The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.”**

<b>The Messiah Must</b>	<b>Prophecy</b>	<b>Fulfillment by Jesus</b>
Be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1; Luke 2:4-7
Be adored by great persons	Psalms 72:10-11	Matthew 2:1-11
Be anointed with the Holy Spirit	Isaiah 11:2; 61:1	Matthew 3:16; John 3:34; Acts 10:38
Be hated without cause	Isaiah 49:7; Psalms 69:4	John 15:24-25
Be undesired and rejected by His own people	Isaiah 53:2; 63:3; Psalms 69:8	Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58; John 1:11
Be plotted against by Jews and Gentiles together	Psalms 2:1-2	Acts 4:27
Be betrayed by a friend	Psalms 41:9; 55:12-24	Matthew 26:21-25, 47-50; John 13:18-21; Acts 1:16-18
Be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver	Zechariah 11:12	Matthew 26:16
Have his price given for a potter's field	Zechariah 11:13	Matthew 27:7
Be forsaken by His disciples	Zechariah 13:7	Matthew 26:31, 56
Be struck on the cheek	Micah 5:1	Matthew 27:30
Be spat on	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67; 27:30
Be mocked	Psalms 22:7-8	Matthew 27:31, 39-44
Be beaten	Isaiah 50:6	Matthew 26:67; 27:26, 30
Be thirsty during His execution	Psalms 22:15	John 19:28
Be given vinegar to quench that thirst	Psalms 69:21	Matthew 27:34
Be considered a transgressor	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38
Be buried with the rich when dead	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
Be sought after by Gentiles as well as Jews	Isaiah 11:10; 42:1	Acts 10:45
Be accepted by the Gentiles	Isaiah 11:10; 42:1-4; 49:1-12	Matthew 12:21; Acts 10:45; Romans 15:9-12

## B. God's Word can Never Fail

### Matthew 5:18

**“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”**

It is absolutely impossible for God's Word to fail, if it could, then God would cease to be God and this whole universe would be in a world of hurt.

- We have great assurances in the Scriptures along these lines.
  - o It is impossible for God to lie- **Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:16-20.**
  - o Given by inspiration of God- **2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:16-21.**
  - o Established forever- **Psalms 119:89, 144, 152, 160, 165; Proverbs 30:5-6.**

### Luke 21:33

**Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.**

**Isaiah 55:10-11, “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”**

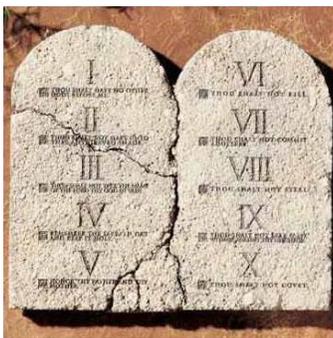
The opening statement Jesus makes in Matthew 5:18 in the KJV, “*For verily I say unto you...*” is in the emphatic particle in the Greek as a strong word of affirmation.

- There are three aspects to the Law- Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial.
- The 10 commandments are part of the moral law and serve as the foundation for the Old Cov.

The vast legal system of Israel’s civil, criminal, judicial, and ecclesiastical systems (Mosaic Law), were framed after the covenant law (10 commandments)- not with a view of expanding it, but to enforce it.

- The religious leaders of Jesus’ time, thought Jesus was a fanatic who came to undermine, dismiss and abolish the Old Covenant Law and Prophecies.
- Jesus came not to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill and accomplish them.

### C. The Commandments Are Still Valid



#### **Matthew 5:19**

**Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**

Some folks have the wrong perception concerning the law, that it’s a bad and repressive thing, but not when it is handled properly- 1 Timothy 1:8, “*We know that the law is good if one uses it properly.*”

- Remember that Jesus was born and died under the Old Covenant to fulfill it completely.
- This explains why Jesus made so many references to it- **Matthew 8:3-4; Luke 17:11-19.**
- The New Covenant was not put into force until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - o **Matthew 26:28-29; Hebrews 8:7-8, 13; 9:15, 23-28; 12:24.**

**Matthew 13:52, “He said to them, ‘Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.’” - 2 Corinthians 4:7**

- The Old Testament was given by inspiration for that dispensational period- **Acts 7:37-38.**
- The Moral Law is an expression of God’s Holy character and nature- that doesn’t change.
  - o **Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8.**
- The 10 commandments are still to be obeyed, but under the New Covenant it’s done by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) and the New Birth- **Ro. 13:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15.**
- Those living under the Old Covenant had the impossible task of obeying the Law perfectly. That does not change the reality of the truth behind the Law for us today- **Galatians 3:21-22.**

**Hebrews 7:18-19 “The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.”**

- There is still great value to be gained from the Old Testament- **Ro. 2:17-20; 1 Cor. 10:1-13.**

## D. A Righteousness Apart from the Law

### **Matthew 5:20**

**For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.**

The mandate is clear in Acts 17:30, “...but now he commands all people everywhere to repent” concerning this dispensation of grace we are now living under today.

- The Old Covenant was based on a system of works; limited righteousness- **Heb. 9:6; 10:1-24**
- Waiting for Jesus to come and make the ultimate, once for all sacrifice for sin for all time.
  - o **Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 24-28; 10:2, 10.**
- The Gospel message of the Old Covenant was to be circumcised and obey the law of Moses.
  - o **Luke 16:27-31; Hebrews 4:1-2.**
- Under the New Covenant, we are justified by faith in Jesus alone, not by observing the law.
  - o **Romans 3:19-30; 2:29.**
- The Work of God now is to simply believe and receive Jesus as Lord- **Romans 10:9-10.**

**John 6:29, “Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”**

The reference Jesus was making to the religious leaders certainly pointed to their hypocrisy, but more than that, the law does not save but simply identifies and condemns sin and the sinner- **2Cor. Chapter 3**

**2 Corinthians 3:6, 9, “ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!”**

Self-righteousness of good works and moral living fails- **Isaiah 64:6; Gal. 2:15-16; Col. 2:16-23.**

The Law was a means to an end under the Old Covenant, even though it represents God’s eternal Holy nature; it was never meant for mankind to uphold apart from God’s Grace. From birth, we were setup for failure, so now man is looking for a savior- either religion, science, or himself! For us, Jesus is the only Way, the only Truth and the only Life- **John 14:6; Galatians 3:17-25.**

It was a gift of God’s grace not by works that brings salvation! There are so many Scriptures that support this truth that it’s undeniable, but that is what all the religions of the world are all about; trying to earn their way into heaven. The falsity of the presumption that my good works will somehow outweigh my bad works, making me acceptable in God’s sight is just flat wrong! The Scriptures declare that just one sin, dooms a person to eternal perdition. We cannot recall the punishment of our sin as much as a murderer can pardon himself by being a good person for the rest of his life- when we commit the crime, we have to do the time. Unless we are able to find a willing substitute to take our place; one who has never committed a sin- that would be JESUS! I owed a debt I could not pay, He paid a debt He did not owe; we all need a Savior, Jesus Christ to save us from our sins and the penalty of sin- death!

If as Christians, we try to serve God in our own strength or make up our own rules and depart from revelation in Scripture, we are in effect putting ourselves under the curse of the law. This is religion, and it only produces death. Certainly, God wants us to produce good works. God’s method is by His grace and through our faith in His Word. Allowing the transforming power of His Word and Spirit to change us, but not by works of our own self-righteousness, trying to earn God’s favor- relative moralism.

**Dt. 27:26; Ro. 4:4-8; Gal. 2:15-16, 18-21; 3:1-12; 5:2-6; Eph. 2:8-10; Jas. 2:8-11.**

# Discourse #4: Murder and Reconciliation

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Reference: Matthew 5:21-26; Luke 12:57-59

Theme: Walking in Love Towards others will Keep us out of Big Trouble

Context: Jesus Builds, Extends, and Expands upon the Law of Moses for the New Covenant



“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is

taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.”

**Matthew 5:21-26**

God holds us accountable to the measure of understanding and grace we have received to obey it. Note, under the Old Covenant they were not born again, and did not have the Holy Spirit living within them.

**Romans 5:6-21; 2 Corinthians chapter 3; Philippians 3:1-11; Hebrews 2:1-4; 9:14; 10:29.**

## **Luke 12:48**

**From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.**

- This is why under the Old Covenant, the command was to love your neighbor as yourself.
- What if you did not love yourself that much, natural human love is selfish at best, and can turn to hatred in a moment of time when it does not get its way.
- Under the New Covenant, Jesus took that command to the next level in **John 13:34-35**.
- We are to love one another just as Jesus loves us, by laying down our lives for each other.
  - o **John 15:12-15; 1 John 2:6; 3:16.**
- Since there is much more grace given to us through the New Covenant, particularly the New Birth and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, God naturally expects more from us.
  - o **Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 3:1; 4:6.**

## **1 Peter 1:22-23**

**Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.**

- The Law under the Old Covenant could not change the sinful heart of man- **Romans 3:9-20**.
- It was primarily concerned with the outward actions of a person's behavior.
- Old Testament Saints would love and worship God in their own strength- which is limited.
  - o **Deuteronomy 6:5; 2 Samuel 6:14**.
- So an individual could harbor bitterness and malice, but as long as they don't act it out against a person, they have not broken the law- such as it is with our current judicial system.
- In our free democracies we don't condemn people for what they think, or even for much of what they say, only by their actions.

**Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"**

The New Covenant holds God's people accountable not only for the outward actions as judged by the Law like murder and adultery (**1 Timothy 1:8-11**), but also for our internal thoughts and motives.

**Luke 12:2-3; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Hebrews 12:15; James 4:3**

**Ezekiel 36:26-27**

**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.**

- Since the New Birth changes us from the inside out, God expects more from us.
  - o **Ezekiel 11:19-20; John 3:3-8; Ro. 2:29; 2 Cor. 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Titus 3:5**.
- Now we have been given grace to worship God in spirit and in truth- **John 4:23-24**.
- Through the redemptive work of Jesus and the ministry of the Spirit we worship God.
  - o **Romans 8:5-17; 12:1-2; Galatians 5:13-26; Philippians 3:3**.

## A. Murder

- The first murder ever recorded in the Bible was between Cain and Abel- **Genesis 4:1-16**.
- The Lord said in verse 10, "*Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.*"
- Did you know that blood has a voice? **Hebrews 12:24**.
- Murder is shedding innocent blood, manslaughter is killing someone accidentally.
- Cities of refuge in the Old Testament for accidental deaths- **Ex. 21:12-14; Numbers 35:9-28**
- Life is sacred to God, shedding blood with malice and intent is murder according to the Bible, in the womb and outside- Abortion is the shedding of innocent blood.

**Genesis 9:4-6**

**"But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man."**

- The difference between the children of God and the children of the devil is their spiritual natures- **John 8:42-47; Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:20; Titus 3:3; 1 John 2:9-11; 3:10-13**.
- According to the Bible, Hating people is the same as committing murder- in the heart.

**1 John 3:14-15**

**We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.**

## B. Unrighteous Anger

### James 1:19-20

**My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.**

The sinful nature of fallen man, and Christians with a sinful nature still in their body lends itself towards perverting legitimate anger into unrighteous anger- for cruel and selfish reasons.

- Not all anger is bad or sinful, even God displays righteous indignation and wrath.
  - o **Psalms 7:11; Hebrews 1:9; 10:31.**
- This produces a holy fear, reverence and respect for God- **2 Cor. 7:1; Col. 3:22; Heb. 12:28.**
- To fear the Lord is to hate evil- **Psalms 97:10; Proverbs 8:13; Amos 5:15; Romans 12:9.**
- We should be angry towards sin, and judge ourselves- **1 Cor. 11:31; 2 Cor. 7:8-12.**

Concerning anger in Matthew 5:22 in the New King James Version it states, "...*is angry with his brother without a cause.*" If our anger is to be validated, there must be a Biblical cause for it.

Notice what the Amplified version says, "*But I say to you that everyone who continues to be angry with his brother or harbors malice (enmity of heart) against him...*"

- Righteous anger is always brief, and is followed up by mercy, grace and forgiveness.
  - o **Psalms 57:10; 103:7-18; 108:4; 117:2; Isaiah 54:8; Lamentations 3:22-25.**
- Since God's mercies are new every morning, how can we harbor anger against others.
- Long protracted seasons of anger is unhealthy and sinful.
- Bible is clear, our anger should not last over night, be unjust, or an expression of contempt!

**Psalms 30:5, "For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.**

**Psalms 4:4- In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent.**

**Ephesians 4:26-27 AMP, "When angry, do not sin; do not ever let your wrath (your exasperation, your fury or indignation) last until the sun goes down. Leave no [such] room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to him]."**

The words of our mouth contain the power of life and death according to **Proverbs 18:21**; they can heal and build or they can pierce like a sword and destroy- **Proverbs 12:18; 15:4; 16:24; 26:18-19; Jas. 3:2.**

- We will be judged by the words of our mouth- **Mt. 12:36-17; Luke 19:22; Eph. 4:29-5:4.**
- Jesus showed how His fulfillment of the Law went far deeper than mere outward conformity.
- He condemns the use of the word 'Raca' which is a Aramaic word meaning empty headed.
- The modern application is don't show contempt for people and call them stupid.

The Sanhedrin Jesus referred to at the time was a Jewish tribunal instituted about 200 years before Christ's birth. It was composed of 72 judges (chief priests, elders and scribes) with the High Priest as the head. Before the Roman occupation, they had the power of life and death- **Mt. 26:57-66; John 18:32.**

The term, "You Fool" Jesus referred to was an expression of the highest guilt- defamation of character- **Deuteronomy 22:21; Joshua 7:15; Psalms 14:1 KJV.** A serious offense since Jesus escalates it to hell.

## C. Reconciliation – Do it Immediately

### Matthew 5:23-24

**“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”**

Notice the sense of urgency and priority Jesus places on being reconciled with others, even over offering God sacrifices; as if God needed anything- **Acts 17:25**. They were for our benefit; being devoted to God

- The same truth is applied before taking Communion, recognizing believers- **1 Cor. 11:27**.
- God is not impressed with the formalism of ritualistic worship while treating others poorly.
- **1 Samuel 15:22; Matthew 25:40; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**.
- So walking in love towards others and sanctification is the greatest form of sacrifice.
  - o **Matthew 9:13; 12:7; 18:33; 23:23-24; Romans 12:1-2**.
- Sacrifices and offerings were a means to an end; love is the ultimate- **Hebrews 10:8; 13:16**.
- Jesus taught that having the heart right is a priority over the outward act or observance.
- So our religious service may be good; becomes nullified without love- **1 Corinthians 13**.
- The Bible teaches making things right with others, make restitution, and confess our sin.
  - o **James 5:16**.

### Matthew 18:15-17

**“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”**

- With reconciliation there is also a side to it that addresses church discipline.
  - o **Acts 5:1-16; 1 Corinthians chapter 5; 1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15**.
- We have an obligation, expectation and a command to love one another- **John 13:34-35**.
  - o **Romans 12:18; 13:8-10; Ephesians 4:1- 3; Philippians 2:1-5**.

### 2 John 5-6

**And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.**

The last few verses in our text of **Matthew 5:25-26**, speak of a legal matter concerning a debt and going to court. Financial debt is used in the Bible as a metaphor illustrating the sin of debt- **Matthew 18:23-35**

- Legal matters according to **1 Corinthians 6:1-11** directs us to settle legal matters amongst each other instead of before unbelievers.
- Reconciliation and forgiveness go hand in hand, essential to prayer- **Mark 11:25; 1 Pet. 3:7**.
- When we fail to repent and hold onto grudges, bitterness and unforgiveness we will be judged and turned over to Satan who has a legal claim- **Revelation 12:10-11**.

**Matthew 18:34-35, “In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”**

# Discourse #5: Adultery

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Reference: Matthew 5:27-30; Luke 16:18

Theme: It's not just the Actions but also the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart that are Important  
Context: Jesus Continues to Expands upon the Law of Moses in Light of the Kingdom of God



**“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”**  
Matthew 5:27-30

Under the Old Covenant Mosaic Law, adultery was a capital offense, for both the man and woman who were involved. God is a holy, and Leviticus chapter 20 discusses sexual purity, among other things.

**Leviticus 20:10 “If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife — with the wife of his neighbor — both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.”**

- Adultery is one of the 10 commandments; specific to at least one partner already married.
  - o **Exodus 20:14; Mt. 19:18; Mk. 7:21; Romans 2:22; 13:9; James 2:8-11**
- Fornication (KJV) is sex between two people and neither are married- **2Cor. 12:21; Eph. 5:3**
- Sexual immorality is more general; all prohibited sexual behavior outside of marriage
- **Mt. 15:19; Acts 15:20; Ro. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Th. 4:3; Rev. 9:21.**
- Homosexuality and Lesbianism fall under the heading of sexual immorality.
  - o **Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Jude 7.**
- Polygamy is not Biblical either- **Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6**
- Marriage was first instituted by God in the Garden of Eden for all mankind.

**Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”**

It is the oldest institution known to man and the most sacred of human covenants- **Malachi 2:13-16.**

- Marriage is a blood covenant between a man and a woman- a solemn and sacred pledge.
- We promise to give them our life in love and faithfulness- “till death do we part.”
  - o **Proverbs 5:15- 20; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3.**
- To violate this covenant that God instituted is a grave sin- **1 Corinthians 6:12-20.**
  - o **Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:3-6; 6:20-29; chapter 7; 22:14; 30:20.**

When a man consummates his marriage with his virgin wife, blood is emitted from the act of sexual intercourse. The blood covenant is consummated when the hymen is broken.

**Hebrews 13:4-5, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”**

## A. Spiritual Adultery

Thankfully there is forgiveness for the adulterer as seen in **John 8:3-11**, Jesus forgiving the woman caught in adultery, but where is the man in this picture? He was just as guilty as the woman- go figure!

- But what about spiritual adultery against the Lord, how is that committed?
- The Israelites had a covenant with God; like a marriage covenant it can be broken. They were notorious for idol worship; worshipping demons- **Dt. 32:17; Ps. 106:37; 1 Cor. 10:14-22.**
- They prostituted themselves to Satan- **Exodus 34:14; Jer. 3:1; Hosea 3; Rev. 17:2; 18:3, 9.**
- As Believers in Jesus Christ today, we too can be guilty of spiritual adultery when we flirt with the world- **2 Timothy 4:10; James 1:27; 4:4-10; 1 John 2:15-17.**
- Falling away and being allured into false cults or religions is another form of betrayal.
  - o **1 Corinthians 7:35; 2 Corinthians 11:2-6; Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1-5.**

### **Psalms 106:34-39**

**They did not destroy the peoples as the Lord had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs. They worshiped their idols, which became a snare to them. They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves.**

Here is a side point I thought was interesting. There was even a provision under the Old Covenant for a husband who felt jealous that his wife was having an affair- **Numbers 5:11-31.**

## B. Thoughts and Intents of the Heart- Hebrews 4:12-13

**Matthew 5:28, “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”**

The Law prohibited the physical act of adultery, but according to Jesus, lustful thoughts, meditating and playing scenarios of sexual immorality is the same sin as acting it out.

- Proverbs 23:7 NKJV, “*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*” Why is this, because the act will follow when the opportunity presents itself- **2 Peter 2:14.**
- It’s not a sin to be tempted, Jesus was tempted and never sinned- **Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.**
- Temptation is a solicitation to sin, and only becomes sin when yielded to and obeyed.

### **2 Timothy 2:22**

**Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.**

- The Apostle Paul was tempted and had to keep his body under- **1Cor. 9:24-27; 2Cor. 11:29.**
- This task is a full time job for Christians today- **Romans 3:11-14; 8:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-3.**
- Staying full of the Word of God and Prayer keeps us full of God’s grace- **Acts 6:5, 8.**
- As Christians we are leaky vessels, in constant need of refilling; to stay full of the Spirit.
  - o **2 Corinthians 4:7; Ephesians 5:18-20; Colossians 3:16; Jude 20.**

In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus was praying just prior to His arrest. Likewise the disciples should have prayed for strength against temptation- Peter shortly after denied the Lord- **Mark 14:37-38; 66-72**

## C. The Awfulness of Sin

**Matthew 5:29-30, “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”**

The overall point I believe Jesus is making here is to clearly illustrate the awful consequences of sin upon the soul of human beings. The pleasure of sin for a short time, is not worth the price- **Heb. 11:25.**

**Mark 8:36, “What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?”**

- Our bodies are an expression of our heart that can be used as instruments for sin or holiness.
  - o **Romans 6:12-23; 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:17-29; 1 Peter 2:11.**
- I don't believe Jesus is advocating masochistic mutilations of our body- **Colossians 2:20-23.**
- Even with the loss of eyes and limbs, a person could still find other ways to sin.
- Once we get saved, we can use our physical bodies for great good for God's glory.

However, Biblical sanctification of bringing our bodies under subjection, denying the cravings of the sinful nature in our bodies can be painful and incur a lot of suffering- **1 Peter 4:1-6; 1 Cor. 9:27.**

### **Galatians 5:24**

**Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.**

Going back to Matthew 5:29, the KJV uses the word “Offend” while the NIV translates the Greek word Skandalizo as “causes you to sin.”

skandalizo (skan-dal-id'-zo) (“scandalize”); from NT:4625; to entrap, i.e. trip up (figuratively, stumble [transitively] or entice to sin, apostasy or displeasure):

The noun from which the verb “offend,” in the original, is derived, commonly means a stumbling-block, or a stone placed in the way, over which one might fall. It also means a net, or a certain part of a net against which, if a bird strikes, it springs the net, and is taken. It comes to signify, therefore, anything by which we fall, or are ensnared; and applied to morals, means anything by which we fall into sin, or by which we are ensnared- it simple means anything that causes us to fall into sin.

### **Matthew 5:29 AMP**

**If your right eye serves as a trap to ensnare you or is an occasion for you to stumble and sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be cast into hell (Gehenna).**

- So Jesus is saying, get rid of anything or anybody that is jeopardizing your eternal soul.
  - o **1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 Timothy 5:22; Hebrews 12:1.**
- Nor should we ever find ourselves in a situation of being a stumbling block to others.
  - o **Romans 14:13, 21; 1 Corinthians 8:13; 2 Corinthians 6:3.**

**1 Corinthians 10:31-33, “ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.”**

# Discourse #6: Divorce

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Reference: Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12; Mark 10:2-12

Theme: Marriage is for a Lifetime and Divorce was Never God's Idea

Context: The Jews were Looking for Validation to Divorce as an Acceptable Instrument



**“It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.”**

**Matthew 5:31-32**

I believe there is a fundamental failure in the Church world today in their obligation and responsibility to strengthen, support and provide biblical training for marriage, the home and child rearing.

- When marriages do fail, often times there is no support or recovery system.
- Instead of receiving healing and encouragement from other believers they are shunned.
- As a consequence the shame of divorce can lead to believers following away from the Lord.

It is a sad fact that about half of marriages in North America end in divorce, and that includes Christian marriages. Unfortunately that risk becomes greater with each successive marriage; about 67% for second, and about 74% for third marriages end up in divorce.

From 25 to 35% of men and women who do not remarry, they will cohabit. This trend is more typical with younger divorced persons, and more likely with men than with women.

According to discovery channel, *couples with children have a slightly lower rate of divorce than childless couples*. Sociologists believe that childlessness is also a common cause of divorce. The absence of children leads to loneliness and weariness- at least 66% of all divorced couples are childless.

In many churches, people have a false assumption that being a Christian will somehow automatically keep them from divorce, but they are subject to the same problems as everyone else; they include a lack of relationship skills, selfishness and the same devil attacks them if not more.

Hughes claim that 90% of divorces among born-again couples occur **after** they have been “saved.” Ironically some studies point to atheist and agnostics as having the lowest divorce rate of all groups.

Religion	% have been divorced
Jews	30
Born-Again Christians	27
Other Christians	24
Atheists and Agnostics	21

## A. The Marriage Covenant

Marriage, remarriage and divorce is a big topic, and fortunately for us the Bible has a lot to say on the subject. It is the oldest institution known to man, established by God Himself between Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden.

### Genesis 2:24-25

**For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.**

- Marriage is a blood covenant between a man and a woman- a solemn and sacred pledge.
- We promise to give them our life in love and faithfulness- “till death do we part.”
  - o **Proverbs 5:15- 20; Matthew 19:3-12; Romans 7:1-3.**
- In **Malachi 2:13-16** we see that a primary purpose for marriage is to raise godly children. It goes on to say that God hates divorce because of how it tears people’s lives apart.
- The union of sexual intimacy in marriage, is a mingling of the soul and spirit as a beautiful and sacred act for God’s glory- celebration of love. Divorce is a violent tearing apart of this.
- Marriage is also sacred due to it being type and shadow of our marriage relationship with God. Therefore, the Bible forbids a Christian from marrying an unbeliever- **1 Cor. 7:39.**

**Ephesians 5:31-33, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.**

When two Christians are walking according to the love that is shed abroad in their hearts, we will never see them darken the door of the divorce court. God’s divine love in our hearts never fails- **1 Cor. 13.**

In 1 Corinthians chapter 7, the entire chapter is devoted to the subject of marriage, divorce & separation.

### 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

**To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.**

- Since marriage is a covenant, only death or infidelity can break it.
- If the relationship becomes abusive in any way, the husband and wife may separate.
- If both parties were unsaved when they got married, but one of them gets saved and the other leaves, the Bible does not hold the believer accountable for that- **1 Corinthians 7:12-16.**

The belief that there is no forgiveness for divorced couples is not supported in Scripture; just consider the woman caught in adultery- **John 8:3-11.** Jesus forgave her, and did not say she can’t remarry.

- Jesus does not condone divorce and adultery, but they not an unpardonable sins!

### John 4:16-20

Jesus told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.” “Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet.”

## B. Why Divorce?

In **Matthew 19:3-12** and **Mark 10:2-12** the religious leaders asked Jesus about the validity of divorce. The insight Jesus provides is a profoundly accurate depiction of human nature then and as it is today.

**Matthew 19:3, “Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”**

- Wow that question sounds like some people today, divorce is often times a selfish convenience to bail from commitment or conflict avoidance when we need to change.
- Marriage has so many values, one of them is for God to use the relationship to teach us to love, give and serve someone other than ourselves; make us more Christ like in character.

Moses in **Deuteronomy 24:1-4** added a provision for the Jews to divorce; Mark 10:4, “*Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away*”

- Jesus quotes the Genesis mandate concerning marriage in **Matthew 19:4-6** as the final authority for mankind to follow. Marriage is between one man and one woman for a lifetime.
- So the Jews ask the logical question as to why Moses made the provision for divorce then.
- The answer was simple, the hardness of selfish human hearts is the cause for divorce!

**Matthew 19:8-9**

**Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”**

- Jesus makes it very plain and simple to understand, so no one can misunderstand it.

**Mark 10:10-12**

**When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”**

The disciples made a great observation concerning the permanency of marriage, that perhaps it’s better not to marry at all since the Bible is so strict about it- correct, it should not be taken lightly!

**Matthew 19:10-12, “The disciples said to him, ‘If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.’ Jesus replied, ‘Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.’”**

- When Joseph found out about Mary becoming pregnant, he had in mind to divorce her.
  - o **Matthew 1:18-21.**

**Bottom Line:**

The marriage covenant ends when there is a death (**Romans 7:1-3**), or marital unfaithfulness (**Matthew 5:32**). In the first case there is no sin to remarry, in the second case the adulterer must repent, but the innocent spouse may remarry without guilt. If a married couple chooses to separate for whatever reason, they must not remarry otherwise it would be adultery for whoever remarries first- **1 Cor. 7:10-11.**

# Discourse #7: Oaths

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Reference: Matthew 5:33-37

Theme: Setting the Record Straight on the Proper Use of Validating One's Word to Others

Context: Jesus was Clarifying the Application of Old Commands under a New Covenant



**“Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but keep the oaths you have made to the Lord.’ But I tell you, Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. Simply let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.**

**Matthew 5:33-37**

Jesus had paved the way for handling oaths under the New Covenant- don't do it. Human oath taking is the cause of many problems/unavoidable trouble- **James 5:12**. What was the purpose of oaths anyway?

- God gave oaths to confirm the validity of His promises and establish His Word- a good thing.
  - o **Luke 1:72-73; Acts 2:29-32; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:13-20; 7:20-28.**
- Used as a pledge, vow or promise, it acted as a legal instrument for collateral or security; held in trust until the contract was satisfied- **Genesis 38:17-30; Exodus 22:26; Dt. 24:10-18.**
  - o When widows were put on a list to receive provision- **1 Timothy 5:12.**
  - o Water Baptism is a pledge of a good conscience towards God- **1 Peter 3:21.**
- Old Covenant Law respects oaths- **Ex. 22:11; Lev. 19:12; Num. 5:19; Dt. 23:23; 29:12, 14.**
  - o Psalms 15:4, “...who keeps his oath even when it hurts.”
- When a person made a oath or gave their word, their good name was on the line.
- If a person's word is no good, they are perceived as no good- not trustworthy or honorable.
- The Pharisees like everything else creating loop holes for making oaths- **Matthew 23:16-22.**
- Peter swore by an oath that he did not know Jesus when he denied Him- **Matthew 26:69-75.**
- Jewish men took oaths not to eat or sleep until they had killed Paul- **Acts 23:12-21.**

**Numbers 30:2, “When a man makes a vow to the Lord or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.”**

- The problem with oaths is that it binds people into unexpected dilemmas.
  - o A woman making a rash promise, can be released by dad/husband- **Numbers 30:3-16**
  - o Man sacrifices his daughter due to a rash vow he had made- **Judges 11:29-40.**
  - o King Herod, bound by a oath, ended up murdering John the Baptist- **Mark 6:14-29.**
  - o The book of proverbs discourages it- **Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 22:26-27.**
- An Old Testament practice to charge people with a solemn command to confess the truth, they would say, “Give glory to God” – **Joshua 7:19; John 9:24.**
- Jesus Himself was placed under an oath by the high priest at His trial- **Matthew 26:63-68.**
- Paul often called God as a witness to his sincerity- **Romans 1:9; 9:1; Galatians 1:20.**
- Today in our society, we make people swear on the Bible to tell the truth.
- People in the world don't keep their Word, but God does- **2 Corinthians 1:17-20.**

# Discourse #8: Eye for an Eye

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Reference: Matthew 5:38-42; Luke 6:27-31

Theme: The Law was about Sin and Consequence, Grace is about Love and Mercy

Context: Going Beyond the Minimum of Obeying the Letter of the Law, Time to go the Extra Mile



**“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”**

**Matthew 5:38-42**

Justice and law comes from God and has been instituted among men, even though there are many perversions of justice, it’s intent is to put fear in people to prevent crime and injustices- **Romans 13:1-7.**

This concept of the punishment fits the crime comes from the Mosaic Law, as given to the Israelites. **Leviticus 24:17-21; Deuteronomy 19:16-21.**

**Exodus 21:22-25, “If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman’s husband demands and the court allows. But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.”**

- From a purely justice standpoint this rule of law makes sense for the Old Covenant people.
- Since they did not have the Spirit of God within them to lead them by the Law of love.
- However this stipulation breeds the propensity to seek revenge and bear grudges.
- So God also instituted another provision to help offset that sinful human tendency.

**Leviticus 19:18, “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.”**

- This premise is further expounded upon by Jesus in our main text to the next level.
- Keeping in harmony with the new Law of Love of the New Covenant- forgiveness and mercy
- Paul by the Spirit of God also quotes the Old Testament scriptures of **Deuteronomy 32:335 and Proverbs 25:21-22 in Romans 12:17-21.**

So does turning the other cheek mean that we become a door mat for people to grind their feet into? Does the Bible teach a brand of passivity that does not defend oneself, family and property from others?

- Before Jesus went to Calvary, He told His disciples to purchase two swords- **Luke 22:35-38.**
- What Jesus is saying is don’t retaliate, seek revenge, be vindictive or mean spirited.
  - o **Proverbs 17:9; Proverbs 19:11; 20:3.**
- However, we have the right and responsibility to defend ourselves and family from harm.
- Unless of course we willingly submit ourselves to martyrdom- **Heb. 11:35.**
- This principle of being wronged or cheated should be settled by the church anyway.
  - o **Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 6:1-11; 2 Corinthians 7:8-13.**

## A. Going the Extra Mile

There is a side to Human nature that will insist on its own rights and own way and is quick to pursue compensation for perceived injustices. However, we need to choose our battles, if its only our pride that has been hurt, Jesus is telling us to let it go, walk in love and take the higher ground.

### **1 Corinthians 13:5-6 AMP**

**Love is not rude (unmannerly) and does not act unbecomingly. Love (God's love in us) does not insist on its own rights or its own way, for it is not self-seeking; it is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it takes no account of the evil done to it [it pays no attention to a suffered wrong]. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail.**

The phrase Jesus made, *"If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles,"* has its origins in the Roman Impressment Law. Under this law if a Roman Soldier passed by you, he could tell you to come carry his pack for up to one mile. By law you're forced to go with him, however he could not force you to go any further.

Giving to people who are in need has to be done in the context of taking care of your own immediate family first. One should also be led by the Spirit (**Romans 8:14**), for giving should further God's purpose in folks lives and not enable bad habits of mismanagement and/or misuse- **2 Th. 3:6-15**.

### **1 Timothy 5:8**

**If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

People who are in great need, the poor and disadvantaged should certainly be ministered to. **Matthew 25:35-45; Hebrews 13:2; James 1:27.**

### **Proverbs 19:17**

**He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.**

**Proverbs 28:27, "He who gives to the poor will lack nothing, but he who closes his eyes to them receives many curses."**

The one who wants to borrow from you, according to Jesus should not be refused if it is within our power to give it. This reminds me of the parable of the man who came at midnight to borrow bread. **Luke 11:5-13.**

If we are going to be like our heavenly Father (**Matthew 5:48**), by God's grace, we will be generous, hospitable (**1 Peter 4:9**), and giving, not according to what we don't have- **2 Corinthians 8:12.**

### **Luke 6:30-31, 34-36**

**Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**

- It's more blessed to give than to receive according to **Acts 20:35**.

# Discourse #9: Love Your Enemies

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Reference: Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:32-36

Theme: Unlike the World, God Expects More From Us because of God's Grace

Context: The Law of the New Covenant of Love Versus the Law of Moses and Outward Conformity



**“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”**

**Matthew 5:43-48**

Human nature says, “If you’re nice to me, I’ll be nice to you, if you’re mean to me, then I’ll be mean to you.” It’s a tit for tat kind of thing. So along these same lines, it’s human nature to love your friends and to hate your enemies, since they are trying to hurt you- **Galatians 5:15**.

- In the world, there is a certain justification to hate one’s enemies and wish them ill will.
- However, this mentality is intrinsically self-centered since it’s all about how I’m being treated will determine how I’m going to treat you- it’s very reactionary in nature.
- Natural human love quickly turns to hatred/bitterness if it doesn’t get its way- **Luke 23:39-43**
- There are three kinds of love in the Greek mentioned in the Bible:
  - o *eros*- known as “erotic love” or the strong feelings of romantic love between a couple
  - o *phileo*- a friendship kind of love between the same or different genders.
  - o *agapao*- The God kind of love, the supernatural nature of God- unconditional love.

In **Leviticus 19:18**, we see the command to love your neighbor as yourself. The “hate your enemy” part Jesus was referring to was an inference that the Jews made; if we love the one, we can hate the other.

- While we were still enemies of God, Christ died for us-**Ro. 5:6-11; Eph. 2:1-7; Col. 1:21-22**.
- So Jesus is simply telling us to do what God is already doing- **2 Cor. 13:11; 1 John 2:6**.
- Besides, the problem is not with people anyway, but the devil motivating them to do evil.
  - o **John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:23-26; 1 John 3:8-10**.
- The problem with hating people is that the Bible calls it murder, it’s of the devil not God.

**1 John 3:14-16, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”**

- One powerful aspect of being born again, is having the love of God in our hearts- **Ro. 5:5**.
- It’s not natural to love our enemies, it takes the supernatural love of God- **1 Corinthians 13**.
- The real test if we are Christians or not is how we love and treat others- **John 13:34-35**.
- True believers have the fruit of the Spirit as their spiritual nature- **Galatians 5:22-23**.
- Jesus suffered at the hands of wicked men and said Father forgive them- **Luke 23:34**.
- When Stephen was being stoned to death, he asked the Lord to forgive them- **Acts 7:59-60**.

## A. Good Overcomes Evil

### John 1:5 AMP

**And the Light shines on in the darkness, for the darkness has never overpowered it [put it out or absorbed it or appropriated it, and is unreceptive to it].**

Jesus provides a powerful antidote for the painful sting and wounds of personal offense when people reject us, are hateful and hurtful towards us in various ways- pray for them.

- This is not an admission of defeat or being a coward when being wronged by others.
- Loving our enemies is not condoning/accepting their evil behavior in how they have hurt us.
- We can hate the evil, but love the person at the same time, desiring to see them repent/change
- Praying for our enemies does two things for us.
  - o First, it extends God's grace to help the other person repent and come to their senses.
  - o Second, it releases God's grace in our lives to heal the hurt and remove the pain.
- It's really an act of faith to forgive the offender and seek their good in spite of themselves.

### 1 Peter 2:19-23

**For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**

We should actually feel sorry for our enemies, because generally speaking, hurt people hurt others; it becomes a vicious cycle of perpetual hurting- **Hebrews 12:15**. We need to be the ones who stop it.

- So let's be part of the solution and not the problem by handling conflict God's way- love!
- When Saul, before he became the apostle Paul was persecuting the Church, Jesus gave him an ultimatum, repent or die while on the road to Damascus- **Acts 9:1-6**.
- The Lord knows how to deal with those who attack us- **Acts chapter 12**.
- God will give these folks an opportunity to repent or else.
  - o **2 Kings 20:1-11; Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:3-13; Revelation 2:20-23**.
- As the old saying goes, "two wrongs don't make it right."
- When we refuse to take revenge and trust God, we become victorious- **Romans 12:17-21**.
  - o Proverbs 17:13, "*If a man pays back evil for good, evil will never leave his house.*"
- If we choose to walk in love, speak blessing over the person, refuse to gossip or agree with others to judge and criticize them, then God will honor and vindicate us.

### Proverbs 16:7

**When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.**

- Trials, tests and temptations fall under this category of people persecuting and slandering us.
- What should our response be to this kind of treatment; count it all joy, continue to do good!
  - o **Hebrews 10:32-39; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 4:12-19**.
- God gets no glory if we walk in the flesh/carnal, like the rest of the world- **1 Cor. 3:1-4**.
- So we are called to a higher standard, because of God's grace, to respond in love.
- Are we going to get this right the first time, no but we are never a failure unless we give up.

# Discourse #10: Give to the Needy

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Reference: Matthew 6:1-4

Theme: We Need to be Discreet when Ministering to the Needs of Others

Context: Keeping the Law Lends itself Towards Pride, the Grace of God is a Gift- God gets the Glory



**“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”**

**Matthew 6:1-4**

At the time of this writing in North America, there are around 12% of families living under the “poverty threshold” and roughly 40% falling below the poverty line at some point within a 10 year time span. Most people (58.5%) will spend at least one year below the poverty line at some point between ages 25 and 75. This problem is magnified when the country is going through hard economic times.

- While Satan is the god of this world system, poverty will continue to be a scourge for many.
- Poverty is a curse and it brings ruin, hardship, suffering and in many cases death.
- The curse of the law is three-fold: poverty, sickness and death- **Galatians 3:13-14.**
- We have been redeemed from the curse of the law, prosperity is part of our redemption.
- It’s God’s will that we prosper and be in health and not be oppressed by the enemy.
  - o **Luke 4:18-19; 2 Corinthians 8:9.**

### **3 John 2 NKJV**

**Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.**

The Bible has a lot to say about taking care of the poor, but there is a right and wrong way about it. **Proverbs 10:15; 14:31; 19:17; 21:13; 22:9, 22-23; 28:27.**

- Jesus was not so heavenly minded that He was no earthly good- provided in many ways.
  - o **Matthew 19:21; 25:34-40; Luke 7:22; 14:12-14, 21-24.**
- Turned the water into wine- **John 2:1-11.**
- Jesus told Peter to catch a fish, and take a coin out of the fish’s mouth to pay their taxes.
  - o **Matthew 17:24-27.**
- Jesus fed the 5,000 one time and 4,000 folks another time- **Matthew 16:8-10.**
- Peter lets his nets down for a huge catch- **Luke 5:4-10.**
- Even though these solutions were only temporary, God still cares about them.
- However for long term results, we have to get people saved and in the Word so their minds get renewed and their lives become transformed and changed- **Romans 12:2; John 6:26-27.**
- “Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime.”
- So the Biblical pattern for ministering to the poor is to provide for their physical needs, while at the same time, ministering to their soul and spirit- spiritual prosperity proceeds material.

## A. Causes for Poverty

There are reasons why people are struggling financially and find themselves homeless and broke.

- Some folks hesitate to minister to the poor because they do not want to be guilty of enabling behaviors like addictions or laziness.
- Poverty often times is a generational cycle that needs to be broken in Jesus' Name!
- That's where the New Birth and the Word kicks in and sets people free.
- Bad decisions and environmental influences all contribute to their present station in life.
  - o A lack of knowledge and ignorance- **Hosea 4:6.**
  - o Simple laziness- **Proverbs 10:4; 20:13; 21:17; 23:21; 1 Th. 5:14-15; 2 Th. 3:6-15.**
  - o A lack of faith and/or fear hinders people- **Matthew 25:24-30; Romans 3:3-4.**
  - o Disobedience to obey God when doors open- **Isaiah 1:19-20; Hebrews 3:1-4:11.**

**James 4:17, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins."**

## B. Avoiding the Fan Fare

As Jesus said in Mark 14:7, "*The poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want.*" Helping the poor is a responsibility for the church- **1 Timothy 5:3-15; James 1:27; 2:14-17.**

- But it needs to be done discreetly so as not to embarrass and shame those who are struggling.
- Our acts of charity are not to be seen by men, our motives are to sincerely help the poor.
- Jesus is telling us to give in a secretive manner, as to not draw attention to ourselves.

### **Proverbs 19:17**

**He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward him for what he has done.**

The word "hypocrite" in this passage is in reference to actors who play the part of someone else while hiding their true intentions. "Hypocrite" in the Greek *hupokrites*: an actor under an assumed character (stage-player), i.e. (figuratively) a dissembler ("hypocrite").

Clearly our primary motive in all we do unto the Lord is not to receive a reward but to glorify God by serving others. However, it's part of God's design to be rewarded as well, thank God for it!

**2 Corinthians 8:2-5, "Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will."**

One last point I want to bring out concerning generosity in sharing with the poor; which is not to be confused with income redistribution of the wealthy.

- It means everybody, even the poor widow, putting in what the Lord directs- **Mark 12:42-43.**
- When we give to the poor it's a memorial offering to God- **Acts 10:1-6.**
- However, those who have the means, should be willing to share- **1 Timothy 6:17-19.**

It seems that the Early Church had made it a priority as a means of soul winning, and taking care of their own by looking after the poor in their midst- **Acts 6:1-4; 9:36-39; 24:17; Ro. 15:25-27; Gal. 2:9-10.**

# Discourse #11: Prayer Unto the Lord

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Reference: Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-13

Theme: Prayer Offered to God Must be from the Heart as a Private and Intimate Offering to Him

Context: Jesus was Refuting the Abuses of the Religious Elite who used the things of God for Show



**“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray:**

**‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’**

**For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”**

**Matthew 6:5-15**

## A. Don't Pray like the Hypocrites

- If what we are doing for the Lord is to be seen by men, then it's all for naught.
- This is what the religious folks were all about, to portray themselves as something they were not.
- Prayer is between us and God anyways, not to be a spectacle for men to see.
- That's why Jesus said to pray to our Father God in secret as He did- **Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16.**
- Notice we are to pray to the Father only, not to any man, angel or saint- **Eph. 2:18; 1 Tim. 2:5-6**

## Colossians 3:17

**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

- There are all kinds of prayers mentioned in the Bible according to **Ephesians 6:18.**
  - o Prayer of Petition- asking the Father in Jesus' Name- **John 15:16; 16:23-24.**
  - o Prayer of Consecration- dedicating ourselves to the will of God- **Luke 22:42.**
  - o Prayer of Worship- fellowship with God- **John 4:23-24; Acts 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 14:15-18.**
  - o United Prayer- public corporate prayer to God- **Acts 1:14; 2:1; 4:23-31; 16:25-26.**
  - o Prayer of Commitment- casting our cares upon the Lord- **Psalms 37:5; 1 Peter 5:7.**
  - o Prayer of Agreement- two or more agreeing in prayer- **Matthew 18:18-20.**
  - o Prayer of Intercession- groaning in tongues by the Spirit- **Is. 66:7-9; Ro. 8:26; Gal. 4:19.**
  - o Prayer of Forgiveness- believer confessing sins to God- **1 John 1:9.**
  - o Prayer of Authority- demanding in Jesus' Name- **Mark 11:22-24; John 14:12-14.**

## B. Vain Babbling

### Matthew 6:7-8

**And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.**

### Matthew 6:7 AMP

**And when you pray, do not heap up phrases (multiply words, repeating the same ones over and over) as the Gentiles do, for they think they will be heard for their much speaking.**

A good example of vain babbling were the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel- **1 Kings 18:25-29.**

- The King James version uses the phrase, “Vain Repetitions.”
- Jesus is describing what unbelievers of false religions do, repeating the same thing over and over again. It can also include using different words to say the same thing as well.
- Jesus was emphasizing quality and not quantity of prayer.

### Acts 19:34

**But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!”**

- The problem with repetitious praying is that they become robotic and meaningless words.
- Since the Father already knows our needs in advance we can be short and to the point.
- It’s the prayer offered in faith that saves the sick, not the lengthy prayer- **James 5:13-18.**
- The prayer of faith only needs to be prayed once, and then thank Him for the answer.
- If we keep asking for the same thing, it proves we did not believe the last time we prayed.
  - o **James 1:5-8.**

### Mark 11:22-24

**“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”**

- The prayer of faith believes he/she receives before the answer has been manifested- **2 Cor. 5:7.**
- God is not impressed by being pitiful, begging and pleading- **Luke 18:8; Hebrews 11:6.**

## C. The Disciples’ Prayer

During the interim period of Jesus’ ministry when the Old Covenant was going out and the New Covenant was coming in, Jesus taught the disciples to pray what many call “The Lord’s Prayer.”

- However, just before He returned to heaven, Jesus changed His disciples’ way of praying.
- He did not teach New Covenant believers to pray the Disciples’ Prayer.
- He had taught His disciples to pray that way at the time.
- I am not saying that the Lord’s Prayer isn’t beautiful.
- I did not say we cannot learn something from it – because we can learn much from it.
- But where is the Name of Jesus in that prayer?
- It referred to the Kingdom coming, speaking of the near future; the resurrection of Jesus.

They didn't ask for one thing in the Name of Jesus. This is not the New Testament Church at prayer. This is not the New Testament norm for prayer, it was the Disciples' Prayer.

### **Luke 11:1**

**One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."**

There's something we need to see here in John chapter 16: Just before Jesus went away, He changed the disciples' way of praying. Under the New Covenant between God and the Church, we are to come to God the Father through Jesus Christ. One reason we have missed a great deal is that we have tried to pray as they did back in the days of the Old Covenant.

**John 16:23-24, "In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."**

As I said before, I am not dismissing what the Lord said to His disciples, there are wonderful principles to be learned, so let's examine them together.

### **Begin With Praise:**

**Matthew 6:9, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name..."**

Notice the personal element of addressing the Father God in heartfelt love and adoration- **Rev. 8:4.**

### **God's Will on Earth:**

**Matthew 6:10, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."**

Through prayer we are able to establish God's will upon the earth; people getting saved- **1 Tim. 2:1-4.**

### **God's Provision:**

**Matthew 6:11, "Give us today our daily bread."**

It's God's will to meet all of our needs, but we have to ask for it in prayer- **Matthew 7:7-8; James 4:2.**

### **God's Forgiveness:**

**Matthew 6:12, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."**

Fellowship with God is based on the blood of Jesus only- **Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-22; 1 John 1:7-9.**

### **God's Protection:**

**Matthew 6:13, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."**

Protection from the enemy is an important part of daily prayer- **Mt. 26:41; John 17:15; 1 Cor. 10:13.**

### **End with Praise:**

**Matthew 6:13 NKJV, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."**

Everything comes back to God and is directed up to Him in praise- **Acts 17:24-28; Romans 11:33-36.**

It is not surprising that Jesus ends this portion of Scripture on prayer by mentioning the subject of forgiving others in **Matthew 6:15.** Walking in love is the secret to successful prayer- **Gal. 5:6; 1Pet. 3:7**

### **Mark 11:25-26 NKJV**

**"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."**

# Discourse #12: Fasting Unto the Lord

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Reference: Matthew 6:16-18

Theme: Whatever we do Unto the Lord is meant to be done Discreetly and in Secret  
Context: Humility and Devotion versus Religious Exhibitions of Hypocritical Pride



**“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”**

**Matthew 6:16-18**

Like the preceding references Jesus made to giving to the poor and to prayer, fasting is no different.

## **Matthew 6:1**

**“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.”**

In our western culture of excess and indulgence, fasting seems like a foreign concept, unless of course you are talking about dieting. However, fasting and dieting are not the same- here’s why.

- Fasting is always accompanied by praying and meditating in the word of God- consecration.
- Fasting is a spiritual discipline to bring the body under subjection and bring ascendancy to the spirit of man to hear from God; to heighten our spiritual sensitivity to be led by the Spirit.

There are different types of fasting in the Bible, but the general rule of thumb is to abstain from something in order to gain something else- a closer walk with the Lord.

- Total fast where nothing is consumed; be led by the Spirit on this- **Exodus 24:15-18; Luke 4:1-2**
- Called a “Daniel” fast where we eat only vegetables and drink only water- **Daniel 1:8-21.**
- Living a fasted life, where we skip meals and deliberately deprive the flesh of compulsive urges.

## **A. Old Covenant Fasting**

- The Old Covenant Jews fasted often- **Jeremiah 41:4; 52:7; Zechariah 7:3; 8:19.**
- Fasting was often centered around repentance from sin and rededication to the Lord.
- **1 Kings 21:25-29; 1 Samuel 7:6; Nehemiah 9:1; Daniel 9:3-4; Joel 2:12-13; Jonah 3:1-10.**
- When someone had died, fasting was a form of mourning or expressing grief- **1 Samuel 1:12.**
- It was also a typical response to great danger and crisis; seeking God for help in time of need.
- **2 Samuel 12:13-23; Nehemiah 1:1-4; Ezra 8:21-23; Esther 4:1-3; Psalms 35:13; 109:24.**
- Obeying God’s Word and fasting makes a powerful combination- **Isaiah 58:3-11.**
- Fasting was actively practiced during Jesus’ time on the earth- **Matthew 9:14-15; Luke 18:9-14.**

## B. Food A Potential Stumbling Block

Among the Gentile nations that Paul ministered to, they did not have refrigeration. So animals who were offered in sacrifice to pagan idols were sent straight to the meat market.

- This cultural condition presented a problem for Christians, if they ever wanted to eat meat.
- Fortunately, since we know that an idol is nothing, the meat was okay to eat- **1 Cor. 8:1-6.**
- Not everyone knew that, so it would be wrong to eat it in front of a weak brother- **1 Cor. 8:7-11.**

### **1 Corinthians 8:12-13**

**When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.**

- In Romans chapter 14, the chapter is devoted to not judging your brother or sister in Christ concerning what they eat or drink; the goal was not to be a stumbling block- to prefer others.

### **Romans 14:20-21**

**Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.**

- The same prohibition of doing anything that would be a stumbling block is also extended in **1 Corinthians 10:23-33.** There is something much greater at stake- others!
- The goal is that the welfare of others comes even before our own legitimate practices.
- We are to exercise control over our physical appetites, fasting helps in this regard.
- Not just the mere abstinence, but praying and meditating in the Word during that time.

### **1 Corinthians 6:12-13**

**“Everything is permissible for me”-but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”-but I will not be mastered by anything. “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”-but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.**

## C. Heightened Spiritual Edge

Living a fasted way of life, keeps us sharp and in tune spiritually. Gluttony and over indulgence dulls the senses and invokes natural sleep and slothfulness; results in being overly body conscious.

- Prophetess Anna, worshipped night and day in the temple, fasting and praying- **Luke 2:36-38.**
- The Early Church would fast and pray in order to discern the Lord’s will and for impartation.
  - o **Acts 13:1-3; 14:23.**

When the disciples tried to cast out a deaf and dumb evil spirit from a boy, they had failed, so they asked Jesus why.

### **Mark 9:28-29 NKJV**

**And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, “Why could we not cast it out?” So He said to them, “This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting.”**

# Discourse #13: Storing Treasures in Heaven

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Reference: Matthew 6:19-24

Theme: The Smart thing to do is to Invest our Whole Lives into God's Kingdom

Context: True Authentic and Transparent Consecration to the Plan and Purposes of God in our Lives



**“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can**

**serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”**

**Matthew 6:19-24**

## A. Safe Investments

Jesus is not saying we can't have a savings account, money market account or investments, but we do have to watch out that these financial vehicles do not become our source, because they are not secure.

- What Jesus is saying is that there are no safe investments on earth- **Luke 12:32-34.**
- What is safe is God's bank account in heaven that has been opened up for each of His kids.
- As we give, and invest into God's Kingdom, our spiritual account will be credited- **Php. 4:14-17**
- This is not talking about God wanting us impoverished or living in lack. When Jesus came to preach the good news to the poor, that included not being poor and oppressed - **Luke 4:16-21.**
- He wants us to have treasure that is secure, and still accessible for us to use on earth.

Many of God's people have been misinformed, that the return on what they give can't be touched until they get to heaven, like a retirement plan. Well certainly there will be wonderful rewards for us to receive when we get to heaven, but we need God's provision while we live here on earth now.

- As children of God, we already have the firstfruits of our inheritance to enjoy today!
  - o **Romans 8:23; 2 Cor. 1:18-22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:3-14; James 1:18; 2 Peter 1:3-4.**
- The fullness will come when we get to heaven for us to enjoy these rewards for all eternity.
- **John 14:1-4; Ro. 8:17-18; 1 Cor. 13:12; Php. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2-3; Rev. 5:9; 20:6; 22:1-6.**
- Our Father God has blessed us in this life beyond measure to be a blessing to others- **Acts 20:35.**
  - o **Matthew 7:7-11; Romans 8:31-32; 1 Timothy 6:17; James 1:16-17**

Unfortunately, many Christian folks have added a verse to our main text that is not there; when Jesus said that we are laying up treasure in heaven, “and thou cannot touch it until thou are dead.”

- Consider the rich man who came to Jesus seeking eternal life in **Mark 10:17-24.**

- Unfortunately this young man did not grasp what Jesus was offering him.
- Jesus was not telling him that he could not have anything on earth in order to serve Him.
- He was telling him, “I want you to transfer your wealth to my system. To exchange or convert your worldly goods into Kingdom currency.” That can be multiplied and withdrawn later on.

For a number of reasons, the young rich man’s faith was in his stuff and needed to be in Jesus as his source. Next, Jesus was telling him that his possessions would be safe in his heavenly account so he could have access to it in order to do all the things he will need to do in following Jesus in the ministry.

Notice the problem with the rich man was his “trust” in riches and comforts, and the so-called security it would afford him. He could have gotten ill and spent all his money on doctors and never got any better like the woman with the issue of blood, then where would his money be- **Mark 5:25-26.**

- So his dependence on money was hindering him from entering into the Kingdom of God.
- His trust would have to switch from money to Jesus as his source for everything- **Acts 17:28.**
- It’s not impossible for rich people to get saved, Jesus just said it was a challenge for them.
- So the smartest thing for that rich man to have done was give it all to be multiplied back to him.
- This spiritual account we have is for this life & the life to come- **Dt. 8:18; Ps. 16:11; Pr. 13:22**
  - o Psalms 35:27 NKJV, “*Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.*”

Now in response to all of this, Peter brought to Jesus’ attention that they had left all to follow Him. Notice Jesus made the amazing statement that they would receive in this life one hundred times as much- not just in heaven. And persecutions for following Jesus- **Mark 10:28-30.**

The generation of Job and Abraham did not know anything other than God blessing them financially. You can’t sell that old lie of the devil that God brings poverty on all of us to keep us humble to the Jewish folks, because their Bible does not say that, and neither does ours.

- The source of that kind of teaching partly came from Zen Buddhism, through the study of Eastern religion by European people at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- That philosophy worked its way from there and started a trend of poverty vows and oaths which are not in the Bible nor a part of the New Covenant, but is actually in violation of the Covenant.
- Then it came over into North America. Beware of this Poverty spirit and so-called religious piety
- It’s just the devil trying to steal from God’s children and keep finances out of God’s Kingdom.

Yet on the other hand watch out for the spirit of materialism and consumerism that is pervasive in our society, that distracts and preoccupies us from following God’s Kingdom priorities.

**1 Cor. 7:30-31, “...those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.**

- Certainly the Bible condemns the sins of idolatry, greed, selfishness and covetousness!
- Money is not evil in and of itself, it’s the love of money that ruins so many people.
  - o **Mark 8:36; Acts 20:33; 2 Cor. 2:17; 1 Timothy 6:5-10, 17-19; Hebrews 13:5.**

**Luke 12:15, “Then he said to them, ‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”**

Don’t ever become attached to things, be able to give away anything; avoid becoming emotionally attached to stuff. The Lord asked for Abraham’s best, Isaac, and he did not hesitate to obey God.

## B. The Eye is the Lamp of the Body

### **Matthew 6:22-23**

**“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”**

- Jesus had stated that the eye is the lamp of the body; let’s study this out a little further.
- **Matthew 6:22-23** was written within the context of having “Treasures in Heaven.”
- Where our treasure is, there our heart will be also- speaking of our priorities and focus.
- Our eyes represent what is important to us, what we are looking at has our attention/gaze.

**Matthew 6:33-34, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”**

- Our eyes like our ears are gateways into our mind and spirit- the windows into our soul.
- The people we hang out with, where we choose to be, listen to and watch has great influence.
- Where our focus is set upon in life determines our conduct, behavior and lifestyle.
- So what are we allowing into our lives through the windows of our soul, and our eyes?

**Proverbs 4:23, “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”**

**Proverbs 23:7 KJV, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”**

**1 Corinthians 15:33-34, “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character.’”**

**1 Timothy 5:22, “...do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.”**

- The Bible instructs us where to set our attention; on Jesus though faith in His Word.
- What helps us in what we think on (**Philippians 4:4-8**), is what we look at- **Romans 12:1-2**.
- Consider Peter when he walked on water; as long as his eyes were on Jesus- **Mt. 14:28-33**.

### **Colossians 3:1-2**

**Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**

**Hebrews 3:1, “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.”**

- So the world view we have, the perspective and paradigm of life must be Christ centered.
- Otherwise we will have a cloudy and distorted understanding of the world around us.
- **Matthew 6:22-23** is worded basically the same as **Luke 11:34-36**, but Luke has a little more.

**Luke 11:35-36- “See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you.”**

- Our physical body will reflect our spiritual condition- good or bad in health or sickness.
- **3 John 2**, notes that spiritual prosperity proceeds physical health and prosperity-**1 Tim. 4:8**.
- Walking in the light of the Word and in love will affect every area of our life- **1 John 1:7**.
- God does not mind us rich (a full supply), just doesn’t want us covetous- **2 Corinthians 8:9**.

## C. Cannot Serve Two Masters

### Matthew 6:24

**“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”**

The other problem with greed that it is the obsessive preoccupation of physical things- not just money. The idol of beauty, fame, power or any other compulsive pursuit outside of our Creator God.

### Mark 4:18-19

**“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”**

### Mark 4:19 AMP

**“Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.”**

- The, “worries of this life,” “deceitfulness of wealth” and “the desires for other things” do what?
- They choke out the things of God in our lives, become weights and sins- **Hebrews 12:1.**
  - o Rather in verse 2, *“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.”*
- Why does Jesus call wealth “deceitful” I wonder, perhaps because of the distractions it can cause to solicit and capture our devotion and love away from God who is jealous for us.
  - o **Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 32:21; 2 Corinthians 11:2.**
- To love and be devoted to the things of this world is sin- **James 4:1-10; 1 John 2:15-17.**

God understands that we have physical needs and He is more than interested and able in meeting our daily needs; in order for us to enjoy an abundance, a full supply in our lives- **Ephesians 3:20-21.**

Let’s not put them first or worry about them, rather seek first His Kingdom and righteousness and all these others things will be added to us as well- **Matthew 6:25-34.**

- Qualifications for Prosperity- Esteem Earthly things lightly, as Temporary

Moses did not put the things of this world first; rather he esteemed the Kingdom of God more than the material world around him- he was looking ahead to his reward.

### Hebrews 11:24-26

**By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.**

There is a price to following Jesus, but it is not to be sick, oppressed, impoverished and starving to death. Moses gave up worldly fame, prestige and power, but he never lacked any good thing from God- his needs were always met and then some.

It is not enough to be obedient or just willing; we must be both willing and obedient in order to qualify for the blessings of God- **Isaiah 1:19-20.**

# Discourse #14: Do Not Worry

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Reference: Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 12:22-34

Theme: Maintain the Rhythm of Life by Keeping our Priorities on God's Kingdom as Number One  
Context: A Continuation of His Sermon on the Mount Concerning the Kingdom of God



**“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor**

**was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

**Matthew 6:25-34**

The Greek word for “worry” in verse 25 is merimnao in the imperative, meaning it’s a command.

- Jesus commands us not to worry about the daily necessities of life- food, drink or clothing.
- Whether we are talking about legitimate needs or desires and wants.
- Nor should we worry about providing for our children- **Isaiah 40:11.**
- If the Lord is our Shepherd, we have nothing to worry about- **Psalms 23; John 10:7-18, 25-30.**
- Is there anything too hard for the Lord? **Genesis 18:14; Mark 9:23; Luke 1:37; Ro. 8:31-32.**
- Look how God provided for Elijah during famine- **1 Kings 17:1-16.**
- Jesus multiplied the bread and fish to feed thousands- **Matthew 15:32-38; John 6:5-15.**
- Our faith can be so small when it comes to trusting God as our source- provider and healer.

## **Psalms 37:25-26**

**I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed.**

- Notice the statement Jesus had made about the birds not storing up food for themselves.
- In other words, trusting God for our “Daily Bread” as in the disciple’s prayer- **Luke 11:3.**
- During their training, the disciples were instructed by the Lord not to take anything with them.
- This was clearly a test of faith, to show them that God was their source- **Matthew 10:9-10.**
- Later on, just before Jesus was crucified He reminded them of God’s provision- **Luke 22:35-38.**
- Without faith it’s impossible to please God and everything that does not come from faith is sin.
  - o **Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23.**
- We are worth so much more to God than the birds; Jesus gave His life for us!

Jesus goes on to tell us the futility of worry, it cannot change things, but rather makes matters worse. Matthew 6:27, “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?”

**1 John 4:18, “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”**

- I believe that worry, anxiety and fretting are all forms of fear.
- The words “Fear Not” or “Don’t be Afraid” are used numerous times in the Bible.
- There is a godly fear of reverence and respect for God or being startled when He appears to us.
- I’m talking about the fear that comes from the devil to doubt God’s goodness and provision.
- Yielding to this kind of fear is a temptation that opens the door to the enemy.
  - o **2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 Peter 3:14-15.**
- Take Job for instance who opened the door to attack because of fear.
  - o Job 3:25, “*What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.*”
- Women are particularly susceptible to fear and turmoil- **1 Peter 3:6.**

**Matthew 10:28-31**

**Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**

- Bottom line of Matthew 6:30, worry is lack of faith, doubting God’s will or ability to provide.
- The world runs after material and natural things; bound by their five senses.
  - o **Ephesians 4:17; Philippians 3:19; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 2:15-17.**
- It is true that the Father knows what we need, but that does not mean God’s provision is automatic, we still have to live by faith and not by sight- **2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11.**
- Jesus tells us elsewhere to ask and we will receive- **Matthew 7:7-8; John 16:23-24.**

## A. Distracting Cares

The world is full of distractions, all competing for our attention. The world system, under Satan’s control is all about getting our eyes off of Jesus- **1 John 2:15-17; 5:19; Ephesians 2:1-2.**

**1 Peter 5:7 AMP**

**Casting the whole of your care- all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all- on Him; for He cares for you affectionately, and cares about you watchfully.**

The word “Care” above in Vines Expository Dictionary- To draw in different directions, to distract. To get our attention off of Jesus and the Word- **Matthew 14:28-31; Colossians 3:1-2; Hebrews 3:1; 12:2.**

- Jesus talked at length about not worrying about our lives in **Matthew 6:25-34.**
- When we give into worry, we are saying to the Father God, “Father I’m sorry, but I just don’t think you are competent to handle this one; I’d be better off taking care of it myself.”
- Resist worry like you resist any other temptation- **Ps. 37:35; Isaiah 26:3 Philippians 4:8.**

**Mark 4:19 AMP**

**Then the cares and anxieties of the world and distractions of the age, and the pleasure and delight and false glamour and deceitfulness of riches, and the craving and passionate desire for other things creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.**

- The, “worries of this life,” “deceitfulness of wealth” and “the desires for other things” do what?
- They choke out the things of God in our lives, become weights and sins- **Hebrews 12:1.**
  - o Rather in verse 2, “*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith*”
- The Word of God is the sword of our spirit to do battle with against the world, flesh and the devil
  - o **Luke 4:1- 13; Ephesians 6:17; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7; Hebrews 4:12.**
- The battleground is dealing with the seeds of thoughts, and the power of suggestion in the mind.
  - o **2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:16.**
  - o Proverbs 23:7 NKJV, “*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.*”

If we would meditate and speak the Word continually and keep the devil in the realm of faith, we will defeat him every time. Let’s not allow him to pull us into the sense and reason realm to be defeated.

- Remember Peter when he walked on the water to Jesus. It was not until he got his eyes off of the Lord and onto the waves and wind that he began to sink- **Matthew 14:28-31.**

**Isaiah 26:3, “You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you”**

**Hebrews 3:1**

**Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.**

**Colossians 3:1-2**

**Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**

**Philippians 4:4-9**

**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.**

## B. Jehovah Jireh

**Genesis 22:7-8 NKJV- But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” Then he said, “Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” And Abraham said, “My son, **God will provide** for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.” So the two of them went together.**

Abraham went to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, but just before he went to slay his only son, the Angel of the Lord stopped him. In verse fourteen we see that Abraham called that place “The Lord Will Provide” which in the Hebrew is one of God’s redemptive Names- Jehovah Jireh.

OT:3070 hr\$y! ho\*hy= Yehovah Yir’eh (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’); from OT:3068 and OT:7200; Jehovah will see (to it); Jehovah-Jireh, a symbolical name for Mount Moriah: KJV – Jehovah Jireh.

## Genesis 22:13-14

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place **The Lord Will Provide**. And to this day it is said, “On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.”

There is something very significant that I want you to see concerning the Hebrew root meaning to God’s redemptive name of Jehovah Jireh- “Jehovah will see to it.”

- In other words, He sees the needs that we have ahead of time and sees to it that they are met when the actual need arises.
- For instance, I wonder where was that ram (sacrificed instead of Isaac) was at 5:00am that morning when Abraham got up.
- I believe that it was making its way up to where Isaac was going to be sacrificed.

Nothing takes God by surprise. Just because we made our bed hard does not mean we have to sleep on it. If we get on our face and repent (turn and change) of what got us there in the first place and ask the Lord for mercy, grace and help- the Lord will turn our financial situation around.

## C. Seek First His Kingdom

### Matthew 6:33-34

**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.**

When we put God and His Word first place in our lives it shows where our heart is; this is the highest expression of love and devotion we can give- **John 14:15, 23-24; 15:10.**

- It is the true expression of our love for God; it’s not about feelings, God is a Spirit Being.
- We don’t contact Him with our body or mind, but with our spirit- **John 4:24; Romans 12:1-2.**
- So it comes down to a willingness and obedience on our part that counts- **Isaiah 1:19-20.**

### 1 John 5:2-3

**This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.**

There is something to be said about Biblical contentment and satisfaction in the Lord as our source. **Philippians 4:10-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Hebrews 13:5.**

- Let’s not be like Martha who was distracted and loaded with cares- **Luke 10:40-42.**
  - o Acts 17:28, “*For in him we live and move and have our being.*”
- Worry is like a rocking chair, it gives us something to do, but does not take us anywhere.
- People think that if you are not worrying, than you don’t care. No I care so I don’t worry and so turn the problem into the hands of the Lord who can do something about it.
- Don’t be like Job and worry about your children and through fear open the door to the devil.
  - o **Job 1:4-5, 18-19; 3:25.**

The overall admonition from this passage of Scripture is to walk by faith, one day at a time, and keep our attention on Jesus and His Kingdom. This will pave the way for the Lord to meet all of our needs.

# Discourse #15: Judging Others

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Reference: Matthew 7:1-6; Luke 6:37-42

Theme: We Reap what we Sow, so let's Treat Others in the Manner we want to be Treated

Context: A Continuation of His Sermon on the Mount, Addressing the Hypocrisy of Human Nature



**“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye. Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.”**

**Matthew 7:1-6**

Not all judgment is bad, there is righteous judgment that God gives that is perfect and may appear to be harsh in how the punishment is perceived in be given out.

- When God judges it's because men are without excuse and know better- can't plead ignorance.
  - o **Joshua 23:14-16; Luke 19:22; Romans 1:18-32; 2:12-16; Hebrews 10:26-31.**
- His judgment is based on righteousness and true justice that can never be perverted.
  - o **John 5:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 15:3; 16:4-7; 19:1-2.**
- The Lord provides a generous period of time for people to repent and change.
  - o **Genesis 15:16; 1 Timothy 5:24; Revelation 2:20-23.**
- Whether its nations or individuals, when they fail to repent, judgment comes- **Isaiah 13:11-13.**
  - o The Hebrews as slaves in Egypt- **Genesis 15:14.**
  - o Sodom and Gomorrah- **Genesis 18:16-19:29; 2 Peter 2:4-10; 3:7; Jude 7.**
  - o Amalekites attacking Israel while in the wilderness- **1 Samuel 15:3.**
- So what should we do when we are disobedient? Repent and judge ourselves- **1 Cor. 11:27-33.**

**Ezekiel 18:23, “Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?” Jonah 3:3-4:11.**

In **John 3:16-18** we see that in Jesus' first advent or coming, He did not come into the world to judge and condemn it, but to save it. However in His Second advent, He comes to judge the wicked and rule. **Revelation 19:11-21; 20:11-15.**

## **John 12:47-48**

**“As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day.”**

- Not only is God the judge of the wicked, but also of His children as well- **Hebrews 6:2; 9:27.**
  - o **Romans 14:9-13; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Peter 4:17; James 5:9; 1 John 4:17.**

## A. Judgment without Mercy

### James 2:12-13

**Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!**

What makes the judgment of others so sinful is when it's handed out with no mercy to help and restore folks from what has taken them captive and in bondage to sin.

- As we had just examined, God who is a righteous judge always provides people a chance to repent and turn from their wicked ways before handing them over to be punished.
- Jesus said the measure of severity and scrutiny that we subject others to, we will be held to.
- The principle of reaping what we sow is in play- **Galatians 6:8-9**.

### Galatians 6:1-2

**Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**

- Note, there is no such thing as the gift of discernment; to be able to discern people's characters.
- In reality this is a bad habit of fault finding and having a critical spirit.
- Not to be confused with the manifestation of the Spirit: Discerning of Spirits- **1 Cor. 12:10**.
- The Holy Spirit enables folks to see into the spirit realm and/or have a revelation of what spirit is in operation- God, angels, demons or human spirits.

### Matthew 7:5

**"...first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."**

- I love the comparison Jesus makes between a speck of sawdust versus a plank of timber.
- It's human nature for folks to be critical of others while giving themselves a pass on morality.
- There is a big difference between criticizing other's weakness and become a servant to help them
- In order to be in a position to help others, we must first tend to our own issues- by grace / faith.

**2 Timothy 2:20-21, "In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for noble purposes and some for ignoble. If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."**

## B. When it's Okay to Judge

Is there ever a right time to pass judgment on others? I believe the answer to that question is Yes, according to the Bible. However, when we do so, we must be sure to walk in love and humility.

### 1 Corinthians 2:15-16

**The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.**

- When we use the Word of God in love to assess situations, the Spirit of God will lead us.
- The Bible is clear that we are not to judge sinners in the world, because it's their nature to sin.
  - o **John 3:16-18.**
- Sinners sin because they are sinners by nature spiritually, what they need is to be born again.
  - o **John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17.**
- There are times when we are to judge and hold other Christians accountable- **1 Cor. 6:1-6.**
- This is necessary in order to prevent the infiltration and contamination of sin amongst believers.
  - o Consider Ananias and his wife Sapphira in **Acts 5:1-16.**
  - o Notice how believers are to treat even Christians who are lazy- **2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.**
  - o The subject of Church discipline is important- **Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Timothy 1:20.**
- Most of the New Testament was written to combat false brothers and teachings.
  - o **Gal. 1:6-9; 2:1-5; 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:3; 2 Peter 2; 2 John 10-11; Jude 3-19; Rev. 2:20-23.**
- The entire chapter of 1 Corinthians five addresses immorality in the church. The resolution of this incident was addressed in **2 Corinthians 2:5-11; 7:8-12; 12:20-21.**

### **1 Corinthians 5:12-13**

**What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."**

## **C. Don't throw your Pearls to Pigs**

### **Matthew 7:6**

**"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces."**

Finally we see some great words of wisdom given by Jesus when it comes to handling sacred things given to you by the Lord. This can also apply to whom we share the Gospel message with as well.

- Pearls in the Bible speak of great spiritual truths and realities from God- **Matthew 13:44-46.**
- We should exercise wisdom and discretion, concerning with whom we share our dreams, and the precious things we have received from the Lord.
  - o **Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:9-12, 24-25; 8:17-21; Luke 10:23-24; John 8:43-47; 13:7.**

### **2 Peter 2:20-22**

**If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."**

- When the Bible talks about dogs or pigs, they are symbolic for wicked people who spurn God.
  - o **Psalms 22:16-20; Philippians 3:2; Revelation 22:15.**
- They can also represent all those outside of the covenant; **Matthew 15:26-27**, Greek- lap dogs.
- So Jesus is telling us don't waste your time on people you know will reject what you will say.
- We are not mandated to force the Gospel down people's throats whether they like it or not.
- Jesus was never under any obligation to share with all men spiritual truths- **Matthew 16:1-4.**
- Neither are we, so let's be led by the Spirit and not by condemnation in sharing the Word of God

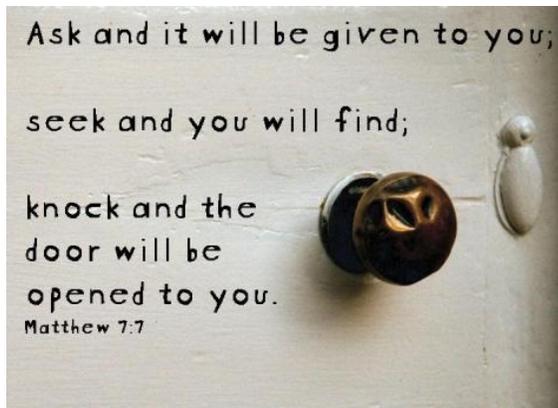
# Discourse #16: Ask, Seek and Knock

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Reference: Matthew 7:7-12; Luke 11:9-13

Theme: Jesus Revealing the Father's Goodness and Principles of the Coming Kingdom

Context: A Continuation of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Addressing a Multitude of People



**“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”**

**Matthew 7:7-12**

## A. Press In and Press Through and Receive!

- To ask, seek and knock is not passive faith that waits- **Isaiah 55:6-7; Mat. 5:6; Php. 3:13-14.**
- This is talking about so much more than just persistence in prayer to God.
- It's talking about a heart attitude, a passion pursuit of the true and living God
  - o James 4:8, *“Come near to God and he will come near to you.”*
- A kind of godly zeal that keeps us read hot for the Lord- **Ro. 12:11; Gal. 4:18-19; Rev. 3:16.**

**Psalms 42:1-2, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?”**

- Certainly the Lord is interested in meeting all of our needs; which is part of God's love in action.
- The promises of God are not automatic; yes they belong to us- **2 Cor. 1:18-20; 2 Peter 1:3-4.**
- And yes they were given to us by His grace, but they must be activated by our faith to receive.
  - o **Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 4:1-11.**
- So often Christians are waiting on God to do something, when He is waiting on them to release their faith and stand on His Word in faith- **Hebrews 11:6.**
- The Lord does not want us to be timid, apprehensive and cautious about asking Him.

**2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV**

**For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.**

**Hebrews 4:16 AMP**

**Let us then fearlessly and confidently and boldly draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy [for our failures] and find grace to help in good time for every need [appropriate help and well-timed help, coming just when we need it].**

**Matthew 11:12 AMP**

**And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize — a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion].**

## B. God is so Good!

Jesus goes on to remove any doubt about the goodness, willingness and generosity of the Father God by making a comparison with natural parents and their love for their children.

- Under the Old Covenant, the Jews had an image of God as awesome, holy and unapproachable.
- God has not changed, but back then sin was only covered and not fully dealt with. Jesus at the time was revealing the Father God as approachable and loving- New Covenant much better.
  - o **Matthew 18:14; Luke 12:32; John 20:17; Ephesians 3:14-15.**
- The King James version refers to parents as “Evil” in comparison to a Holy and perfect God.
- Most unbelieving parents who are children of the devil know how to provide for basic needs.
- So Jesus is saying, how much more infinitely and grander will the Father provide for His own.
  - o **Psalms 34:9-10; 37:19, 25; 84:11; 103:5; Eph. 3:20; Php. 4:19; 1 Timothy 6:17.**

**Romans 8:31-32, “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”**

So many Christians have been religiously brainwashed instead of New Testament taught concerning our glorious inheritance and redemption we have in Jesus Christ.

- There are numerous Scriptures that encourage us to come to God with our needs because of His wonderful, generous & benevolent nature to shower His children with rich blessings- **John 1:16.**

### **James 1:16-18**

**Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.**

Notice the first phrase in James 1:16 says, “Don’t be deceived...” well deceived about what? The context of this passage is “Trials, Tests and Temptations.” God is not responsible for them, the devil is.

- If it’s good it’s from God and He is responsible for all the good in the world- **John 10:10.**
- He is even merciful and good towards unbelieving sinners- **Matthew 5:44-48.**
- Sure He permits evil in the world, because He is honoring Adam and Eve’s choice to make Satan the god of this world- **Job 1:6-7; Luke 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Galatians 3:22; 1 John 5:19.**
- Many times God is said to be responsible for the things He only permits or allows to be done.
- So in dealing with His own children, if we persist in unrepentant sin, the devil gains access to us
  - o **Psalms 78:61-62; Judges 2:14-15; Jeremiah 22:25; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:19-20.**
- There are other times when the Lord comes against wicked individuals to prevent more evil.
  - o **Numbers 16:1-35; Acts 5:1-16; 12:23; 13:11; Revelation 2:20-23.**

When God executes judgment upon the wicked, it’s as an act of mercy. Take Noah’s flood and Sodom and Gomorrah, to prevent future generations from being born under such wickedness.

**Genesis 6:12-14; 15:16; Job 22:15-17; Jonah 3:1-10.**

- So here we have it, simple theology- Good God and bad devil- **John 10:10.**
- In Luke’s account, a reference is made to ask God for the Baptism of the Spirit- **Luke 11:13.**
- Jesus speaking to those still under the Old Covenant makes a reference to **Leviticus 19:18.**

# Discourse #17: Narrow and Wide Gates

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Reference: Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:22-30

Theme: There is only One Way to Heaven – through Faith in Jesus Christ

Context: For the Benefit of Religious People who Trust in their own Righteousness



**“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”**

**Matthew 7:13-14**

Jesus was probably referring to ancient cities at the time. They were surrounded with walls and entered through gates. Some of those, connected with the great avenues to the city, were broad and admitted lots of people; others, for more private purposes, were narrow, and few would be seen entering them.

- The Greek word for “Narrow” means hemmed in closely, cramped with obstacles close about.
- Jesus was making reference to the way of life as being obscured to the casual observer.
- Nor is it perceived as the easiest or popular route to take, making it unattractive or appealing.
- Satan has been effective in conjuring up numerous false religions, cults and other philosophies to deceive people from seeing the truth and so be saved- **Luke 8:11-15.**
- Satan is a liar and the father of it, and deception gets worse in the end times with the Anti-Christ.

## **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**

**The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.**

- The enemy makes it difficult for people to find the narrow road and presents obstacles to hinder and discourage them from being saved- **Matthew 23:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16.**
- Those who get saved, the enemy does not stop in using persecution and hardships to get them to deny the faith and turn from Jesus- **Acts 26:11; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; Heb. 10:32-39; Rev. 2:10.**

## **Acts 14:22**

**Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.**

- The narrow and wide comparison also denotes the proportion of people that will be found on either road. Notice there are only two roads to choose from- not many as some espouse.
- The narrow gate is obviously entered through Jesus alone, and the broad road represents and includes all the other ways of this world that are false and lead to death- **Proverbs 16:25.**

### **John 14:1-6**

**“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

- Jesus is the only way to heaven while all the other roads lead to hell- simple absolute truth.
  - o **John 3:35-36; 10:9; Romans 3:22-23; Acts 17:29-31; 20:21; Galatians 2:15-16.**
- Yes Christianity is ultra exclusive, specific and narrow; this is the point Jesus was making.
- Finding and following Jesus is no easy task, it costs us everything but we gain everything as well
  - o **Matthew 10:32-39; 16:24-26; Luke 14:25-33; 1 Peter 4:18.**

### **Luke 18:24-27**

**Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus replied, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”**

Jesus was noting that it is hard for those who trust in riches to put their hope and trust in Him. Whether it’s riches, money, power, fame or religion, these things are obstacles for people to get saved.

- Even though salvation belongs to all mankind, the narrow gate principle illustrates that few people will enter through it for various reasons- **Acts 14:2; 16:30-34; 19:9; 26:28-29.**
- The Scriptures are clear, God wants all people to be saved- **Ro. 2:4; 10:1-4; 1 Timothy 2:1-6.**

**John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”**

Someone asked Jesus a great question in Luke 13:23, *“Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”* The Lord’s answer in verse 24 was, *“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.”*

- As you read the rest of the text, it was to those who thought they were right with God but weren’t
- Jesus made it clear in **John 3:3**, that we must be born again to enter the Kingdom of God.
- Good works are never good enough, since God demands perfection- **Revelation 20:11-15.**
- It’s so tragic, so many religious people in hell today because of deception and ignorance.
  - o **Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:25-30; 16:19-31.**
- But I belonged to the church, was water baptized and took communion; none of these things save us, only faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Lord and Savior.

**1 Peter 3:21, “...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”**

- As Jesus said in **Matthew 16:26**, what can a man give in exchange for his soul.
- This is the most important and pressing question for humanity today- the meaning of life.
  - o What are we going to do with Jesus: Accept, Reject or Ignore Him.
  - o **Psalms 9:17; John 3:36; Hebrews 2:2-4.**

# Discourse #18: A Tree is Known by its Fruit

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Reference: Matthew 7:15-23; 12:33-35; Luke 6:43-45

Theme: Cutting through all the Smoke Screens to Real and Authentic Christianity

Context: Jesus Getting Near to the End of His Sermon on the Mount to all the People



**“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”**

**Matthew 7:15-23**

## A. False Prophets and Teachers

The sheep is an emblem of innocence, sincerity, and harmlessness. To come in sheep’s clothing is to assume the appearance of humility and innocence, when the heart is evil- **Acts 20:25-31.**

Jesus is giving us the secret to recognizing people with wrong motives, who are intent on deceiving us- we will know them by the fruit of their lives- **Ezekiel 34:1-16; Matthew 12:38-40; 23:25; Jude 12.**

- As false prophets were a threat under the Old Covenant, false teachers are under the New Covenant. People being misled and deceived by false doctrines is a very serious matter.
  - o **2 Cor. 2:17; 11:1-21; Gal. 1:6-10; 2:4; 2 Peter 2; 3:16-17; 2 John 7-11; Jude 3-19.**
- Initially, false brothers will put on a mask, and play the charade, but eventually they will slip up and their true nature will become evident- **Philippians 1:18; 1 Th. 2:3-6; 2 Tim. 3:1-9.**

### **Romans 16:17-18**

**I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people.**

- Paul went out of his way to set an example of integrity for people to easily identify those masquerading as servants of Jesus with wrong motives- money and prestige.
- **Acts 20:34-35; 1 Cor. 11:1; 2 Cor. 12:14-18; Php. 3:17-19; 2 Th. 3:6-14; 2 Tim. 3:10-15.**
- Paul spoke the truth, to benefit others- **Galatians 4:12-18; 6:12-15; Ephesians 4:11-16.**

## B. Fruitless Trees are Cut Down

### **Matthew 7:19**

**Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.**

This is a stern warning and a simple reality that makes a division between the saved and the unsaved.

- In the parable of the weeds and wheat, weeds are worthless and are burned- **Mt. 13:24-30.**
- The fruit of our recreated, born again spirit is evidence of salvation- **Galatians 5:22-23.**
- When we display the love of God in our hearts to others- **Romans 5:5; 1 John 3:9-24.**
- We are connected to Jesus, the vine and we bear fruit accordingly- **John 15:1-17.**
- The parable of the fruitless fig tree further drives this point home- **Luke 13:6-9.**

### **Hebrews 6:7-9**

**Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case — things that accompany salvation.**

## C. Posers will be Exposed

### **Matthew 7:21-23**

**“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”**

So Jesus is cutting through all the smoke and mirrors of human duplicity and hypocrisy to expose religious appearances and a form of godliness without having a real conversion, new birth experience. **John 5:41-47; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.**

- So what is the will of the Father God for mankind? **John 5:19-30; 6:40; 1 John 5:11-13.**
- It all centers around what we do with Jesus- **John 3:35-36; Hebrews 2:1-4.**

### **John 6:28-29**

**Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”**

Isn't it amazing that prophesy, driving out demons and signs/wonders alone are not enough to validate an individual's salvation. As I have already mentioned, the fruit of love in our lives is the true test! **2 Corinthians 13:5-7.**

- The enemy is able to reproduce some counterfeit miracles to deceive people, but his power is limited and can only go so far. So signs and wonders alone are not the true test of faith.
  - o **Exodus 7:10-13, 20-22; 8:6-7, 17-19; Acts 19:13-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10.**
- In addition to manifestations of the Spirit, there must also be corresponding fruit, character and the love of God in demonstration- **1 Corinthians 16:14; 2 Corinthians 12:11-13.**
- God's Word is our final authority for all matters that pertain to life and conduct- **1 Th. 2:13.**

## D. Words Locate Us

**Matthew 12:33-37**, “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

The words that come out of our mouths locate us and set the landmarks of our lives- **Numbers 13:26-33**

- We can locate where a person stands spiritually by just listening to them.
- Our words give us away, to whether or not we are in faith or in fear.

In order to change our vocabulary, we need to start hearing God’s Word, which will renew our mind, and store the truth in our hearts. As a result, it will become second nature for us to speak God’s Word.

- What is instinctive for us to do and say is based on what we have stored in our spirit.
  - o Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV), “As a man thinks in his heart so is he.”
- We will not receive beyond what we say. If we say we can’t, then we can’t- we get nothing.
- But if we say we can, then we can through Jesus according to the Word of God do all things.

The reason the majority of Christians are weak even though they are earnest, is that they have never dared to make a confession of who they are in Jesus. How do we do this?

- First, we must realize how God looks at us, and confess it!
- Then boldly confess what the Word declares we are in Christ Jesus- our faith will abound.
- Confession of God’s Word puts angels to work on our behalf- **Ps. 103:19-20; Heb. 1:13-14.**

The reason faith is held in bondage is that we have never dared to confess what God says we are. Faith, then, grows with our confession of God’s Word.

There is no faith without confession! Confession is classified as an action, or act of releasing, putting into force our faith- it’s faith’s way of expressing itself. Our faith will rise no higher than our confession of God’s Word. Note, if we could not lose faith, we would not need to hold fast to our confession of that faith- **1 Timothy 5:11-14; Hebrews 3:16; 4:14.**

**Careless Word (Greek)= Useless, barren, idle, and inactive words.** Words that are void of faith. In the latter part Romans 14:23 it says, “*And everything that does not come from faith is sin.*”

We live in a society that is very loose in their choice of words. It really matters what we say since life and death are in the power of the tongue- **Proverbs 13:3; 18:21; 21:23; 26:18-19; Ephesians 4:29.**

I am today based on the words I have spoken yesterday. Some people think that this whole issue of right speaking, and believing is a legalistic bondage. Yet I have watched their lives, and seen the defeat their careless words have produced. What I mean by careless words is simply speaking words that are contrary to what the Bible says about the situation. Very often these people will speak what they feel or what they see in the natural. Some go as far as saying what the devil says about them, “I am a failure,” “I am an old sinner saved by grace,” “I am nothing.” In an effort to be humble they shoot themselves in the foot, and block the blessings of God from coming into their lives.

# Discourse #19: Wise and Foolish Builders

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Reference: Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49

Theme: We are Deceiving ourselves if we don't put God's Word into Practice - Destruction

Context: Jesus Closes His Sermon on the Mount with a Beautiful Illustration to Obey His Words



**“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete.”**

**Luke 6:46-49**

## A. Putting God's Word into Practice

Here is the real crux of the matter, are we putting into practice Jesus' words or are we simply performing lip service that we are a disciple of Jesus without any corresponding actions.

- The truth of God's Word acted upon brings results in our lives- **John 8:31-38.**
- Otherwise we are just accumulating information and knowledge- **1 Corinthians 8:1.**
- As we study the Word of God, it should be with the aim to apply it in our lives- **2 Tim. 2:15.**

### James 1:22-25

**Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.**

So the Holy Spirit through James is making it painfully clear, that we are self-deceived if all we are doing is listening to the Word of God only. This is important, but don't stop there- **Romans 10:17.**

- In order for the Word to stick in our lives, we must put it into practice, otherwise we'll forget
- The secret to being blessed by God is to look into the Word consistently and do it.
- An effective Christian witness is backed up with a life of willing obedience- **Isaiah 1:19-20.**

### Luke 8:21

**He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.”**

### 1 John 3:18

**Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.**

## Please Read: James 2:14-26

- Speaking the Word or confession is part of working the principles of faith.
- But, faith without deeds is dead, so our faith is made complete by what we do.
- Real Christianity is moved with compassion that does something about needs. It is not hollow sympathy that feels sorry for people, but does nothing- **1 John 3:16-18.**
- What turns the world off more than anything is hypocritical Christians who do not practice what they preach. The double standard offends them and rightly so- **Mt. 23:1-3; Rev. 3:16.**
- When we obey the Law of Love, we are setting the right example for others- **John 13:34-35.**

### 3 John 2-4 NKJV

**Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.**

- When we obey God's Word we show our love for God- **Romans 12:1-2; 1 John 5:1-5.**
- Neglecting to obey God's Word invites tragedy; our spiritual life being built on sand.
- So when the tests, trials and temptations of Satan come, we crumble beneath them.
- It's not just a little fall, but complete destruction; a shipwrecked faith- **1 Timothy 1:18-20.**
  - o A good example of a hard fall was Peter- **Mark 14:37-38; Luke 22:31-34.**
  - o Isaiah 7:9, *"If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all."*
  - o Luke 18:8, *"However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*
  - o 2 Corinthians 5:7, *"We live by faith, not by sight."*
- The secret to standing according to Jesus in **Luke 6:48**, is to dig down deep and lay our Christian faith upon the rock of God's Word- consistently putting it into practice in our lives.

The foundation we all start with through the New Birth experience is Jesus Christ. How we build upon it, the materials we use, will stand before the Lord one day to be judged- **1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:1-11.**

## B. The Word of Faith – the Secret to Obedience

So we have been learning the critical nature of obeying God's Word, but how do we do this. When we read a command, do we run off and try to obey it in our own strength? **Galatians 3:14.**

- That would be religion, man trying to serve God by their own devices and not by faith.
- The principles of by God's Grace (Power) and through our Faith is the key- **Eph. 2:8-9.**
- With the Word of Faith principles we can Obey God's commands His way, by His grace.
  - o **Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:8-9.**
- The secret is to take the seed of God's incorruptible Word and plant it in our spirit.
  - o **James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23-25.**
- The sowing is in the saying, as we meditate and speak God's Word, it gets into our heart.
  - o **Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3; 119:9-16; Mark 4:14-20, 26-29.**

When we become fully persuaded in our spirit, that we believe we have received, the Word of Faith is transformed into the Spirit of Faith and we obey the command or receive the promise of God.

**Romans 4:17-25; Mark 11:22-23; Luke 17:6; 2 Corinthians 4:13.**

- So confession of God's Word always proceeds possession of God's grace to obey or receive.
- For the circle to be complete, we must step out and act on that grace to obey and receive.
  - o **Romans 13:11-14; Ephesians 4:17-5:20; Colossians 3:5-17; 1 Peter 5:5-6.**

# Discourse #20: The Cost of Following Jesus

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Reference: Matthew 8:18-22; Luke 9:57-62

Theme: The Concerns of this Life must not Interfere and Distract us from the Call of God

Context: Jesus was Performing Many Miracles and was becoming Popular, Attracting a lot of Attention



As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” But the man replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go

and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:57-62

There is a cost for being a disciple of Jesus Christ that we must all consider and be willing to pay, but there is an extra cost involved when called by the Lord into full-time ministry.

## A. When Called to do a Task by the Lord

### Mark 1:16-18

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

- Which was the case with the 12 disciples, they were called to leave all and follow Jesus.
  - o Luke 18:28, “Peter said to him, ‘We have left all we had to follow you!’”
- God has a specific plan and purpose for each one of us to pursue on the earth.
  - o **Jeremiah 29:11; Proverbs 19:21; Romans 11:29; 1 Peter 4:10.**
- We can’t be presumptuous and assume our way into God’s permissive will and miss His perfect will for our lives- **Romans 12:2.**
  - o For example, Israel asked for a king when God was their King- **1 Samuel 8:1-22.**
- Besides it’s dangerous to presume and venture into something we are not called to do.
  - o **Numbers 12-** Miriam and Aaron were jealous of Moses
  - o **Numbers 16-** The Levites were envious for the priesthood.

There are those who are specifically called by God to perform a task or go to a certain place and fulfill a mission, and there are those who just ran ahead and went because they saw it as a good thing to do.

- We need to learn to be led by the Spirit, and not just by needs- **Romans 8:13-16.**

Those who just run out ahead and start doing what seems to be a good thing, expending energy and effort without the mind of Christ- that would be activity. However, productivity is having wisdom, take the time to pray and prepare (not indefinitely mind you), and get the direction one needs.

- The key is to receive the plan and direction first, before applying effort.
- We can get more things done by moving slower, and by moving surely.

Consider **2 Samuel 18:19-33**, about two men who ran, but only one of them had a message.

**1 Corinthians 9:26-27**

**Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.**

## B. Hesitation to Obey

**Acts 20:20-21**

**You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.**

When the Lord calls for us to act, any hesitation is indicative to a lack of will and faith to obey.

This became evident with Paul and Barnabas' helper John-Mark who abandoned them in **Acts 13:13**. To his credit, he later matured and reentered the ministry to become a great help- **2 Timothy 4:11**.

- Delayed obedience is the same disobedience, not doing what we are called to do.
- Jesus was not being insensitive to the man whose father had just died.
- He was pointing out the greater reality of life and death that hung in the balance for all those who had yet to hear the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- When it comes to priorities, the choice is obvious, obey the Lord and obey immediately.
- The message Jesus was conveying; don't hold back anything from serving the Lord 100%.
  - o Acts 20:27, "*For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.*"

**Matthew 6:33**

**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**

The other fellow who wanted to go back home and say good-bye to his family, shows one with a divided heart, with the likelihood of regret and divided loyalties.

- There is a grave danger that if we defer the call of God upon our lives, we will forfeit the call of God for something else that grabs our attention.
- As an elder minister once said, "...will wind up on the spiritual junk heap."
  - o Out of circulation- out of the will of the Lord.
  - o Not making any difference for the Kingdom of God- lost our saltiness- **Matthew 5:13**
- That's why the principle of being quick to forgive and quick to repent applies here as well.
- Even though the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable (**Romans 11:29**), that does not stop us from compromising for something less.
- When we settle for anything less than God's best, we are substituting brass for gold!
  - o **1 Kings 14:26-27.**

# Discourse #21: Jesus Sends out the Disciples

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Reference: Matthew 10:1-31; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6

Theme: Jesus Sends out His Disciples two by two to Prepare those Places for His Coming

Context: The Lord is Giving His Disciples Instructions Concerning Ministry



When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: “Take nothing for the journey — no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic. Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. If people do not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave their town, as a testimony against

them.” So they set out and went from village to village, preaching the gospel and healing people everywhere. Luke 9:1-6

## A. The Word of God Confirmed by Signs

Jesus came with the express purpose to destroy the works of the devil. To undo what was done in the Garden of Eden when mankind fell into sin- **Luke 4:16-20; John 1:29; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8.**

When we consider this reference of Jesus sending out His 12 disciples ahead of Him in the synoptic gospels, there are two core principles to be found. Declaring the truth sets the captives free!

- There is no freedom until one receives, believes and applies the truth of God’s Word.
- Truth acted upon sets the captive free- **John 8:31-32; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1.**
- Signs and wonders confirm the Word of God- **Mark 16:15-20; Hebrews 2:1-4.**

### **Principle #1: Heal the sick and cast out demons**

Matthew 10:1, “He gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.”

Matthew 10:8, “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.”

Mark 6:7, “He sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits.”

Mark 6:13- “They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.”

Luke 9:1- “He gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases”

### **Principle #2: Preach the gospel and a message of repentance**

Matthew 10:7- “As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’”

Mark 6:12- “They went out and preached that people should repent.”

Luke 9:2- “He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.”

- This seems to be the divine formula. Jesus modeled this perfectly in His own ministry.
- Preached the gospel and taught the people and then healed the sick and drove out evil spirits.
  - o **Matthew 4:23; 7:28-29; 9:35; Luke 20:1; 21:37-38.**
- This same pattern was replicated by the Early Church, following in Jesus’ footsteps.
  - o **Acts 2:42-43; 8:5-13; Romans 15:17-19.**

Later on Jesus appointed seventy-two followers, who were not one part of the 12 original disciples, to go out ahead of Him. He gave them the same commission in Luke 10:9, *“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”*

So according to Jesus, the kingdom of God is about bringing healing and deliverance upon the earth! They returned with a good report in Luke 10:17, *“The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’”*

It gets even better, the Lord passed on His healing ministry to the Church through the Great Commission to be perpetuated throughout the dispensation of Grace that we now live in- **Matthew 28:18-20.**

### **John 14:12**

**I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.**

**1 John 2:6, “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”**

- All of this is from God, the continuation of His Kingdom through His Body on the earth.
  - o **1 Cor. 12:27; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:30.**
- Everything we have, we have received to be a blessing- **John 3:27; 1 Corinthians 4:6-7.**
  - o **Matthew 10:8, “Freely you have received, freely give.**

As New Covenant children of God, we have been given so much; our glorious redemption & inheritance in Jesus. All these rights, privileges, and weapons (**2 Cor. 6:7; 10:3-6; 13:3; Eph. 6:10-18; Jas. 5:16**), comes with great responsibility to faithfully serve humanity.

- The Name of Jesus!
  - o **Jn. 14:13-14; 16:23; Mark 9:39; 16:15-20; Acts 3:6-7, 16; 16:18 4:12; Php. 2:9-11.**
- The Word of God!
  - o **Acts 12:24; Eph. 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; James 1:21; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 2:14.**
- The Anointing of the Holy Spirit
  - o **Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Samuel 10:6; Isaiah 11:2; Zechariah 4:6; Micah 3:8;**
  - o **Luke 4:14-18; Acts 1:4-8; 10:38; Ro. 15:19; 2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Jn. 2:20, 27; 4:4.**

## **B. Going from Place to Place**

### **Matthew 10:5-7**

**These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near.’”**

The Jews were caretakers or stewards of God’s revelation for salvation on behalf of the rest of the world. It was also through their lineage that Jesus came into the world. This afforded them a special privilege to hear the Gospel message first, but never at the exclusion of the rest of the world.

**Matthew 15:21-28; John 4:21-26; Romans 9:1-5; 10:12-13; 15:25-27.**

- It was Paul’s custom when he reached a town, to reason with the Jews in the synagogue first, but most of the time they rejected the message- **Acts 13:14-52; 17:1-15; 28:17-31.**
- Just prior to Jesus being crucified, some Greeks wanted to see Him, showing that the time had come for the Church Age to start and take the Gospel to the world- **John 12:20-36.**

## 1. God is Our Source

### **Matthew 10:9-10**

**Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.**

- Jesus was not telling them to preach the Kingdom of God without being prepared.
- In this specific instance, He was teaching them to look to God as their source. So in the future, they would be able to look back and see how God supernaturally provided for them.
- Later on Jesus told them to make preparations for ministry- **Luke 22:35-38.**
- It's imperative that those in full-time ministry not put pressure on people- God is our source.
- However God has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should make their living from the Gospel- **1 Corinthians 9:1-18; Philippians 4:10-19.**
- Yet Paul often times did not exercise that right in order to advance the Kingdom of God.
  - o **2 Corinthians 2:17; 11:1-12; 12:14-18; 1 Timothy 6:5.**

## 2. Impartation

### **Matthew 10:11-13**

**“Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting. If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.”**

Remember what Jesus had said in Matthew 10:8, *“Freely you have received, freely give.”* What we have received in trust, to be stewards over, is meant to be ministered faithfully to others.

**Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10.**

- The transference of the anointing is a vital part of our ministry wherever we go.
  - o Words- **Matthew 8:5-10; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 10:5-6; 17:6; Acts 10; 13:11.**
  - o Laying on of Hands- **Acts 8:14-24; 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:14; 5:22; 2 Tim. 1:6; Heb. 6:2.**
- Peace is a spiritual grace from God that is very real- **Jn. 14:27; 20:21; Ro. 15:33; 2 Pet. 1:2.**
- Without doubt our greatest privilege in life is to live to give and be a blessing- **Acts 20:35.**

### **Romans 1:11-12**

**I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.**

## 3. Rejection of the Gospel

### **Matthew 10:14-15**

**If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.**

The Jews taught universally that the dust of the Gentiles was impure, and was to be shaken off. To shake off the dust from the feet, therefore, was a significant act, denoting that they regarded them as impure, profane, and pagan. This practice was continued on by the Early Church- **Acts 13:51; 18:6.**

- Jesus told us not to give what is sacred away to those who would treat it with contempt.
  - o **Matthew 7:6.**

When the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to give them a sign to prove He was the Messiah, He would not do it, but just left them- **Matthew 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-13.**

- In **Mark 16:15** we are told to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, not to argue with other people or to try and prove God exists and that the Bible is the Word of God.

Don't feel obligated to convince people to believe, our job is to just bear witness and testify to the truth **Acts 1:22; 4:33; 10:42-43; 22:15, 18; 23:11; 26:16, 22; 2 Cor. 13:1; 2 Tim. 1:8; 1 Jn. 4:14; Rev. 2:13.**

Let the Word and the Holy Spirit do the rest, leave the results in God's hand. Some will get saved immediately, others later on and the rest never at all. We do our part and God does His- **2 Cor. 6:1-2.**

- We are not to argue with people, but rather speak the truth in love, give them the message with gentleness and respect- **Ephesians 4:15; Php. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:23-26; 1 Peter 3:15-16.**
- When people reject the message, bid them good day and go to the next one.
  - o **Titus 1:16; 3:9-11; Revelation 22:11.**
- As we pray to prepare the way ahead of us, God is faithful to open the hearts of people.
  - o **Acts 13:48; 16:13-15.**
- We are not to do the Holy Spirit's job to convict people of sin- **John 16:8-11; Hebrews 6:4.**
  - o When we do, we end up condemning people instead- **John 3:16-17.**
- Our job is to lift up Jesus and let God do the rest- **John 3:14-15; 6:44; 12:32.**

When one considers the absolute depravity and despicable behavior of Sodom and Gomorrah, it may be hard to understand how a town in Jesus' time, rejecting the Gospel would be considered worse- **Gen. 19.**

**Genesis 18:20-21, "Then the Lord said, 'The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know.'"**

- It all comes down to knowledge, the more we know, the more accountable we are.
  - o **Luke 12:47-48; John 15:22-25; James 3:1**
- That's why there is no salvation for the 1/3 of the angels who fell; there was no excuse for their treachery and high treason against God- **Revelation 12:4.**
- This principle of "knowledge" is also true for Christians who commit the unpardonable sin.
  - o **2 Timothy 2:11-13; Hebrews 6:4-9; 10:26-31; 2 Peter 2:20-22; 1 John 5:16-17.**

#### 4. Suffering Persecution from Men

##### **Matthew 10:16-20**

**I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard against men; they will hand you over to the local councils and flog you in their synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.**

- Jesus warns us to exercise wisdom when dealing with the world.
  - o **Ephesians 5:16; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Th. 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 3:7; 1 Peter 3:16.**
- Knowing they are under the control of the world, the flesh and the devil.
  - o **2 Corinthians 2:11; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:1-2; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19.**

**John 2:24-25, “But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man’s testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.”**

Even though Jesus is God, while on earth He did not run head long into danger just to prove His deity. He was always led by the Holy Spirit- **Matthew 12:14-16; Luke 4:9-13; John 5:13; 7:1-15.**

- Obviously Jesus was never afraid for His life- **Matthew 26:53; John 10:17-18.**
- He lived as an example for us to follow the Father’s will at all times- **John 12:49; 14:30-31.**

Jesus made it very plain that there is a cost to being a disciple of His, we would suffer persecution. However, through suffering persecution we in turn would become a powerful witness to the world. **Mk. 10:28-30; Acts 8:1-8; 11:19-21; Ro. 8:35; 2 Cor. 1:3-11; 11:24; 12:7-10; Php. 1:29; 1Th. 2:14; 3:1-7; 2 Th. 1:4; 2 Tim. 3:10-12; Heb. 10:32-39; Jas. 1:2-4; 1 Pet. 2:18-23; 4:1-2, 12-19; Rev. 2:10.**

**Acts 5:41-42**

**The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.**

We have a wonderful promise from the Lord that when we face persecution, the Lord will stand by our side and give us what to say, for it will be the Spirit of God speaking through us. **John 12:49; 14:26; Acts 4:13; 6:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 3:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:17-18**

- When Stephen, the first church martyr was on trial, the Spirit spoke through him in power.

**Acts 6:10, “...but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.”**

**Keep Moving**

The key is to keep moving, don’t shrink back when persecution comes, stay on the offensive. The whole point of Satan stirring up persecution is to shut us up, so we need to do the opposite and speak more. **Acts 4:23-31; 5:17-42; 8:1-8; 12; Philippians 1:12-21.**

**Matthew 10:21-23**

**Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

Even after Paul has been stoned to death, he got up and continued preaching the gospel. I think most people would have quit at that point; God’s grace is sufficient for us- **Acts 14; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.**

There is a book called “Foxes Book of Martyrs” that describe actual stories of many who were put to death for their faith in the most hideous forms- **Hebrews 11:35-38.**

To torture, racks, and flames, before being put to death they were tormented in the most awful modes that human ingenuity could devise. They were crucified; were thrown into boiling oil; were burned at the stake; were roasted slowly over coals; were compelled to drink melted lead; were torn in pieces by wild animals; were covered with pitch and set on fire.

- Jesus spoke of a baptism of martyrdom in **Matthew 20:20-23; Luke 12:49-53.**

### **A Student is not Above his Teacher**

What Jesus is saying is that if the world persecuted Him, they will most certainly persecute us, because we belong to the Lord- **John 15:18-21**. Others will also listen to us as they listened to Him as well.

### **Matthew 10:24-25**

**A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!**

## 5. Living for Eternity

### **Matthew 10:26-31**

**So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.**

Our life on this earth is so short, so when we view it through the revelation of eternity, our values, goals and perspective on life becomes Kingdom focused- **Mt. 6:33; 1 Cor. 7:31; 2 Cor. 4:18; Php. 3:20-21**.

**Romans 8:18, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."**

- We are not to be ashamed of the Gospel, but boldly make it known- **Romans 1:16-17**.
- Satan has no right to take our lives, like Jesus we chose when to lay it down for God's glory.
  - o **John 10:18; Philippians 1:20-30; Hebrews 11:35**.
- After physical death, there is nothing man can do to us- **Luke 12:4-7**.

Jesus goes on to reveal our eternal worth to God by comparing us to the sparrows. So if all of our heads are numbered, what do we have to fear- **Psalms 42:5; 1 Peter 3:13-17**.

### **Romans 8:31-39**

**What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:**

**"For your sake we face death all day long;  
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."**

**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

# Discourse #22: Disowning the Lord

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Reference: Matthew 10:32-42; Luke 12:8-12, 49-53

Theme: Remaining Faithful to the Lord, without Yielding to the Fear of Man- Especially from Family.  
Context: His Disciples are sent two-by-two Ahead of Him and Prepared to meet Persecution



**“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter**

**than me is not worthy of me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”**

**Matthew 10:32-42**

## 1. The Declaration of Water Baptism

When we come to Jesus and confess Him as Lord and Savior according to **Romans 10:9-13**, this may have been done in a private setting or around other encouraging Christians.

- Our faith in Jesus is put to the test when we make a public declaration through water baptism.
  - o **Matthew 3:6; 28:19; Mark 16:16.**
- In a not too distant past, water baptisms were done publically in rivers, lakes and oceans.
- It could not be hidden, and from that moment on a person was identified as a Christian.
- So water baptism is a witness to the world that we are sold out, devoted followers of Jesus.
- It is the initial means of acknowledging Jesus as our Lord before men at whatever cost.
- In Bible times this was dangerous, and paved the way for persecution and even death.

### **Luke 7:30**

**But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God’s purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.**

- We are admonished in Scripture not to be ashamed of Jesus and His Word.
  - o **Romans 1:16-17; Philippians 1:20; 2 Timothy 1:8, 12; 1 Peter 4:16.**
- If we live out our Christian faith in secret, ashamed and afraid we in fact disowning Jesus.
- The Lord tells us to let our light shine and be the salt of the earth- **Matthew 5:10-16.**

## 2. Fear of Man

### **Galatians 1:10**

**Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.**

- A great lesson to be learned here is about the “Fear of Man.” It’s a snare to the soul.

**Proverbs 29:25, Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe.**

- Fear of what other people might think or do has kept many from the Kingdom of God.
  - o **Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-26.**
- The threat of losing one’s prestige, position or rank; perhaps fear of bodily harm.
- Satan uses intimidation and bullying techniques to cause people to shrink back.
  - o Unfortunately, that is why persecution is so effective- **Hebrews 10:32-39.**

### **John 12:42-43**

**Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God.**

### **Luke 12:4-5**

**“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”**

- When we come to the Lord it’s a total abandonment of our reputation- others might think.
- To be a follower of Jesus is an all or nothing proposition- some countries = martyrdom.
- The sinful woman in **Luke 7:36-50** represents the truly sold-out, repentant seeker of Jesus.
- She knew Jesus was a controversial figure, but was unashamed to acknowledge Him.
- Like the song, “I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back”

**Luke 12:8-10- “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”**

- Now there is a godly fear that the Bible talks about; the fear of the Lord is to hate evil.
  - o **Proverbs 8:13; Romans 12:9-10**
- We are talking about a reverential awe, respect, love and devotion for the Lord.
- We serve an awesome God- **Daniel 7:9-10; Ezekiel 1:25-2:2; Isaiah 6:1-8; Heb. 12:28-29**

We have all disowned the Lord in some fashion or another during our Christian walk. The crucial factor is what we do after we have been unfaithful to him; run to Him or from Him- **Gen. 3:10; Jas. 4:8.**

- Remember how Peter, when under pressure disowned the Lord in **Matthew 26:31-35, 69-75.**
- Later he repented and was restored by the Lord- **Mark 16:7; Luke 22:31-32; John 21:1-19.**
- Jesus warned him ahead of time to pray in order not to fall into temptation- **Mt. 26:37-46.**
- Judas had betrayed Jesus too, yet he was not restored because of his own free will.
  - o **Matthew 26:20-25; 27:1-10; John 6:70; 13:10-11, 21-30; Acts 1:15-20.**
- It is a serious thing to disown the Lord from the heart as Judas did- **2 Timothy 2:11-13.**

### 3. Rejection from Men

No one wants to be rejected and scorned by others. It's particularly painful when it comes from family and friends. But this is the price that we must pay sometimes to follow Jesus when forced to choose.

This reminds me of a story by a missionary friend who described a young woman in a Muslim country who had accepted the Lord. She was old enough and wanted to leave home to be trained in a Bible school, but was severely beaten by her family- this is not an uncommon thing to happen.

- When faced with such intense opposition, in the natural it seems so impossible to serve God.
- His grace and power is more than sufficient- **Ro. 5:20-21; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; 2 Tim. 2:8.**
- Anything esteemed above Jesus is considered an idol; our God is jealous for us.
  - o **Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 32:21; 2 Corinthians 11:2.**
- To love and be devoted to the things of this world is sin- **James 4:1-10; 1 John 2:15-17.**

The fact Jesus specifically points out family members rejecting our faith in Him is due to the reality of how common it was back then and is still today.

- If it does come down to choosing Jesus over family, the Lord promised that we would have a spiritual family to love and support us- **Mark 10:29-31; 1 Tim. 5:1-2; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 3:15.**
- Sometimes when a spouse gets saved, the unbelieving spouse leaves- **1 Corinthians 7:12-16.**
- Often times with Christians, their relationship with the family of God is closer than kin.
- Thank God if immediate family are already Christians, but even if they are not- no problem!

#### **Proverbs 18:24**

**A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.**

As Christians, we are not to abandon our unsaved family members, we should continue to pray for them and be a blessing to them any way possible. We just need to remember to put Jesus first above all things.

### 4. It Matters how we Treat Christians

In the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, Jesus had made a pointed remark, that the manner in which we treat other believers is a direct reflection on how we are treating Him in **Matthew 25:40.**

#### **John 13:20**

**I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.**

- The Lord is more than able to defend and protect us from evil- **2 Timothy 4:16-18.**
  - o **Acts 12:21-23; 26:14; Romans 12:17-21; 16:20; Revelation 2:16; 3:9.**
- The Lord is faithful to pay back those who have persecuted His Church.
  - o **Romans 12:17-21; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 18:20.**
- Consider Saul and the threat Jesus made to him to stop persecuting His Church or else.
  - o **Acts 26:14.**
- Don't ever forget this one thing, our lives are sacred to the Lord- **1 Corinthians 3:16-17.**
- It really matters how we treat other Christians, it can cost us dearly- **1 Corinthians 11:27-34.**

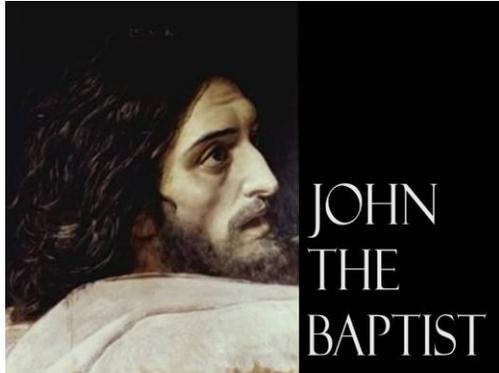
# Discourse #23: Jesus and John the Baptist

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Reference: Matthew 11:1-19; Luke 7:18-35; 16:16

Theme: John the Baptist was a Crucial Element for Jesus Fulfilling His Mission on the Earth.

Context: While His Disciples were sent two-by-two Ahead of Him John's Disciples ask Him a Question



**After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee. When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”**

**Matthew 11:1-3**

The ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus intersected when Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan river- **Matthew 3:13-17**. That event marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry and the ending of John's.

- John 3:30 NKJV John said, “*He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease.*”
- According to Luke 1:36, John's mother Elizabeth was a relative of Mary.
- John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus from a physical birth standpoint- **Luke 1:36**.

## 1. To Prepare the Way of the Lord

- John the Baptist fulfilled a significant role in God's redemptive plan, quoting **Isaiah 40:3**.
- He had the same anointing of the Holy Spirit upon him as Elijah; filled with the Spirit from birth.
  - o **Luke 1:11-17; Matthew 11:14-15**.
- The fact that he was not to drink wine reminds me of a Nazirite vow. Those consecrated for God's service like Samson- **Judges 13:1-7; 16:17-19**.

### **Matthew 3:1-6**

**In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:**

**“A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’”**

**John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.**

John's baptism was a baptism of repentance in order to prepare the people's hearts for the coming of their Messiah according to **Acts 19:4**.

- John the Baptist performed a great role in pointing people to Jesus- **John 1:15-39**.
- John was the last of the Old Testament prophets- **Matthew 11:13; Luke 1:76-80, 16:16**.
  - o Matthew 11:13, “*For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.*”
- Jesus ministered under the Old Covenant and with His resurrection brought in the New Covenant

## 2. Repentance

- John the Baptist and Jesus preached a message of repentance; turn from sin to God.
- According to the Bible it's a prerequisite to salvation.
- To repent simply means to turn and go in another direction.
- Godly repentance is illustrated by an intense desire for God- **2 Corinthians 7:8-12.**
- True repentance is an enablement from God where He draws the sinner to Himself and the sinner in return says yes to God's invitation- **John 6:65; Acts 13:48; 16:14; Romans 2:4.**
- Repentance is not just lip service, but must be backed up by forsaking sin.
  - o Matthew 3:8-9, "*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*"

### **Matthew 4:17**

**From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."**

- The sinner is to come to Christ just as they are, with a willingness of Heart to leave sin.
- A sinner can't stop sinning, that is their nature, but they have to want to be free from it.
- A drunkard can't come to Christ with the intent to remain a drunkard- **1Jn. 3:6; 1Cor. 6:9-11**
- Has to be a willingness to stop sinning, but only by God's grace through faith- **1 John 3:9-10**
- It's all or nothing. We come to Jesus to be Born Again, so we can be freed from sin- **Ro. 6:2.**
- As a result, "Eternal Life" is operating in our spirit, producing the fruit of righteousness.

### **Acts 26:20**

**I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.**

- That is why Jesus came, to call sinful humanity to repentance.
- The problem with religious people, is they think they are righteous and don't need help.
- As a result, they are arrogant and sanctimonious- Jesus made a point to expose the hypocrisy.
  - o **Matthew 9:10-13.**
- Repentance: tear clothes and put on Sack Cloth and fasting- **1 Kings 21:27-28.**
- Jesus referred to "Mourning" in **Matthew 9:15** in reference to fasting.
- In the Sermon on the Mount He talked about fasting in **Matthew 6:16.**
- Not to disfigure your face and make it apparent to others that you are fasting- **Joel 2:12-13.**
- It is a tearing of the heart in regret, not being sorry we were caught; wanting to change!
- Concerning the sinful woman, we learn a great lesson in repentance- **Luke 7:36-50.**
- This sinful woman represents the truly sold-out, all the way, Jesus or bust kind of repentance.
- She knew Jesus was a controversial figure, but was unashamed to acknowledge Him.
- Like the song, "I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back"

**Acts 3:19, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord"**

**Acts 20:21, "I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus."**

### **Acts 17:29-30**

**"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man's design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent."**

### 3. John the Baptist in Prison

Shortly after Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan river, he was arrested by Herod. With Jesus starting His public ministry it was time for John to exit the stage, having done his part to prepare the people.

- The whole story of what happened to John is recorded in **Matthew 14:1-14; Mark 6:14-29.**
- While John was in prison he sent a couple of his disciples to confirm if Jesus was the Messiah.

#### **Matthew 11:2-3**

**When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?"**

- John wanted to know for sure, so Jesus gave the perfect response, "Just look at what I am doing."
- Jesus was fulfilling Old Testament prophecies, performing miracles and preaching the Gospel.
  - o **Matthew 11:4-6; Luke 4:17-21.**
- Jesus goes on to testify about John and his role in fulfilling Old Testament Scripture.
  - o **Matthew 11:7-15.**
- John was a great example of one consecrated to the call of God, having made many personal sacrifices to obey the will of God.

Jesus gave John a word of encouragement- to persevere and remain faithful unto the end.

Matthew 11:6, "*Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.*"

### 4. The Proof of the Pudding is in the Eating

#### **Matthew 11:16-19**

**"To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:**

**'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'**

**For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her actions."**

The bottom line of what Jesus was saying from this portion of Scripture was, "There is nothing we can do to please you!" The majority rejected John as a crazy man, and Jesus as a immoral despot.

- So there was no pleasing this bunch, nothing that John or Jesus did suited them.
- The problem was deeper than Jewish indifference, it was a stubbornness of the heart and unbelief
  - o **Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-9; Romans 11:20-23.**

The old saying, "The proof of the pudding is in the eating" simply means, you know something is good when you experience it firsthand. People can talk about how good something is, but not until you taste it yourself personally will you know for sure if it's good or not.

**Psalms 34:8, "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him."**

- Jesus performed so many miracles and signs- **Mt. 11:20-24; John 10:25, 38; 14:11; Heb. 2:1-4.**
- He fulfilled many prophecies- **Luke 18:31; 24:25-27, 44; John 3:14; 5:46; 15:25; Acts 13:33.**

# Discourse #24: Woe to Unrepentant Cities

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Reference: Matthew 11:20-24; Luke 10:10-16

Theme: Greater Knowledge of Truth Brings Greater Expectation to Heed and Obey it

Context: Jesus was Teaching and Preaching in the Towns of Galilee



**Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed**

**in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.”**

**Matthew 11:20-24**

The cities of Korazin and Bethsaida were towns not far from Capernaum, situated on the banks of the Sea of Galilee in Israel.

- Jesus spent much of His time and ministry in Capernaum, so the people of that town would have witnessed numerous signs and wonders; they had no excuse for their unbelief- **Luke 12:47-48.**

Tyre and Sidon were cities in modern day Lebanon, located on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Both of these cities were very ancient- **2 Chronicles 2:11-16; Ezekiel 26:4-14, 21; Joshua 19:28.**

- Due to their location, they became very wealthy through commerce and thus exceedingly wicked
- Sackcloth (coarse cloth) and Ashes was a sign of mourning, repentance and deep sorrow.
- The Jews often threw ashes on their heads as a sign of grief- **Job 1:21; 2:12; Jeremiah 6:26.**
- The people of Nineveh, when they saw their great guilt and danger, turned from their iniquities.
  - o **Jonah 3:3-4:11.**
- Jesus was laying a great indictment against the cities of Israel; rejected the truth and repented not

Sodom was destroyed because of its great wickedness; homosexuality being one of its chief sins. Jesus was declaring if He had preached the Gospel there with signs and wonders, they would have repented.

- The city would not have been destroyed and the people would have been saved.
- Abraham interceded for Sodom, but there was no one to preach to them- **Romans 10:11-21.**

**Ezekiel 18:23**

**“Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?”**

## 1. The Judgment of God

Judgment comes upon individuals and nations when God's mercy has been exhausted and His calls to repentance have gone unheeded. In Scripture it appears God treats nations like He does individuals.

**Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people."**

In Scripture, to be judged by the Lord, is to be turned over to the hand of the enemy. And what does the enemy promptly do? Destroy and bring ruin & misery- **Job 1:12-19; 2:7-8; Judges 2:14; Ps. 78:61-62.**

- Sin, lack of faith and disobedience opens the door to Satan- **Job 3:25; Luke 13:1-9; Eph. 4:27.**
- Other times, bad things happen because we live in a fallen world- **Romans 8:19-25.**
- One of the elementary teachings of Jesus is in reference to "Eternal Judgment" in **Hebrews 6:2.**
- When God judges it's because men are without excuse and know better- can't plead ignorance.
  - o **Joshua 23:14-16; Luke 19:22; Romans 1:18-32; 2:12-16; Hebrews 10:26-31.**
- His judgment is based on righteousness and true justice that can never be perverted.
  - o **John 5:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-10; Revelation 15:3; 16:4-7; 19:1-2.**
- The Lord provides a generous period of time for people to repent and change.
  - o **Genesis 15:16; 1 Timothy 5:24; Revelation 2:20-23.**
- Whether its nations or individuals, when they fail to repent, judgment comes- **Isaiah 13:11-13.**
  - o The Hebrews as slaves in Egypt- **Genesis 15:14.**
  - o Sodom and Gomorrah- **Genesis 18:16-19:29; 2 Peter 2:4-10; 3:7; Jude 7.**
  - o Amalekites attacking Israel while in the wilderness- **1 Samuel 15:3.**
- So what should we do when we are disobedient? Repent and judge ourselves- **1 Cor. 11:27-33.**

Jerusalem in its history serves as a good example of God dealing with a large group of people. It has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times.

- God is longsuffering, but it's not everlasting and when a people fail to repent, the door is opened for Satan to come in and kill, steal and destroy- **John 10:10.**
- Jerusalem was judged once again and turned over to her enemies in 70 AD when Titus the Roman general, in response to a rebellion invaded the land and devastated it.
  - o **Matthew 23:29-39; Luke 19:41-44; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16.**

### **Luke 21:20-24**

**When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

When innocent blood is spilled in a land, injustice and violence and people cry out to the Lord for help, He is faithful to move on their behalf- **Genesis 4:10; 9:5-6; 18:20-21; Revelation 8:1-6; 11:18; 16:5-7.**

### **2 Chronicles 7:14**

**If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.**

# Discourse #25: Revelation Revealed to the Humble

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Reference: Matthew 11:25-27; Luke 10:21

Theme: Coming Humbly before God Opens the Way for Revelation from Heaven

Context: Jesus was Teaching and Preaching in the Towns of Galilee



At that time Jesus said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.” All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

**Matthew 11:25-27**

What is it about little children that makes them such a great example for Jesus to use as a characterization for those who would receive from God?

- Their innocent, transparent and authentic behavior for starts.
- It's their humility and the absence of pretense, flattery, pride and selfish ambition.
- We are admonished to be innocent concerning evil and wise about what is good- **Romans 16:19.**
- Those who resemble these childlike characteristics are considered greatest in the Kingdom.
  - o **Matthew 18:4.**
- It is easy for people to dismiss childlike characteristics as being naïve- **Mt. 18:10; Mk. 9:36-37.**
- We are warned not to be a stumbling block to little children or people in general for that matter.
  - o **Matthew 18:5-11; Mark 9:42-49; Luke 17:1-3.**

Concerning the new birth, Jesus uses little children as an example for those who would receive eternal life and be born again as children of God- **Matthew 18:2-3; 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17.**

## **Matthew 18:4**

**Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.**

## **Luke 14:11**

**For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**

The pride of man makes him wise in his own eyes, for such foolishness deceives his own heart from knowing and receiving the truth- **Isaiah 5:21; Obadiah 1:3; 1 Corinthians 1:17-31; 3:18-23.**

It seems that pride, self-reliance and self confidence comes with age, but the wise grow in humility over time as they see their need for the Lord- **Proverbs 16:18; 29:23; Isaiah 2:11; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5.**

## 1. Revelation Knowledge

### **Ephesians 1:17**

**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.**

It's an unfortunate thing, but as people get older, the tendency for reason to dominate their spirit; logic, skepticism and cynicism clouds their minds. Simple truths and realities become complicated and religion is born to burden men with excessive legalism and requirement all birthed out of pride & self-exaltation.

**Matthew 23:1-4; Luke 11:52; Colossians 2:16-23; James 1:26-27.**

- The world calls this becoming an adult, like cement, thoroughly mixed up and well set in their ways. That's why it's a greater challenge to get adults saved and filled with the Holy Spirit.
- Children who are open and receptive in their heart are not clouded with doubt and unbelief.

However, it's not too late for us adults to change and become childlike, not childish to the things of God. Open, receptive and hungry; not content to remain the same, but willing to change- **Matthew 5:6.**

As natural light produces life and illumination, so also the Word of God has the same affect upon us for the spiritual realm. God's Word is spiritual food (Luke 4:4): it's the bread of life for our spiritual development, it's a revealer of spiritual truth, it's a portal or door into experiencing God's Kingdom.

### **Psalms 119:130 AMP**

**The entrance and unfolding of Your words give light; their unfolding gives understanding (discernment and comprehension) to the simple.**

The Bible acts as our spiritual eyes into the unseen realm that is more real than this natural world. The Bible is the truth that reveals things as they really are! So revelation knowledge is spiritual understanding revealed to the spirit of man.

This spiritual light of God's revelation knowledge is a key ingredient to our development, growth and spiritual maturity. It is the creative and life changing power of God that is at work in us who believe.

**1 Thessalonians 2:13; Luke 17:20-21; John 6:63**

In this dispensation of Grace that we live in today, the Holy Spirit has been sent forth to be our teacher, comforter, advocate, counselor and one called alongside to help! This is what is meant by "Counselor" in the Greek- parakletos. He lives inside us to make Christianity a reality and not a dead religion.

One of the main tasks that the Holy Spirit fulfills in the life of the believer is as our teacher or mentor. The Bible calls us disciples, "Disciplined Learners" of Christ, the Holy Spirit is our Master Teacher! He takes the truth of God's Word and reveals it to our spirit on a personal basis.

**John 14:16-17, 26; 16:13**

- For those who are self-seeking and reject the truth, there will be judgment.
  - o **John 12:47-48; Romans 2:8; Titus 1:14.**
- Humility is reality and pride is deception.
- To receive revelation truth from God we have to be born again- **1 Corinthians chapter 2.**
- Being Baptized with the Holy Spirit further enhances and amplifies our comprehension.
  - o **Acts 6:3; Ephesians 5:18.**

# Discourse #26: Rest for the Weary

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Reference: Matthew 11:28-30

Theme: The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus Obtained what we could not by Ourselves - Life  
Context: Jesus was Teaching and Preaching in the Towns of Galilee



**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”**

**Matthew 11:28-30**

## 1. The Burden of the Law

Relief from the burden of sin and alienation from God only comes through repentance and faith in Jesus. Marking the end of the meaningless and frustrating task of seeking God by our own good works.

**Acts 3:19-20, “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus.”**

- The Apostle Paul, having been raised under the strict sect of the Pharisees knew all too well the pointless pursuit of legalism- **Acts 26:1-11; Galatians 1:13-17; Philippians 3:2-16.**
- Being a Pharisee gave Paul tremendous insight in knowing the Scriptures concerning Jesus.
- It also gave him personal knowledge of the futility of obtaining righteousness through the law.
- So he was uniquely qualified to detect any infiltration of religious legalism into Christianity.
  
- The Early Church had a rich heritage of Old Covenant types and shadows pointing to Jesus.
- Unfortunately this background made it hard for Jewish Christians to let go of the old ways.
- There were those who accepted Jesus as their Messiah, but still held onto Judaism and the Law.

Judaizers, a term that belonged to Jewish Christians during the Early Church period who claimed the necessity to a continual adherence and obedience to the Mosaic Laws as a prerequisite to salvation.

- They claimed that Gentiles coming to Christ must convert to Judaism- **Acts 15:1-35.**
- For instance the observance of Circumcision, Sabbath, and the Passover.
- The overall theme of the book of Galatians refutes the error of works based salvation.
  - o **Galatians 2:11-4:11; 5:1-12; 6:12-16.**
- It's part of sinful human nature to observe a religious based system of works, because it is inherently self-centered and based on pride. Look what I have done, self-righteous- **Isaiah 64:6.**

## **Hebrews 7:18-19**

**The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.**

**Galatians 2:15-16, “We who are Jews by birth and not ‘Gentile sinners’ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”**

So when Jesus made His statement in **Matthew 11:28-30**, he was speaking to Old Covenant people under the law, eluding to the new freedom to be found under the New Covenant.

- Freedom from the Yoke of the law and religion- **Acts 15:10; Galatians 5:1; 1 Timothy 6:1.**
- The law places the burden on man to obey- **Romans 10:5.**
- Through the righteousness that comes by faith, the burden was on Jesus for us- **Ro. 10:6-10.**

**Romans 4:4-5, “Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”**

## 2. The Rest of God

In Hebrews chapter three the author provides a sad commentary of the children of Israel failing to enter into their Promise Land because of the unbelief, due to the hardness of their hearts.

Under the New Covenant we too have received a Gospel message to put our faith in Jesus in order to enter into the rest of God, not relying on our own good works to earn or deserve anything from God. Notice Jesus did not say there would be no weight, just much lighter in comparison to serving God in our own strength. Walking by faith requires some effort (speaking/obeying the Word)- **Eph. 2:8-10.**

- So we enter into the rest of God by faith alone in God’s Word- **Hebrews 4:1-12.**
- Through Jesus as our Great High Priest we can approach the throne of God’s grace.
  - o **1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-10; 6:19-20; 7:23-28; 8:1-2; 9:11-28; 13:11-16.**
- We need to cast our cares upon Him and be anxious for nothing- **Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7.**

## 3. Power to the Faint

- The Lord not only removes our burdens, but He gives us the power and strength to follow Him.
  - o **Psalms 27:1; 28:8; 119:28; Isaiah 40:29-31; Jeremiah 31:25; Philippians 4:13.**
  - o Joel 3:10 NKJV, “*Let the weak say, ‘I am strong.’*”
- While we live in this fallen world and in a mortal body, the opportunity to be weary exists.
  - o **Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 12:3; Revelation 2:3.**

## **2 Corinthians 5:4**

**For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.**

## **Romans 8:11**

**And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.**

# Discourse #27: Lord of the Sabbath

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Reference: Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-11; 14:1-6

Theme: The Value of Man Supersedes the Traditions of Men

Context: Jesus and His Disciples were going through some Grain Fields and Eating as they went



**One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?” He answered, “Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions.” Then he said to them,**

**“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”**

**Mark 2:23-28**

The term “Sabbath” derives from the Hebrew Shabbat, “to cease”, which was first used when God had re-created the earth, and on the seventh day finished His work in **Genesis 2:2-3**.

- The first ordinance concerning the Sabbath came when the people of Israel were in the desert and God had provided manna for them to eat; were to collect extra in preparation for the Sabbath.
  - o **Exodus 16:21-30.**
- Observance of the Hebrew Sabbath day was from the six-day evening to the seventh-day evening
  - o **Nehemiah 13:19; Leviticus 23:32.**
- God made observing the Sabbath a part of the 10 commandments- **Exodus 20:8-11; Dt. 5:12.**
- It was meant to be a day of rest from labor and spend time in worship, prayer and meditation.
- Under the Mosaic Law, desecrating the Sabbath was punishable by death- **Exodus 31:15.**

Jewish tradition had built upon the simple commandment and extended it to adopt all kinds of rules and regulations to define what constituted work; they took the simple principle to an extreme.

- Their intent was to build a hedge around the law called the *Halakah*; extra regulations designed to prevent the Jews from accidentally breaking the law- safeguards.
- Pharisees had added 1,521 additions to the “Sabbath” law and 39 sections of things forbidden.
- Ironically in an attempt to keep from breaking the law, their religious traditions broke the law by adding their own words to God’s Word- **Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32.**
- Jesus also had rebuked them for taking such liberties with other Scriptures as well- **Mark 7:1-23.**

**Luke 6:1, “One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels.”**

Harvesting wheat is among these sections and, although the disciples were not really conducting a harvest, picking the heads off the stems to eat was a technicality of the law. One thing the Pharisees lacked was compassion as they would rather see a person go hungry than to “break” the laws.

The Pharisaic tradition, by Jesus' day, had developed into an array of petty rules having to do with the minutiae of the law. It focused on physical works that had little to do with the spirit and intent of the law; and which, in fact, often violated the law- **Mt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; John 7:19; Gal. 6:13.**

As we study the Scriptures, it almost appears as though Jesus purposely healed people on the Sabbath just to upset their religious apple-cart- **Luke 13:10-17; John 5:1-18; 7:21-24; 9:1-41.**

- Jesus is the Great I Am, the one who gave them the Sabbath commandment-**John 8:58; Ex. 3:14**
- Therefore, He had the authority to do what He wanted on the Sabbath, but He did not violate it.
- All the Pharisees could see through their narrow prism of religious glasses was another law breaking "technicality" by Jesus.

#### **Matthew 23:23-24**

**"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel."**

- The point Jesus was making is the law was instituted to protect and provide for man.
- The religious leaders had it backwards and made an idol out of the Law of Moses.
- It was also stated in the Law that the poor could pick kernels of grain in another man's field without a distinction of days- **Deuteronomy 23:25.**

David had fled from Saul who wanted to kill him to find food/refuge with Abiathar the high priest. The Law restricted the shewbread to the priests (**Lev. 24:9**), extreme human need overruled this regulation.

#### **Matthew 12:5-6**

**Or haven't you read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple desecrate the day and yet are innocent? I tell you that one greater than the temple is here.**

A second illustration shows that the law of Sabbath rest was not absolute, for the priests were required by that very law to work on the Sabbath- **Numbers 28:9-10.**

So if priests can be guiltless in working on the Sabbath for furthering temple worship, how much more are the disciples guiltless in using the Sabbath for the work of Christ, to whom the temple pointed.

**John 2:18-22.**

#### **Matthew 12:7-8**

**If you had known what these words mean, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," you would not have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.**

Had the Pharisees understood **Hosea 6:6**, they would not have condemned the innocent who merely broke their traditions and not the Law itself.

- The Law was only a shadow of the good things yet to come; meant to lead us to Jesus.
  - o **Galatians 3:19-25; Hebrews 10:1.**
- The fact that Jesus healed so many on the Sabbath showed that the Sabbath was made for man and not the other way around.
- In other words, that day was set aside as a special time to experience God's grace in our lives.
- Under the New Covenant, every day is a Sabbath rest by faith in God's grace- **Hebrews 4:1-12.**

# Discourse #28: Jesus and Beelzebub

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Reference: Matthew 12:22-37, 43-45; Mark 3:20-30; Luke 11:14-28

Theme: It was the Holy Spirit Manifesting through Jesus in Power as He does through us Today

Context: Jesus Cast a demon out of a Man that had made him both Blind and Mute



**And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.” So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will**

**never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.” He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”**

**Mark 3:22-30**

All throughout the ministry of Jesus, we see numerous accounts of demons being driven out of people who came to Him for deliverance and freedom.

- Many demons driven out- **Mark 1:34, 39; 3:11-12; 16:9; Luke 4:41; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2; 13:32.**
- Mad man of the Gadarenes- **Matthew 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39.**
- Demon driven out of a mute man- **Matthew 9:33; Luke 11:14.**
- Boy with seizures- **Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:17-29; Luke 9:37-43.**
- Phoenician woman’s daughter- **Mark 7:24-30.**
- The man in the synagogue- **Mark 1:23-28; Luke 4:32-36.**
- Woman oppressed by a spirit of infirmity- **Luke 13:10-17.**
- Jesus delegated authority- **Matthew 10:8; Mark 3:15; 6:7; 16:17; Luke 9:1; 10:17-19.**

All forms of oppression either directly or indirectly is attributed to Satan through sin, world system & demonic activity. Jesus came with the express purpose to bring freedom for the oppressed-**Luke 4:17-19**

## **Acts 10:38**

**How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.**

## **1 John 3:8**

**The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.**

- This same ministry of deliverance Jesus started 2,000 years ago is to continue through us.
  - o **Mark 16:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16-18; 19:12.**

## 1. A Kingdom Divided

The Pharisees were desperate (John 12:19), they resorted to any means to discredit Jesus, even attributing His deliverance ministry to Satanic origins which was ludicrous as Jesus points out.

- First Jesus gives a universal principle that a kingdom or house divided against itself cannot stand.
- Remember the old axiom, “divide and conquer” is a true statement.

This principle has great application when you consider that Christians today naively attribute the work of Satan to God when they say that God makes people sick so He can turn around and heal them.

### **Galatians 2:18-19, “If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.”**

Folks will use John chapter 11 in regards Lazarus being raised from the dead for God’s glory and John chapter 9 concerning the man born blind that God caused it so He could be glorified through it.

- The absurdity if this religious reasoning is just as dangerous as it was with the Pharisees error.
- To suggest that God traffics in the same detestable works of Satan- sickness, oppression etc.
- Jesus makes a clear distinction in **John 10:10**: simple theology- good God versus bad devil.
- The two will never exchange roles, they are absolute opposites.

For example, Isaiah 45:7, “*Does God create evil?*” Well the answer would be no. That would make God a devil. God may permit evil, but He does not create it. If God commits or creates evil, then He has no right whatsoever to judge man for sinning. Sickness, poverty and oppression is evil, of the devil.

Take the whole counsel of God’s Word into consideration when interpreting Scripture, God is not responsible for evil, He only permits evil. There is a vast difference between commission & permission.

### **James 1:16-17**

**Don’t be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.**

Why does James by the Holy Spirit warn us not to be deceived, because many Christians today are deceived in thinking that trials, tests and temptations come from God- they come from Satan!

Let me give you an example of why this point is so important. If a Christian is deceived in thinking that cancer came from God to keep them humble, they won’t resist it, cause they don’t want to resist God.

- Yet they pay thousands of dollars on medicine to get out of God’s will for them- foolish thinking
- However, when we know the source of the attack, we can resist it and defeat it in Jesus’ Name!

When tragedy hits a Christian, the biggest mistake they can make is to spiritualize and reason out the cause for the calamity. Suppose a fine Christian lady experienced a driving accident that left her paralyzed, changing her life dramatically, spiritualizing the situation would sound something like this:

“God knows what He is doing. I am being made Christ like, and God is being glorified in my infirmities, more than He would be glorified in my physical healing. The same was true of Paul with his thorn in his flesh. We may not fully understand how this is to our benefit or how God can be glorified in this way, but He is. There are special cases in which God demonstrates His Sovereign love through giving patience & strength instead of healing. Sometimes, He is healing and perfecting our spiritual lives first.”

## 2. The Finger of God

### **Luke 11:19-20**

**“ Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you.”**

Jesus turns the tables on their ridiculous logic by directing their attention to their own activities in the area of exorcisms- **Acts 19:13-20.**

- I love the imagery Jesus uses concerning the “Finger of God” which was also used in **Ex. 8:19.**
- To God, driving out demons would be like us flicking a bug off our arm.

### **Matthew 12:28**

**But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

- The “Finger of God” speaks of the power of God manifested through the Holy Spirit.
  - o **Isaiah 11:1-3; Luke 4:14; 24:49; Acts 1:8; 10:38; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 John 4:4.**
- We minister not in our own strength, but by the power of the Spirit of God- **Zechariah 4:6.**

## 3. Binding the Strong Man

The context of Jesus speaking in parables concerning binding the strong man was in reference to Him bringing deliverance to a demon-possessed man.

### **Luke 11:21-22**

**When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.**

- So the “strong man” Jesus was referring to was the demon possessing the man.
- The strong man’s “house” speaks of the man himself.
- Our physical bodies are called a temple, jar of clay and a tent; they all speak of containers.
  - o **1 Corinthians 3:16 6:19; 2 Corinthians 4:7; 5:1-4; Philippians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:13.**
- So the only way to drive a demon out, is if someone more powerful to come along and cast it out
- Jesus defeated Satan when tempted in the desert in **Luke 4:1-13.**
- Notice in verse 14, “*Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit...*”
- The key to Jesus’ deliverance ministry was that He was anointed with the Holy Spirit- power!

### **Isaiah 10:27 KJV**

**And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.**

### **2 Corinthians 3:17**

**Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.**

- The works Jesus did we are to continue as His body- **John 14:12-14; Eph. 3:10.**
- Like Jesus, the secret to our power is the Holy Spirit operating through us- **1 John 2:20, 27; 4:4.**

- Through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Satan is defeated and stripped !
  - o **John 12:31-32; 16:11; 14:30 Colossians 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 5:18; Rev. 12:11.**
- Through the power of attorney Jesus has given us the authority through His Name.
  - o **Mt. 16:18-19; 18:18; 28:18-20; Mark 16:17; Luke 10:19; Eph. 1:20-23; Php. 2:9-11.**

### **Colossians 1:13-14**

**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

Satan is the god of this world system; Adam and Eve eating the forbidden fruit- **Gen. 3:1-20; Ro. 6:16. Luke 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:7; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 20:3, 8**

- However, Satan's days and of his kingdom of darkness are numbered- **1 Corinthians 15:24-28.**

### **Matthew 8:29**

**“What do you want with us, Son of God?” they shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?”**

In the Gospel of Luke concerning this account, we see some additional insight as to what happens when an evil spirit is cast out of an individual. We see the same account in **Matthew 12:43-45.**

### **Luke 11:24-26**

**“When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first.”**

- First of all when dealing with total demon possession, the person possessed is not a Christian.
- It would be impossible for a child of God who already has the Holy Spirit in their spirit to be demon possessed, spirit, soul and body.
- However, Christians can be oppressed in their mind and/or body just not in their spirit.
- In either case we learn from Jesus the evil spirit will come back and try to gain entrance again.
  - o So what had opened the door for possession or oppression in the first place must be shut.
  - o Sin opens the door to the enemy, so whatever it was must stop- **Eph. 4:27; 2 Tim. 2:26.**
  - o In case of the unbeliever he/she needs to get born again.
  - o Next, the Word of God needs to dwell in them richly so they aren't empty and vulnerable.
  - o Need to be taught how to resist the devil and exercise spiritual authority in Jesus' Name.

Jesus pointed out that those who are not with Him are against Him, there is no middle ground. So the choice is clear, to be sold out and on fire for Jesus- **Matthew 12:30-31; Luke 9:49-50.**

- For the Pharisees and most people, all they can offer is lips service- **Matthew 7:21-23.**
- Where the rubber meets the road is in obedience- **Matthew 7:24-27.**
- It's those who put God's Word into practice will be blessed- **Matthew 12:48-50; Luke 11:27-28**

**James 1:22-25, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.”**

## 4. Blaspheming the Holy Spirit

### **Matthew 12:31-32**

**And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.**

It's interesting to note that the religious leaders were big on not committing blasphemy against God, yet that is what they did against the Holy Spirit when they attributed the work of Jesus to Satan.

- Jesus had been called demon possessed before by the Jews in **John 7:20; 8:48-49; 10:20.**
- In those cases, I believe they spoke from the top of their head, flippantly and ignorantly.
- However, for those who knew it was the Holy Spirit operating through Jesus, and yet still make such a slanderous insult from their heart, they committed an eternal sin that cannot be forgiven.
- This particular unpardonable sin is committed by unbelievers.

Jesus said, whatever is in our heart is going to come out of our mouth. The words we hear on a continual basis (faith & doubt come by hearing words) will eventually register in our spirit.

**Proverbs 23:7 NKJV “For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.”**

Once those words are in our heart, they will in turn come out of our mouth, and those things which we say will eventually come to pass- for good or evil.

### **Matthew 12:33-37**

**“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”**

- So words locate us, we can look into a person's heart by listening to what they say.
- Just consider how powerful words are, our eternal destination is determined by them.
  - o **Proverbs 18:21; James 3:2-12.**
- Ultimately words will also set the landmarks of our lives, what we receive in life.
  - o **Numbers 13:26-33.**

We will not receive beyond what we say. If we say we can't, then we can't- we get nothing. But if we say we can, then we can. The reason the majority of Christians are weak even though they are earnest, is that they have never dared to make a confession of who they are in Jesus.

How do we do this? First, we must realize how God looks at us, and confess it! Then boldly confess what the Word declares we are in Christ Jesus. As we do this, our faith will abound. The reason faith is held in bondage is that we have never dared to confess what God says we are. Faith, then, grows with our confession of God's Word.

# Discourse #29: The Sign of Jonah

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Reference: Matthew 12:38-42; Luke 11:29-32

Theme: The Greatest Sign for Mankind is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead

Context: Jesus was at a Synagogue on the Sabbath Teaching the People



**Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a miraculous sign from you.” He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here.**

**Matthew 12:38-42**

## 1. Sign Seekers

Jesus did not tell us to go into all the world and prove that God is real and the Bible is the Word of God.

- The Lord called us to preach the Gospel and bare witnesses to the truth- leave the results to God.
- There will always be sign seekers who want you to prove something; however, Jesus never felt obligated to accommodate scoffers and skeptics.

When the Pharisees tried to get Jesus to give them a sign to prove He was the Messiah, He would not do it, but just left them- **Matthew 12:19-20; 16:1-4; Mark 8:11-13.**

- In **Mark 16:15** we are told to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, not to argue with other people and get into debates- **Acts 6:9-10; 2 Timothy 2:23-26.**

Don't feel obligated to convince people to believe, our job is to just bear witness and testify to the truth **Acts 1:22; 4:33; 10:42-43; 22:15, 18; 23:11; 26:16, 22; 2 Cor. 13:1; 2 Tim. 1:8; 1 Jn. 4:14; Rev. 2:13.**

However, the Lord is generous is performing signs and wonders on behalf of those who are open to the Gospel and hungry for the truth- **Mark 16:17-20; Acts 2:22, 43; 4:30; 5:12-16; 6:8; 8:4-13; 14:3.**

## Hebrews 2:3-4

**How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**

## 2. The Resurrection from the Dead

The greatest sign that Jesus gave the Pharisees was the prediction that after three days, He would be raised from the dead. This was significant, because it pointed to prophetic Scripture of the Messiah.

### **Psalms 16:9-10**

**Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.**

- This prophetic utterance given through David concerning the resurrection, Jesus fulfilled.
  - o **Luke 24:25-27, 44-49; John 3:14.**
- The resurrection was the central theme of the Gospel message given by the Early Church.
  - o **Acts 2:22-37; 13:26-39; 26:22-23; 1 Corinthians 15:1-21.**
- Men consider it an absurdity and no other major religion can claim it- **Acts 17:29-32.**

So going back to the sign of Jonah, he was swallowed by a fish for three days and three nights just as Jesus was in the heart of the earth for three days and nights after He had died on the cross for our sins.

**Jonah 1:17, “But the Lord provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.”**

- Jonah had rebelled against God and fled from a city called Nineveh, to warn them of impending judgment due to their sin. So he was on a boat at the time and they cast him overboard.
- Jonah died physically in the fish and descended into Abraham’s bosom in the second chapter.
- Fortunately for Jonah, the Lord raised him from the dead and gave him a second chance to obey.

**Jonah 2:10, “And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.”**

- Abraham’s bosom was a compartment adjacent to hell where the righteous dead were held until the resurrection of Jesus, and sin was atoned for- it was a prison but they were not tormented.
- Jesus referred to this place as paradise while still on the cross- **Luke 23:42-43.**
- Scripture tells us Jesus preached the Gospel to those in this place- **1 Peter 3:18-20; 4:6.**
- Upon hearing the Gospel in Abraham’s bosom, the righteous dead were born again and accompanied Jesus in His resurrection to heaven where they are now- **Ephesians 4:8-11.**
- So now those who die in Christ go straight to heaven- **2 Cor. 5:8; Php. 1:20-26; 1 Th. 4:13-18.**
  
- These truths are revealed to us by Jesus in the true story of the rich man and Lazarus.
- The rich man in hell pleaded to Moses for Lazarus to return from the dead and warn his family.
- What Moses said next was profound and true of Jesus’ resurrection concerning the Jews.
  - o **Matthew 28:11-15.**

### **Luke 16:27-31**

**“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ ‘Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ ‘‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ ‘He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”**

There was no excuse for the Jews to deny Jesus while He was present with them as pointed out in **Matthew 12:41-42.** With greater revelation comes greater accountability- **1 Peter 1:10-12.**

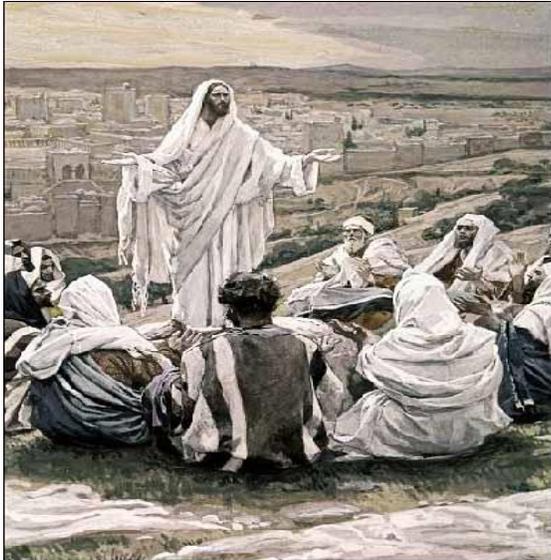
# Discourse #30: On Relationships

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Reference: Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21

Theme: Looking beyond the Natural Point of View to Eternal Realities

Context: While Jesus was Still Talking to the Crowd, Mary and her Sons wanted to see Him



**While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” He replied to him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”**

**Matthew 12:46-50**

There is no question that Jesus kept the law and honored Mary and Joseph as He grew up, since His whole life was a fulfillment of the law- **Matthew 5:17**.

## **Hebrews 12:1**

**Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**

- Human families are important to God, but Jesus redirected the focus to the spiritual family of God that encompasses countless people in heaven and on earth.
  - o **Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 4:17.**
- Thank God for natural families, they are special to God and to us and should be looked after.
  - o **Mark 7:9-13; 1 Timothy 3:12; 5:4-8.**
- But our definition of family needs to expand to all our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Through the blood of Jesus we are all spiritually related with the one and the same Father God.

## **1 Timothy 5:1-2**

**Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.**

- Mary and Jesus’ natural brothers were important, but not as important as obeying God’s Word.
- Clearly Jesus placed the greatest significance upon putting God’s Word into practice!
  - o **Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22-25; Hebrews 4:12.**

## **Luke 8:21**

**He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.”**

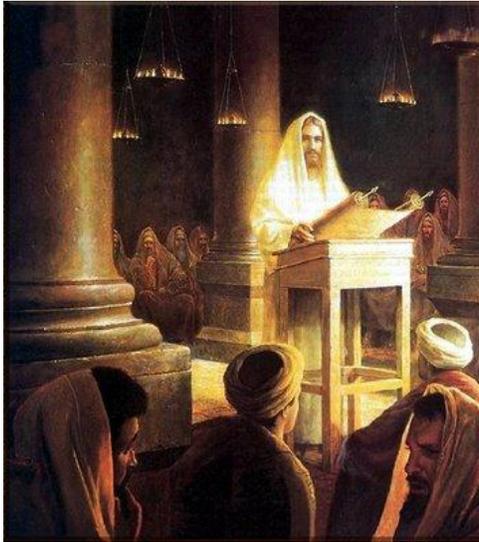
# Discourse #31: A Prophet Without Honor

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Reference: Matthew 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6

Theme: We Limit God with our Lack of Faith from Performing His Perfect Will in our Lives

Context: Jesus Returned to Minister to His Hometown of Nazareth



Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.” He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

Mark 6:1-6

It seems to be typical human nature to take people we know for granted, or perhaps it’s because we know them too well that our ability to appreciate or receive from them is affected; for good or bad.

- Inadvertently we see people from a natural perspective, and judge them accordingly.
- We need to see our brothers and sisters in Christ primarily by their true spiritual identity in Jesus.
- Regard others as the Word of God sees them- see them through those new set of eyes!
  - o 2 Corinthians 5:7, “We live by faith, not by sight.”
  - o Galatians 2:6, “God does not judge by external appearance.”
- When someone gets saved and becomes born again, their past sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus, there will always be those who knew them before and want to drag up the past.

## 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

**So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**

- That’s what we see in the reception Jesus had received in His hometown of Nazareth.
- The local people could not get past Jesus’ humanity to embrace His Deity as God with us.
  - o **Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:20-21.**
- These same principles of judging people by the outward appearance applied when the prophet Samuel was looking at David’s oldest brother Eliab, looking for the Lord’s anointed.

## 1 Samuel 16:7

**But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”**

## 1. Lack of Faith

Sadly, Jesus had full intentions in performing mighty miracles, healings and great deliverances, but the Bible says that he “Could Not” do any miracles, not that He “Would Not.”

- Jesus is God, but according to Scripture, His activities were limited by their lack of faith.
- It is the same today, receiving from God is not automatic, He is looking for our faith.
  - o **Hebrews 11:6; James 1:6-8.**
  - o Luke 18:8, “*However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?*”

Matthew 14:31 - “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Matthew 21:21 - “Have faith and do not doubt”

Mark 11:23 - “Does not doubt in his heart”

James 1:6 - “He must believe and not doubt”

John 20:27 - “Stop doubting and believe”

(KJV) - “Be not faithless but believing”

- There are generally three reasons why people don’t receive, a lack of faith being one of them.
  - o Lack of Knowledge: We can’t experience beyond what we don’t know- **Hosea 4:6.**
  - o Disobedience: Habitual sin, brings condemnation- faith trembles in broken fellowship.
  - o **Isaiah 1:19; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; James 4:1-5; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 John 1:9.**

Some people believe if they can just get pitiful enough, God will be benevolent, and feel sorry for them. Yes, on occasion God will do that- **John 5:1-15.**

- Primarily the Lord is looking at our faith, not our need- **2 Thessalonians 1:11.**
- Begging, pleading and whining does not solicit pity from God, He responds to our faith.

### **Romans 3:3-4**

**What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: “So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”**

I believe it is the plan of God that no believer should ever be sick, just as it’s His will that all be saved and go to heaven. Do all get saved, no and neither will all be healed, but that is not God’s fault, nor has His Word failed. We can expect results if we pray in line with God’s Word and believe- **1 John 5:14-15.**

There are reasons why not everyone gets saved just as there are reasons why not everyone gets healed, but it’s not because God has changed His Mind or His will on the matter- **Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8.**

Human beings are the variable in this equation; their free-will and decisions make all the difference on whether they get saved, healed or receive answers to their prayers.

God has done all He is ever going to do in providing salvation and healing, now it’s up to folks to mix God’s Word with faith in order to receive for themselves God’s highest and best for their lives- but it’s not automatic- **2 Corinthians 1:18-20; Hebrews 4:1-12.**

### **James 4:8**

**Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.**

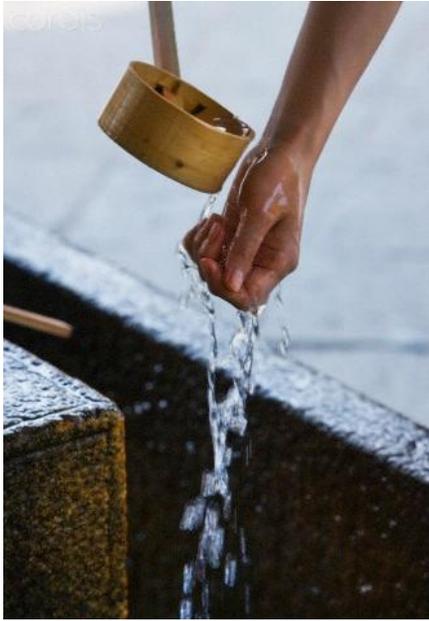
# Discourse #32: Clean and Unclean

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Reference: Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23

Theme: Obeying God's Word and having a New Heart through Regeneration Makes a Man Clean

Context: Pharisees came from Jerusalem to Scrutinize Jesus in the Vicinity of Capernaum



**The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed. (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?”**

**Mark 7:1-5**

There is nothing wrong with washing your hands or dishes before you eat for sanitary reasons, that is not what Jesus is condemning here. It was the liberties the religious leaders were taking in their presumption to exalt their own man-made traditions above the Word of God.

**Proverbs 30:5-6, “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.”**

- Adding to God's Word is an extremely serious offense- **Revelation 22:18-19.**
- There are eternal implication if we drift away from the truth and stray from the Bible.
  - o **Romans 10:1-4; Galatians 1:6-9; 5:4; 1 Timothy 4:16; Hebrews 2:1.**
- In **Mark 7:6-7** Jesus quoted **Isaiah 29:13** concerning the hypocrisy of religious lip service.
- Notice that worship is in vain when they are but rules taught by men- **Psalms 127:1.**
- Jesus made reference to true worship done by the Spirit according to truth- **John 4:24.**

**Mark 7:8-10, “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.” And he said to them: “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!”**

**Matthew 15:3**

**Jesus replied, “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?”**

This clash between Jesus and the Pharisees addresses the premise that oral traditions carry the same divine authority as the written Word of God. The tradition of the elders was the unwritten corpus of commands and teachings of the honored rabbis of the past, a body of 613 rules designed to regulate every aspect of life. Unless the Lord is in what we do, it's all done in vain- **Psalms 127:1.**

## 1. Twisting the Word

### 2 Peter 3:16

**He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.**

- What is it about human nature in that it looks for loop holes and exceptions to the rules.
- Human reason is notorious for looking for every justification to not obey simple truth.
- For instance, one of the 10 commandments is to honor your father and mother.
  - o **Exodus 21:17; Deuteronomy 5:16.**
- They didn't have social security in Bible times, so the elderly depended on family for livelihood.

We need to realize that many times when the Bible talks about honor, it is talking about giving. So when the Lord says to honor our parents, it's not just with respect, but also financially.

### Mark 7:10-13

**“For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.’ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”**

“Corban” is the transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning a gift, as Mark explains for the benefit of his Gentile readers. The word was used to refer to something devoted to God by a vow which was unbreakable. If a son declared that the amount needed to support his parents was Corban, that vow was unalterable, even setting aside the Mosaic command- nullifying the Word of God is serious business.

### Mark 7:13 AMP

**Thus you are nullifying and making void and of no effect [the authority of] the Word of God through your tradition, which you [in turn] hand on. And many things of this kind you are doing.**

- Matthew's account provides some additional dialogue that is quite insightful.
- Sadly, there are multitudes of people following blind leaders, and both are lost- **Mt. 7:13-14.**
- Proverbs 16:25, *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”*

### Matthew 15:12-14,

**Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?” He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.”**

## 2. It's a Matter of the Heart

The religious leaders of Jesus' day had an over preoccupation with natural things, visible things.

### Mark 7:14-15

**Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a man can make him ‘unclean’ by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him ‘unclean.’”**

- The legalism of the Pharisees was an outward show of self- righteousness that was done in vain
- They were more concerned with being seen by men rather than doing good deeds in secret.
  - o **Matthew 6:4, 6, 18.**
- Their traditions were never from God in the first place; they were man-made rules- religion.
- This is a typical hallmark of man-made religions- outward pious acts of false humility.
  - o **Colossians 2:16-23.**

#### **Luke 20:45-47**

**While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, “Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely.”**

- The disciples still did not understand what Jesus was saying, so further explanation was required.
- Even though the Jews had their dietary laws handed down to them through Moses, Jesus was changing the requirement for the New Covenant.
- Under the Old Covenant, there was a variety of unclean animals prohibited from being eaten.
  - o **Leviticus chapter 11.**
- God later used the concepts of clean and unclean food to illustrate to the Early Church that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved- **Acts 10:1 – 11:18.**
- Since all food is considered clean, we are free to eat anything we want under the New Covenant.
- However, there is still wisdom, from a health standpoint to those dietary laws.
- Just because we are free to eat whatever we want, the law of love over rules our personal freedoms. In other words we can’t be a stumbling block- **Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 8.**

#### **Mark 7:17-23**

**After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”) He went on: “What comes out of a man is what makes him ‘unclean.’ For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’“**

So food does not defile a man, but what comes out of his mouth comes from the heart, and that has the potential to defile and destroy a man’s life- **James 3:2-12.**

- Our words locate us and set the landmarks of our life.
- They contain the power of life and death- **Proverbs 18:21.**
- So when a person gets born again, their communication will change as their mind gets renewed with the Word of God- **Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:22-23.**

#### **Matthew 12:33-37**

**“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”**

# Discourse #33: The Signs of the Times

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Reference: Matthew 16:1-4; Luke 12:54-56

Theme: It was Already Self-Evident that Jesus was the Messiah by His Ministry

Context: The Religious Leaders looked for Jesus to Test Him as the Messiah with a Demonstration



**He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?”**

**Luke 12:54-56**

To the south and southwest of Judea were situated Arabia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, all warm or hot regions, and consequently the air that came from those quarters was greatly heated.

- You see a cloud rise, and predict a shower; a south wind, and expect heat.
- These are considered regular events that are predictable in forecasting the weather.
- Jesus used these natural occurrences to compare what He was doing through signs and wonders.

For example, John the Baptist, when he was imprisoned by Herod, had doubts whether Jesus was the Messiah or not. So he sent some of his disciples to Jesus to confirm. Jesus’ response was simply, look at what I am doing as the Messiah through signs and wonders- **Luke 7:11-23, 31-35; Acts 2:22-39.**

- Jesus was doing things that no man had ever done before- **John 9:30-33; Acts 5:34-38.**
- Yet, the greatest signs that Jesus was the Messiah was how He fulfilled so many prophecies.
  - o **Mt. 1:20-25; 3:13-17; 4:12-17; 5:17-19; 8:16-17; 12:13-23; 21:1-11; John 12:37-43.**
- Signs alone are not enough, because Satan can conjure up lying wonders to deceive- **Ex. 8:18-19**
  - o **2 Corinthians 11:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12; Revelation 16:14.**
- Many people are like doubting Thomas, limited to the sense world- **John 20:24-31.**
- Consider Gideon, who relied on a fleece to discern God’s leading- **Judges 6:33-40.**
- Not to mention the typical crowd of scoffers and cynics- **Acts 13:38-41; 2 Peter 3:3-7; Jude 18.**

Based on the knowledge the Jews had of Daniel’s 70 weeks time table (490 years), they were right on schedule for the coming Messiah and the end of the world to come during Jesus’ time- **Daniel 9:20-27.**

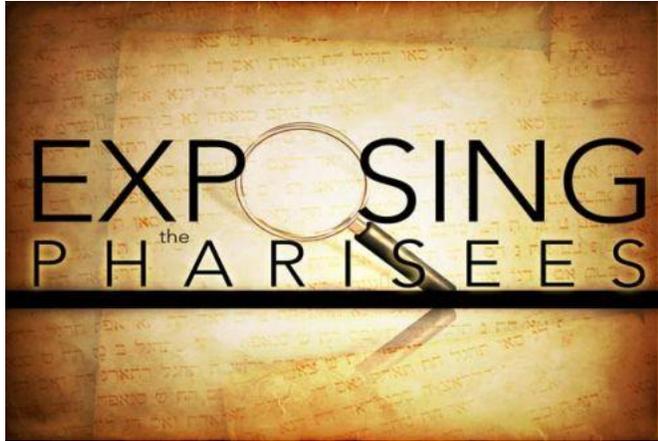
- Even after the resurrection the disciples thought the end had come- **Acts 1:6-8**
- So the religious leaders were without excuse, knowing through Scriptures the approximate time that the Messiah was to come; doing the signs and fulfilling the prophecies- **Luke 2:25-38.**
- Unfortunately, as predicted Jesus was rejected by the nation of Israel as a whole as it is today.
  - o **Matthew 23:39; 27:18; Luke 19:41-44; John 11:45-54; 15:25; Romans 11:13-15.**

# Discourse #34: The Yeast of the Pharisees

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Reference: Matthew 16:5-12; Mark 8:14-21; Luke 12:1-3

Theme: Sober Warning to be on Guard against the Error of False Teaching and Subtleties of Legalism  
Context: Jesus and the Disciples just had an Encounter with the Pharisees and Sadducees



When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.” Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? Or the seven loaves

for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Matthew 16:5-12

The general reference to “Yeast” in the Bible is in the context of sin, and how it contaminates and corrupts that which it comes in contact with. Kind of like a spreading disease that brings death.

- For instance in **Matthew 16:1-12** refers to yeast as metaphor for the traditions of men- **Gal. 5:9**.
- In **Luke 12:1** yeast is compared to the hypocrisy of the religious Pharisees.
- Yeast is also used as a symbol for sin that contaminates others- **1 Corinthians 5:1-8**.
- The relationships we form have a great affect upon us spiritually- **1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18**.
- The Old Covenant uses yeast as a physical symbol to admonish the people of God to avoid sin.
  - o **Genesis 19:3; Exodus 12:1-20**.
  
- As you probably know, from a natural use, yeast causes dough to rise and give it volume.
- It has been used in baking and fermenting alcoholic beverages for thousands of years.
- From a biological standpoint it is a microorganism, classified as fungi.
- It grows most optimally in warm and moist environments.
- As Jesus points out, a little yeast grows, spreads and works through a large amount of flour.
  - o **Luke 13:20-21**.

## 1. Little Faith

Jesus was using “Yeast” as a metaphor to warn the disciples of the hypocritical teachings of the Pharisees. But their minds were still in the natural, worrying about not bringing enough bread.

- Jesus reminds them of the 4,000 that were recently fed supernaturally- **Mt. 15:32-38; Mk. 8:1-9**.
- Then there were the 5,000 that were fed- **Mt. 14:15-21; Mk. 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; Jn. 6:5-13**.
- How often we limit God today with our little faith- **Mt. 17:20; Mark 9:23; Luke 1:37; 18:27**.

## Little Faith

Jesus sleeping in a boat during a storm: *“You of little faith, why are you so afraid.”*

**Matthew 8:24; Mark 4:39; Luke 8:24.**

Jesus walking on the water along with Peter: *“You of little faith, why did you doubt.”*

**Matthew 14:27; Mark 6:48; John 6:19.**

Jesus discourses on God’s provision for us: *“O you of little faith. So do not worry about tomorrow.”*

**Matthew 6:30; Luke 12:31.**

Jesus fed the 5000, disciples doubt: *“You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread?”*

**Matthew 16:8.**

Disciples wonder why they couldn’t drive out a demon?: *“Because you have so little faith.”*

**Matthew 17:19-20; Mark 19:14; Luke 9:41.**

## 2. Hypocritical Teachings

The main point that Jesus was making in **Matthew 16:12** and **Luke 12:1** was warning the disciples and really us today as well, against the subtle infiltration of hypocritical teachings of legalism.

- Just as yeast is subtle and pervasive, so also is the philosophical reasoning of religious ideology.
- This yeast worked its way into Judaism during Jesus’ time and was a threat to the Early Church.
- I believe Colossians 2:16-23, articulates it perfectly:
  - o “...delights in false humility.”
  - o “...his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.”
  - o “...with their self-imposed worship, their false humility”
- Jesus blasted the Pharisees, Sadducees and teachers of the law on three main accounts:
  - o Self-Exaltation: **Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18.**
  - o Self-Righteousness: **Luke 15:1-2; 18:9-14; John 9:1-41.**
  - o Self-Appointed: **Matthew 15:1-9; 23:1-39; Luke 11:42-54; 13:10-17.**

In the epistles (Romans – Revelation) of the Bible or letters to the churches, we are warned repeatedly to be on our guard against false teachers who would secretly slip in among us and inject their error.

- These folks may have started out right, but have wandered from the truth, got side tracked.
  - o **1 Timothy 1:3-7; 4:1-5; 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:14-18, 23-26; 4:3-4; Titus 3:9-11.**
- Others began with wrong motives with the intent to deceive from the beginning.
  - o **Acts 20:28-31; 2 Cor. 2:17; Php. 1:18; Titus 1:10-16; 2 Peter 2; Jude 3-19; Rev. 2:2.**

Gnosticism, comes from the Greek word “Knowledge” that taught that the world was created by an imperfect God. They trafficked in esoteric knowledge or mysticism- **1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7.**

Nicolaitans was an early Christian heretical sect made up of followers of Nicolas, who was possibly the deacon of **Acts 6:5**. The group is mentioned explicitly only in **Revelation 2:6,14-15**, where it is equated with a group holding “the doctrine of Balaam,” who taught Israel “to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.” So this error was more moral rather than doctrinal- linked to the Gnostics.

- There were also the Judaizers who required circumcision and following the law to be saved,
  - o **Acts 15:1-35; Galatians 2:3-6; 5:1-12; 6:12-15; 2 Peter 3:17.**

# Discourse #35: Cost of Following Jesus

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Reference: Matthew 16:24-28; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-27

Theme: Being a Disciple of Jesus Christ is a Total Commitment just as He is Totally Committed to Us  
Context: Jesus was Explaining to His Disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and be Crucified



**Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of**

**him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”**

**Mark 8:34-38**

## 1. Count the Cost

When it comes to sharing the Gospel to the lost, it’s important to also mention the “fine” print of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We do people a great disservice if we fail to mention the commitment.

- Eternal life is free to receive, but there is also our part: consecration, repentance and dedication.
- God is not willing that any should perish, but that all come to repentance- **1 Timothy 2:1-4.**

Many Christians interpret that as making as many converts of people as possible, rush them through the prayer of salvation, without discerning if they truly believe the Gospel message in their heart; are they really making Jesus Lord of their lives- turning from Satan, Sin and the World- **1 John 2:15-17.**

- Don’t get me wrong, we need to reach people with a sense of urgency with the Gospel.
  - o **1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 2 Corinthians 5:20-21.**
- But we should not approach evangelism like a salesman, trying to reach some quota for the day.
- Jesus told us to make disciples (Committed Followers) of all nations, not converts- **Mt. 28:18-20.**
- Repentance is a prerequisite to salvation; to turn from and forsake sin, and turn unto the Lord.
- Godly repentance is illustrated by an intense desire for God- **2 Corinthians 7:8-12.**
- True repentance is an enablement from God where He draws the sinner to Himself and the sinner in return says yes to God’s invitation- **John 6:65; Acts 13:48; 16:14; Romans 2:4.**
- Repentance is not just lip service, but must be backed up by forsaking sin- **Acts 26:20.**
- Matthew 3:8-9, *“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”*
- So repentance is part of counting the cost to get saved and continues as believers- **Hebrews 6:1.**
- When a large crowd was following Jesus, He made a startling statement.

## Luke 14:25-27

**Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.”**

When it comes to counting the cost, we are examining our willingness to go the distance with Jesus.

### **Luke 14:28-33**

- That does not mean go about living the Christian life in our own strength.
- Nor does it mean we have to wait until we have our lives together before we come to Him.
- But it does mean that we are willing to go all the way in making Jesus the Lord of our lives, and not just receiving Him as our Savior from hell.

## 2. Deny Himself and Take up His Cross

Religious folks take “Denying” oneself to extremes, meaning self-abasement and masochistic abuse.

- I believe in fasting as a means to bringing the body under subjection.
- We are certainly to deny the sinful nature in our physical body from dominating our lives.
  - o **Romans 6:11-14; 8:13; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 5:24; 1 Peter 2:11.**
- Living for God is done by His grace & through our faith- **Dt. 30:11-14; Ro. 10:5-11; Eph. 2:8-9**

**Colossians 2:23, “Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.”**

- I believe what Jesus is talking about here is priorities, putting the Lord first in everything.
- A willingness to lose all for the sake of Jesus and the Gospel:
  - o Whether it’s family, friends or anybody else- **Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 14:25-27.**
  - o Money, riches and position- **Matthew 19:16-30; Luke 12:32-34; John 12:42-43.**
- It costs us everything to follow Jesus, but we also gain everything as well- nothing compares.
  - o **Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23; 1 Peter 1:18; 2 Peter 2:20-22.**
- Just as Jesus gave His all for us as an example for us to follow- **John 12:23-26.**
- If we are not willing to give all to Jesus, and put Him first place we are not worthy of Him.
  - o **Luke 9:59-62.**
- If we are ashamed of Jesus and His Words, then we are not worthy of Him.
  - o **Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 12:8-9; Ro. 1:16; 2 Tim. 2:11-13.**

**Matthew 6:33-34, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”**

What does it mean to take up our cross and follow Jesus? I can say with certainty that it does not mean we are to die for people’s sins. It does mean we share in the same ministry of reconciliation to the world.  
**2 Corinthians 5:18-6:2; Philippians 1:3-6.**

- Having the same kind of love and passion for the lost, and actively leading them to Jesus.
- We are also to crucify the sinful appetites of our flesh to the cross of Christ- sanctification.
  - o **Galatians 2:20; 5:24; Hebrews 5:7-9; 1 Peter 4:1-2.**
- Becoming a servant to others as Jesus set the example for us to follow in His footsteps.
  - o **Matthew 20:28; John 13:12-17; 1 John 2:6.**

### **Philippians 2:17**

**But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you.**

# Discourse #36: The Temple Tax

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Reference: Matthew 17:24-27

Theme: God is our Source and the Lord is not Limited to Meet all of our Needs – Easy for Him  
Context: Shortly after arriving at Capernaum, Peter is asked about Jesus Paying the Temple Tax



After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?” “Yes, he does,” he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes — from their own sons or from others?” “From others,” Peter answered. “Then the sons are exempt,” Jesus said to him. “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.”

**Matthew 17:24-27**

The drachma was a Grecian coin, and a silver tetradrachma or four-drachma coin was equivalent to 1 Jewish Shekel. It was a tax not paid to the Roman government, but a tribute for temple service.

It was originally instituted under the Mosaic law (**Exodus 30:11-16**) as ½ a shekel per person, and was reinstated after the Exile as a one-third shekel- **Nehemiah 10:32**. Apparently in Jesus’ time the Jews followed Nehemiah’s annual plan, but charged at Moses’ rate.

The tax was devoted to the purchase of animals for the daily sacrifice, wood, flour, salt, incense, etc., for the use of the temple.

Since this tribute was not a civil or government tax, but a religious one, Jesus being the Son of God would have been exempt from having to pay it; however, lest they be offended, Jesus paid it anyway.

- Jesus sets the example of relating to and working with people for their good- **1 Cor. 9:1-23**.
- We are however obligated by Scripture to pay taxes and respect those in authority.
  - o **Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17**.
- We are also to give honor and support financially those in full-time ministry.
  - o **1 Corinthians 9:14; Philippians 4:14-19; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17**.

## 1. The Lord’s Supernatural Provision

- In **Genesis 22:7-8** we see one of God’s redemptive names given- Jehovah Jireh.
- Meaning, the Lord will see to it or the Lord will provide- speaking of God as our source.
- So He sees the needs that we have ahead of time and sees to it that they are met when the actual need arises. An amazing miracle for Peter to catch a fish with a four-drachma coin in its mouth.
- All things are possible for Him and us who believe- **Genesis 18:14; Jer. 32:17, 27; Mark 9:23**.

OT:3070 hr\$y! ho\*hy= Jehovah Yir’eh (yeh-ho-vaw’ yir-eh’); from OT:3068 and OT:7200; Jehovah will see (to it); Jehovah-Jireh, a symbolical name for Mount Moriah: KJV – Jehovah Jireh.

# Discourse #37: The Greatest in the Kingdom

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Reference: Matthew 18:1-4; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-27

Theme: If you want to be Considered Greatest in the Kingdom of God – Be Servant of All  
Context: As the Disciples were Partaking of the Last Supper with Jesus a Dispute Broke Out



**Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.**

**Luke 22:24-27**

It's so contrary to human nature to stoop down and server others, put them first and honor them above ourselves. I suppose the instinctive desire of self-preservation breeds self-importance at others expense.

- The search for significance ends with finding Jesus; He is our all in all- **Acts 17:28.**
- Competition, comparison and rivalries have their root in insecurity and selfishness.
  - o **1 Cor. 1:10-16; 3:1-8; 2 Cor. 10:12, 18; Php. 2:1-4, 19-21; James 3:13-18.**
- As we mature in the Word of God and walk in love more, we start to look like Jesus- **1 Jn. 2:6.**
- Walking in love is the key to spiritual maturity; “For God so loved the World, He gave...”
  - o **John 3:16; 2 Cor. 12:14-15; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 5:1-2, 25; Col. 3:12-16.**
- Becoming like little children is two-fold:
  - o Born Again- the love of God is shed abroad in our heart- **Mt. 18:3; John 5:42; Rom. 5:5**
  - o Humble- being child-like resembles a meek and humble heart- **Mt. 18:4; 1 Pet. 5:1-7.**
- Jesus Himself is our chief example of what it means to be a servant- laid His life down for us.
  - o **Matthew 20:25-28; Mark 10:42-45; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:15.**

**Philippians 2:6-8, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!”**

This was really an important lesson for the Lord's disciples to know and for us today as well. Kingdom economics are quite simple, and Jesus could not make it any plainer for us to understand. In the world, it's the opposite, those who are severed by others are considered great, but anyone can be served!

**Luke 9:48, “For he who is least among you all — he is the greatest.”**

**Mark 9:35, “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.’”**

As a result, we should all be running for the towel, to lovingly server, honor and prefer one another without favoritism or partiality- **2 Corinthians 5:14-16; James 2:1-13.**

- Love for God and for one another is simply living out and obeying God's Word.
  - o **1 John 4:10-11; 5:2-3; 2 John 4-6.**
- So I have enclosed a bunch of "One Another" Scriptures for us to meditate and act on.

**John 13:34-35**

**"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."**

**Romans 12:10**, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves."

**Romans 12:16**, "Live in harmony with one another."

**Romans 13:8**, "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another..."

**Romans 15:7**, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

**1 Corinthians 1:10**, "...all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you."

**Galatians 5:13**, "...rather, serve one another in love."

**Ephesians 4:2**, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

**Ephesians 4:32**, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other..."

**Ephesians 5:19**, "Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs."

**Ephesians 5:21**, "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

**Col. 3:13-14**, "Bear with each other & forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another."

**1 Th. 5:11**, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

**Hebrews 3:13**, "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today..."

**Hebrews 10:24**, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

**Hebrews 10:25**, "Let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

**James 4:11**, "Brothers, do not slander one another."

**1 Pet. 1:22**, "...so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart."

**1 Pet. 3:8**, "live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, compassionate/humble."

**1 Peter 4:9**, "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling"

**1 Peter 5:5**, "All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another."

**1 John 3:11-12**, "This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another."

# Discourse #38: Whoever is not Against Us is for Us

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Reference: Mark 9:38-41; Luke 9:49-50

Theme: Either we are for Jesus or Against Him

Context: Jesus was Instructing His Disciples at a House in Capernaum



**“Teacher,” said John, “we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.**

**Mark 9:38-41**

Even though it is not explicitly stated who this man was that was driving out demons in Jesus’ Name, I believe in some loose way he was affiliated with Jesus like one of the 72 that were sent out- **Luke 10:1.**

- The reason I say this, is because when other non-followers of Jesus tried to exorcise demons they failed miserably- **Acts 19:13-20.**
- Or did so deceptively apart from God’s power, by demonically giving false appearances that a person is healed or delivered by lifting the oppression temporarily- **Matthew 7:21-23.**

## **Luke 10:17**

**The seventy-two returned with joy and said, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.”**

John , one of the 12 original apostles was a brother of James, whom Jesus called the sons of Boanerges, which means “Sons of Thunder” (**Mark 3:17**)- they were bold, austere and critical at times.

- I believe John was being overzealous to protect the “Franchise” that Jesus had started.
- When Jesus and His disciples entered a Samaritan village for provisions, but they would not help, because they were headed for Jerusalem- James and John wanted to destroy them.

## **Luke 9:54-56 NKJV**

**And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.**

The modern day application is in Christianity today, there are many denominations and religious affiliations that try to claim a corner of the market with God so-to-speak. There is only one Church of the Jesus Christ, only one Body of Christ- **Ephesians 4:5.** We are either for Jesus or against Him.

- As long as a person is born again through faith in Jesus, we are all part of the same team.
- Jesus is the Lord of the harvest, and He uses all His laborers from Christian groups- **Luke 10:2.**
- It’s wrong to say, well unless you are a member of our denomination you can’t...

# Discourse #39: Causing to Sin

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Reference: Matthew 18:5-9; Mark 9:42-50

Theme: The Awful Seriousness of Sin and a Warning not to be a Stumbling Block to Anyone

Context: Jesus had a Little Child stand among them; Concerning who is the Greatest in the Kingdom



**“And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your**

**eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”** **Matthew 18:5-9**

In Scripture we see a condemnation being made for those who cause others to sin and fall away from the Lord- especially children. It's a real serious matter to cause other people to sin- **Romans 6:23**.

- For now, sin is in the world, but woe to those who traffic in it and place others in bondage.
  - o Drugs, Alcohol, Pornography, Wars, Corruption, Slavery and Exploitation of all kinds.
- Also false teachers who come and lead people from Christ and distort the Scriptures.
  - o **Acts 20:29-31; Gal. 1:6-9; 1Tim, 6:3-5; 2Tim. 2:17-18; 2Pet. 2:17-19; 3:16; Jude 3-19**
- When people take advantage God's people, the Lord takes it very personally- **Matthew 25:40!**
  - o **Proverbs 14:31; 17:5; 19:17; Luke 11:52; 20:45-47; Acts 12:23; 26:14.**
- Those who have greater understanding of the truth, have greater responsibility- **Luke 12:47-48.**
- That's why ministers of the Word will be held more accountable- **James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:1-6.**

**1 Timothy 4:16, “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”**

The apostle Paul is a great example of a man who went out of his way as to not be a stumbling block to other people for the sake of the Gospel.

- Paul made personal sacrifices of legitimate things so as not to hinder the Gospel- **1 Cor. 9:3-23.**
- His own ministry was of the utmost integrity- **2 Corinthians 2:17; 6:3; 7:2; 12:14-18.**
- Clear instructions were given to the church to not be a stumbling block to saints or sinners.
  - o **Romans 14:20-21; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:27-33.**
- It's very easy to be a stumbling block, probably the easiest way is with our words- **James 3:2.**
- When we cease to walk in love and the truth of God's Word we are destined to fall.
  - o **John 11:9-10; 1 John 2:10-11.**
- Even Peter was inadvertently used by Satan to be a stumbling block to Jesus- **Matthew 16:22-23.**

Jesus was not literal about cutting off our body parts, but was being clear about the awfulness of sin and the consequences if we don't put to death the misdeeds of the body- **Ro. 8:13; Gal. 5:24; Col. 3:5.**

# Discourse #40: On the Number of Saved

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Reference: Luke 13:23-30

Theme: Relatively Speaking, Only a Few People will be Saved; so don't Dilly Dally Around

Context: Jesus was Making His way through the Towns and Villages on His way to Jerusalem

Someone asked him, "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" He said to them, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.'



"But he will answer, 'I don't know you or where you come from.' "Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' "But he will reply, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!' "There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

**Luke 13:23-30**

"Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" Even though Jesus does not answer the question directly, unfortunately, in comparison to the billions of people who have been on the earth over the last 6,000 years, not as many as we would like.

- Consider Noah's flood, only eight people survived and the rest perished in the flood waters.
  - o **Luke 17:26-27; 1 Peter 3:20.**
- Noah was a preacher of righteousness, he had a Gospel that no one listened to except his family.
  - o **Hebrews 11:7; 2 Peter 2:5.**
- The time period from Adam to Noah was approximately 1,656 years and around 7 billion people.
  - o During pre-flood conditions people lived for hundreds of years- **Genesis chapter 5.**
- Interesting that there are approximately 7 billion people alive on the earth today.
- Approximately 33% of the earth's population claim to be Christians.
- However of that 33% probably 10 - 15% are actually born again in the world today- 1 Billion.
- Our goal of course through the Great Commission is to increase that number- **Mt. 28:18-20.**
- The Lord purchased eternal life for every human being, He wants as many saved as possible.
  - o **2 Corinthians 6:1-2; 2 Peter 3:9; Jude 23.**

## **1 Timothy 2:3-4**

**This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.**

- According to **Revelation 12:4**, 2/3 of the angels remained true to God.
- Sadly, a much smaller percentage of humans will be saved.
- Even after the Millennium, so many still rebelled against the Lord- **Revelation 20:7-10.**
- Human beings have a free will to choose life or death- **Deuteronomy 30:19.**

## 1. Only One Way – Jesus!

One thing is certain, it is not the Lord who is keeping people from getting saved or making it difficult for them to believe, that would be Satan- **Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 20:3.**

**2 Corinthians 4:3-4, “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”**

Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, the devil has been deceiving and placing doubt in people’s minds- **Genesis 3:1-13; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 2:1-2; 1 Tim. 2:14; 1 John 5:19.**

### **John 8:44**

**You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.**

- There are so many religions in the world to deceive and keep people from the truth.
- False religions are the result of demonic teaching- **1 Cor. 10:18-22; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Rev. 9:20-21.**
- Psalms 96:5, *“For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens.”*

### **Acts 17:29-30**

**“Therefore since we are God’s offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone — an image made by man’s design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”**

- Many claim that Biblical Christianity is not tolerant of other religions and is very exclusive.
- Jesus framed it very simply, He is the only way to be saved from sin and hell- **John 14:6.**
- The fact is, it’s not easy for people to turn from sin, overcome Satan’s lies & put faith in Jesus.
  - o **Matthew 19:23-26; 1 Peter 4:17-18; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:1-5.**

**Acts 4:12, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”**

- It’s so tragic that so many sincerely want to know God but are deceived- **Proverbs 14:12.**
- There are multitudes of people who think they are going to heaven, but aren’t- **Mt. 7:21-23.**
- Some think that because of their ancestry, religious affiliation or family heritage they are okay.
- Like the Jews, salvation is not based on your ancestry tree or religious pedigree.
  - o **Luke 3:7-9; Romans 2:25-29; 9:6-8; Rev. 2:9; 3:9.**
- So many in North America claim to be a Christian without a new birth experience.
- Jesus stated it plainly, we must be born again to be saved- **Mt. 18:3; John 3:3-8; 2 Cor. 5:17.**
- Going to McDonalds does not make a person a hamburger any more than going to church makes them a Christian. Even the demons believe in God- **James 3:19.**

So going back to the original question, “Are only a few people to be saved?” The answer is only a minority will choose life and be saved relative to the whole human race- **Luke 13:1-5.**

**Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”**

# Discourse #41: Counting the Cost

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Reference: Luke 14:25-33

Theme: Before Committing to be a Disciple of Jesus, One must Count the Cost

Context: Large Crowds were Following Jesus



**Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This**

**fellow began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.”**

**Luke 14:25-33**

Jesus is not advocating that we “hate” our family in a literal sense, because the Bible tells us not to hate (maliciously) in other passages of Scriptures- **Ephesians 6:1-3; 1 John 2:9-11; 3:15; 4:20.**

- In the Greek the word translated “hate” could also be rendered, “to love less”- **Matthew 10:37.**
- So I believe Jesus is saying that unless we love Him more than any person on this earth we can’t be His disciple. Which is a reasonable request since He is our Creator and Savior.
- This includes our very life as well, belongs to the Lord for Him to use as He chooses.

The cross we carry for Jesus, is sharing in his sufferings (**Philippians 3:10**), not at all meaning what He suffered vicariously for humanity as our substitute for sin.

- It does mean suffering disgrace, persecution, humiliation and shame in the form of persecution.
  - o **John 15:18; Acts 5:41; 2 Cor. 11:22-33; Col. 1:24; Hebrews 13:13; 1 Peter 2:21-23.**
- It also means that we have an obligation to crucify the flesh, which is not a pleasant task.
  - o **Romans 8:13; Galatians 5:24; 1 Peter 4:1-2.**
- Finally, it means having a heart of passion and compassion for fulfilling the Great Commission.
  - o **Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; 1 Th. 2:1-12, 17; 2 Th. 3:6-9.**

Jesus uses a couple of masterful illustrations of “Counting the Cost” by referencing a economic and political example. In both cases, the wisdom of evaluating before committing is emphasized.

- In regards to receiving eternal life and being a disciple of Jesus, one must count the cost.
- Jesus was speaking to large crowds that were following Him mostly for selfish reasons.
- So in order to weed out the riff-raff and sign seekers talked about commitment- **John 6:5-15.**
- He was being real with them, and testing their true intentions- there is a cost to follow Jesus.
  - o **Matthew 22:14; Luke 18:18-30; John 6:43-70.**

# Discourse #42: The Rich Man and Lazarus

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Reference: Luke 16:19-31

Theme: Hell is a Real Place with Real People there in Torment- Even Now at this very Moment

Context: Tax Collectors, Sinners and the Pharisees were all gathered around Him



“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. “The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool

my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ “But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ “He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ “Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ ““No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’“

**Luke 16:19-31**

First of all, this is not a parable but an actual account that Jesus narrated in order for us to gain insight into the reality of hell and the torment that is there.

- Parables typically begin with a literary simile; “like” or “as” to begin the comparison.
  - o **Matthew 7:24; 13:44; Mark 4:30; Luke 13:21.**
- When these figures of speech are used in Jesus’ parables, various metaphors and allegories are used to illustrate spiritual or abstract principles by using concrete natural examples.
- However in this account, Jesus starts out by saying, “There was...” which in the Greek, the mood is *indicative* which is used as a declarative fact or as something certain.
- Therefore, this is not an allegory or hyperbole that can be spiritualized- we take it as literal facts!

Secondly, we cannot assume all rich people go to hell because they are rich, or that all poor people go to heaven by virtue of their poverty. What sends a person to hell is if they die in their sins- **John 8:24.**

- However, there is a propensity for rich people to be arrogant & spurn God on account of money.
  - o **Proverbs 18:23; 30:9; 1 Timothy 6:9, 17-19; James 1:9-11; 2:1-7; 5:1-6.**
- No doubt, there are plenty of wicked, greedy and despicable poor people going to hell.

## 1. The Purpose for Hell

Some have asked, why is there is hell to begin with, what purpose is there to having a place of torment?

- Like any such question, we must look to the Bible for revelation that God has given us.
- Hell was not created for man explicitly, but rather for the devil and his angels- **Matthew 25:41**.
- Man goes to hell by choice, since salvation has been afforded for all of mankind
- Many false cults and others claim there is no hell at all. They use a human argument, “How could a loving God send His beloved creation to an eternity of pain and suffering.”
- So they concocted beliefs of no hell and no eternal punishment that simply contradicts the Bible.
  - o **Matthew 5:22, 29; 23:33; Luke 12:5; James 3:6; Revelation 1:17-18.**
- The NIV translation uses the word ‘grave’ for many Old Testament verses that should be hell.
  - o **Psalms 139:8; Proverbs 7:27; 9:18; 15:24; 23:14; 27:20; Ezekiel 31:14; 32:21.**

**Psalms 9:17 NKJV “The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God.”**

Thankfully our God is holy (**1 Peter 1:15-16**) who is just and must rid the universe of sin and death so that it does not consume all of God’s creation like a cancer; that is love, to judge sin- **Isaiah 5:16**.

- However, unlike so many false religions, God does not sweep man’s sins under a spiritual rug.
  - o So in their error, somehow good works can outweigh one’s bad works- this is ludicrous.
  - o If a murderer decides to start being a good person, he still had committed murder- crime!
  - o When you commit the crime, all that is left is to do the time- **1 Tim. 1:8-11; Jm. 2:10-11.**
- When a man or woman commits sin, it’s a spiritual crime and is punishable by death- **Ro. 6:23**.
- Since all have sinned (**Romans 3:23**) all are justly condemned to eternal fire to pay for those sins
- But just as God is Holy, He is also merciful and sent Jesus to die for our sins in our place.
- In this way, sin is justly punished and done away with (**Hebrews 7:27; 9:26; 10:18**), and eternal life is offered as a free gift for all who will receive it by faith in Jesus Christ- a free pardon!
- For those who accept this gift, their name is written in the Lamb’s Book of Life.
  - o **Exodus 32:32-33; Psalms 69:28; Philipians 4:3; Revelation 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 21:27.**

### **1 Peter 3:18**

**For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.**

- That’s why I say that no human being needs to go to hell, they go there by choice. By either rejecting or ignoring this great salvation- **John 3:36; Acts 17:30; Hebrews 2:1-4**.
- For those who never heard the gospel of the Old or New Covenants (**Hebrews 4:1-2**), at a minimum, the Lord uses creation and man’s conscience to judge him- **Ro. 1:18-32; 2:5-16**.
- Therefore, no human being from any age has an excuse before God- **Romans 3:9-19**.
- Since humans, demons, and angels are spirit beings that live forever, there must be a place that is quarantined from everything else in order to contain those who have rebelled against God.
- To keep them from infecting the rest of God’s Kingdom and all of creation.

Hell is not the eternal abode for all wicked spirits, it acts as a temporary containment or incarceration; like a jail in the natural holds people for future judgment at the court house.

- The doctrine of “Eternal Judgment” in **Heb. 6:2** speaks of the fate of lost sinners.
- They will all have to stand before their creator at the Great White Throne judgment. Since they rejected God’s salvation plan, they are judged by their own works; falling short- **Rev. 20:11-15**.
- They will realize that God is just in sentencing them to the Lake of Fire for all eternity.

The Lake of Fire is the eternal abode for all whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. Also known as the Second Death, death (meaning separation) for all eternity- **Revelation 21:8**.

### **Who is Cast in the Lake of Fire:**

- Those who take the mark of the Beast during the Tribulation period- **Revelation 14:10**.
- The Anti-Christ and False Prophet are the first ones- **Revelation 19:20**.
- As a matter of fact, death and hell will be cast into the Lake of Fire- **Revelation 20:14**.
- Satan himself and all demons and fallen angels will be cast in the Lake of Fire- **Rev. 20:10**.

Right now when people go to heaven or hell, they are disembodied spirits, in other words their soul and spirit is separated from their physical body- **James 2:26**.

- There are a few exceptions to this rule, Enoch was taken to heaven- **Genesis 5:24; Heb. 11:5**.
- Next there was Elijah who was translated to heaven in a chariot of fire- **2 Kings 2:9-12**.
- Finally, Jesus experienced a full bodily resurrection from the dead- **Luke 24:39; Acts 1:1-11**.
- There will be a bodily resurrection of all the righteous and wicked as they once were on earth.
  - o **John 5:29; Acts 24:15-16; Philippians 3:20; Revelation 20:4-5**.
- Life on earth is just a probationary period like Adam and Eve to choose to obey or disobey.
- God has given us a free will to choose life or death- **Deuteronomy 30:19**.

### **1 Corinthians 15:24-26**

**Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.**

## **2. Hell, An Actual Place**

### **Deuteronomy 32:22 NKJV**

**For a fire is kindled in My anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.**

**Isaiah 14:15 AMP, “ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol (Hades), to the innermost recesses of the pit (the region of the dead).”**

As I already mentioned, hell is a temporary jail and the Lake of Fire is the eternal prison. What is the difference between the two places- not much.

### **2 Peter 2:9**

**“...if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.”**

In the natural when a person is beyond bars in the county jail, it the same as being behind bars in the state prison. In either location, an inmate is incarcerated and in a place of punishment.

- There are three compartments in the center of the earth.
  - o Hell or Hades (Greek) or Sheol (Hebrews)- jail for wicked human spirits.
  - o Abraham's bosom- next to hell, where Old Testament saints waited for Jesus to come.
- The Abyss or bottomless pit, is a prison for fallen angels, kept separate.
  - o **Luke 8:31; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6; Revelation 9:1, 11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3**.

- So where is hell and Abraham's bosom located?
- It is an actual geographical location- in the center of the earth.
- Do you know why it is really hot in the earth's core, because that is where hell is located.
- Jesus eluded to this place where He immediately went to after His death on the cross.

**Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."**

- So where is the heart of the earth- that would be in its center.

**Deuteronomy 32:22 NKJV, "For a fire is kindled in My anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell; It shall consume the earth with her increase, And set on fire the foundations of the mountains."**

### **Hebrew word for all Old Testament references to hell**

she'owl (sheh-ole'); or sheol (sheh-ole'); from OT:7592; Hades or the world of the dead (as if a subterranean retreat), including its accessories and inmates: KJV - grave, hell, pit.

### **Matthew 23:33**

geena (gheh'-en-nah); of Hebrew origin [OT:1516 and OT:2011]; valley of (the son of) Hinnom; gehenna (or Ge-Hinnom), a valley of Jerusalem, used (figuratively) as a name for the place (or state) of everlasting punishment: KJV - hell.

### **Acts 2:27**

hades (hah'-dace); from NT:1 (as negative particle) and NT:1492; properly, unseen, i.e. "Hades" or the place (state) of departed souls: KJV - grave, hell.

### **1 Peter 2:4**

tartaroo (tar-tar-o'-o); from Tartaros (the deepest abyss of Hades); to incarcerate in eternal torment: KJV - cast down to hell.

Most cultures and false religions have their own made up versions of hell, but they do all have one thing in common, on the most part they all agree that there is an awful place for the damned.

Atheists and secular humanists claim hell is a mythical place that has been used by religion to manipulate people through scare tactics- like the book "Dante's Inferno". Hell is a real place, especially for those who went there and were fortunate enough to be resurrected from the dead to tell about it.

- We would be remiss to not warn people of this place as Jesus had during His earthly ministry.
- However, the majority of our message is about God's mercy and goodness- **Romans 2:4.**
- The Gospel message centers around His death, burial and resurrection- **1 Cor. 15:1-8.**

After Jesus had died on the cross He went to preach the gospel to the Old Testament saints who were waiting for Jesus to come and purchase eternal redemption for them- **1 Peter 3:18-20.**

Sin under the Old Covenant was only covered, they were not born again nor permitted in heaven when they died, they were kept in a prison, but not tormented in Abraham's bosom- **Romans 3:25-26.**

- Having believed upon Jesus, they joined Him in His resurrection- **Romans 10:6-7; Eph. 4:8-10.**
- Now when saints pass away, they go straight to heaven- **2Cor. 5:6-9; Php.1:21-26; 1Th.4:13-18**
- So Abraham's bosom is now empty, but hell continues to fill- **Proverbs 27:20; Isaiah 5:14.**

**Isaiah 14:9-11 NKJV, “Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you, All the chief ones of the earth; It has raised up from their thrones All the kings of the nations. They all shall speak and say to you: ‘Have you also become as weak as we? Have you become like us? Your pomp is brought down to Sheol, And the sound of your stringed instruments; The maggot is spread under you, And worms cover you.’”**

- We are a tri-cotomy: I am a spirit, I have a soul and I live in a body- **1 Thessalonians 5:23.**
- Our fallen physical body that we live in dulls our perception and sense of reality.
- This limitation is removed when we leave our physical body.
- For those in hell, their sense of pain and torment, becomes intensely acute.

I remember back in the 1980’s when long hair bands would sing about reigning in hell and having a great big party there; those in hell today are not having such a good ole time.

- Jesus described it as a place with two possible responses: weeping and gnashing of teeth.
  - o **Matthew 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28.**
- Weeping for those who are full of regret and sorry for having missed God’s salvation.
- Gnashing of teeth for the hateful, God cursing and venomous types- **Rev. 9:20-21; 16:9, 11, 21.**
- There are gates to the entrance of hell, inferring that people walk through them- **Matthew 16:18.**

### **Job 17:16 NKJV**

**Will they go down to the gates of Sheol? Shall we have rest together in the dust?**

### 3. A Conversation in Hell

Abraham’s Bosom (KJV), also called paradise in the Bible (**Luke 23:43**), but not to be confused with “paradise” when referring to the third heaven or the throne of God- **2 Corinthians 12:4; Rev. 2:7.**

- It was a compartment adjacent to hell, separated by a large chasm- **Luke 16:26.**
- Notice the rich man, even though his physical body was in the ground, he still continued to exist.

### **Luke 16**

- Vs 23- *“In hell, where he was in torment...”*
  - o The rich man experienced the sensation of torment without five senses of the body.
- Vs 23- *“He looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side.”*
  - o He could still recognize Lazarus without his physical body, and knew who Abraham was.
- Vs 24- *“So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me...”*
  - o The rich man was able to speak and communicate with words that could be heard.
- Vs 24-25 *“Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water cool my tongue, in agony in this fire”*
  - o Abraham’s Bosom there was water/comfort, but in hell, only fire/torment- **James 3:5-6.**
- Vs 26- *“And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed...”*
  - o By the Lord’s decree, no one could cross from one side to the other.
- Vs 27-28- *“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house...”*
  - o The rich man still had memories of his family and concern for his five brothers.
- Vs 29- *“Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’”*
  - o Every human being has some revelation from God, to reach out to him- **Acts 17:22-31.**
- Vs 30- *“No, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.”*
  - o Consider all the signs and wonders Jesus did yet most of the Jews did not repent.

Notice what Abraham says in verse 31, *“He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”*

# Discourse #43: A Brother who Sins Against You

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Reference: Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:1-10

Theme: Reconciliation amongst the Brethren and Church Discipline

Context: The Disciples were asking Jesus who the Greatest in the Kingdom was



**“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”**

**Matthew 18:15-17**

Reconciliation is really important to God, for starters, consider the greatest act of reconciliation of all time, God reconciling the world to Himself through Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

**Romans 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 1:19-22.**

- Jesus also mentioned the importance of being reconciled in the parable of **Matthew 5:23-26.**
- We are admonished to live in harmony with one another- **Romans 12:16; 1 Peter 3:8-12.**
- To keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace- **Ephesians 4:1-6.**
- Biblical reconciliation is best expressed when we are to walk in love towards each other.
  - o **John 13:34-35; 15:12-13; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:14; 2John 6**

Christians who are always fussing and fighting with each other is showing their spiritual age- immature.

**1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 12:19-21; Galatians 5:15; James 4:1-3.**

- Notice what Jesus says to do first when a brother or sister in Christ sins against you.
- Go tell everyone and their dog how sister Sally offended you- No!
- Go to them in private and point out the offense and seek reconciliation without telling anyone!
- If the other person will not listen, then take a couple of others who had witnessed the wrong or who are spiritual mature and can act as mediators in the matter.
- If there is still no response to make things right, then it needs to be escalated to the church leadership. Moses was very involved in judging cases amongst the Israelites- **Exodus 18.**
- If the believer in the wrong still will not repent, then he/she is to be removed from fellowship.

We need to realize that Church discipline must encompass the Biblical directive to correctly deal with infractions amongst believers that has the potential of affecting the whole congregation.

The local pastor is given the charge to be overseers of the flock of God that has been given under their charge by the Holy Spirit to feed and take care of the brethren- **1 Peter 5:1-4.**

**John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Th. 5:12-15; 1 Timothy 3:5; 4:16; Hebrews 13:17.**

- That also includes the task of admonishing, disciplining and reproofing those who need it.
  - o **1 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 2 Timothy 2:22-26; 3:16; 4:1-5; Titus 1:10-14; 2:15.**
- A Shepherd has to look after individuals as well as the well-being of the whole group.
- One believer gone wild can affect, influence and cause other believers to fall away from Jesus.
  - o **2 Cor. 11:1-3; Galatians 2:11-16; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; Hebrews 5:2; 1 John 2:26.**
- The Shepherd does not have the rod and staff for nothing- **Psalms 23:4; Pr. 29:15; Micah 7:14.**

### **1 Peter 2:25**

**For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

For instance in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 we see a brother committing sexual immorality with his stepmother. Since the offender was unrepentant about the matter, Paul instructed that he be removed from fellowship from other believers- so they are not affected by the unrepentant sin.

- What is the purpose of removing a believer from a local church- we see two reasons in Scripture.
  - o One: keep the evil behavior from influencing other Christians- **1 Corinthians 5:6-11.**
  - o Two: feel ashamed and repent of destructive behavior- **2 Cor. 2:5-11; 2 Th. 3:6-15.**
- Consider Ananias and Sapphira who had died for lying to the Holy Spirit- **Acts 5:1-10.**
  - o A healthy reverential fear seized the people, the church kept growing- **Acts 5:11-16.**
- In another case, there were a couple believers who were blaspheming- **1 Timothy 1:19-20.**

Another great example is in **1 Corinthians 11:17-34**, surrounding the Lord's Supper, which according to custom included a meal, culminating into taking communion at the end.

- Wealthy believers were feasting and getting drunk and not sharing with other believers who were poor. This was not walking in love and Paul rebuked them for it.
- He took it a step further and warned them that not walking in love can lead to premature death.

### **1 Corinthians 11:30-32**

**That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.**

So getting back to the incident in 1 Corinthians chapter five. This example shows one of the few instances when it's okay to judge other believers.

### **1 Corinthians 5:12-13**

**What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."**

In the next chapter of 1 Corinthians chapter six, we are admonished to judge civil cases between believers, and not take such cases before the world for judgment- **1 Corinthians 6:1-11.**

- Makes sense to me, why drag our issues before the world which discredits the Gospel.
- We are suppose to show that we are His disciples because of the love we have- **John 13:34-35.**

# Discourse #44: The Little Children and Jesus

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Reference: Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17

Theme: Do not look down on Anyone for any Reason, they are all Spirit Beings – Priceless!

Context: Jesus had crossed the Jordan into Judea and Crowds came to Him, so He Taught them



**People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.**

**Mark 10:13-16**

In the culture that Jesus was ministering to 2,000 years ago, little children were not highly esteemed by the adult society. So when people brought them to be blessed by Jesus, the disciples rebuked them.

- There are some specific accounts where Jesus healed children or young people.
  - o Jairus’s daughter had died- **Luke 8:41-42, 49-56.**
  - o Young man had died- **Luke 7:11-17.**
  - o A boy demon possessed- **Mark 9:17-27.**
- So obviously the Lord regarded young people as just as valuable as adults- all spirit beings!

I’d like to briefly point out the importance of the laying on of hands for the purpose of impartation of the anointing to bless people. That is why the parents of these children brought them to Jesus.

## **Romans 1:11-12**

**I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.**

- There is a doctrine of laying on of hands that is foundational to our faith- **Hebrews 6:2.**
- Impartation to be filled with the Holy Spirit- **Acts 8:14-24; 9:17; 19:1-7.**
- Healing- **Mt. 14:36; Mk. 1:31; 3:7-12; 8:23-25; 16:18; Luke 4:40; 13:10-17; Acts 19:11; 28:8**
- Separation for Ministry- **Acts 13:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6.**

Jesus made a profound statement about the temperament and disposition of little children that made them special in the Kingdom of God; humility and meekness- prerequisites for receiving salvation.

- The new birth is equated to little children, we are born into the Kingdom of God- **John 3:3-8.**
- Little children are also alive unto God until the age of accountability- **Mt. 18:10; Ro. 7:9.**

# Discourse #45: The Rich Young Man

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Reference: Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-30

Theme: The Perceived Sacrifice for Following Jesus is Far Outweighed by the Rewards

Context: Jesus was ministering in Judea and Crowds came to Him, Along with a Rich Young Man



As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. “Good teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good — except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’” “Teacher,” he declared, “all these I have kept since I was a boy.” Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow

me.” At this the man’s face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!” The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, “Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” Peter said to him, “We have left everything to follow you!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields — and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

**Mark 10:17-31**

A rich young man who was very earnest and sincere came to Jesus in a humble and meek manner wanting to know what he must do to inherit eternal life- a great question.

- It’s important to note that Jesus’ earthly ministry transpired while the Old Covenant Law was still in full force, and obeying the commandments and the Levitical Priesthood was required.
- That is why this man feared that perhaps there was some good works he was missing to be saved.
  - o **Romans 4:1-9; 9:30-33; 10:5.**
- This same nagging question of “What do I still lack...” still plagues mankind today.

**John 6:28-29, “Then they asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’ Jesus answered, ‘The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.’”**

The answer under the New Covenant, bases perfect righteousness on the completed work of Jesus Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Father- **Eph. 2:6; 4:8-10.**

**1 John 3:23, “And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.”**

- All is left for us to do is to believe on Jesus and confess Him as Lord- **Ro. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9.**

## 1. Give All to Follow Jesus

### **Mark 10:21**

**Jesus looked at him and loved him. “One thing you lack,” he said. “Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”**

First of all, Jesus was not saying that one has to buy their way into heaven, by selling everything they have and give it to the poor in order to inherit eternal life- salvation is a free gift.

- Nor is Jesus saying you have to live in poverty to be a disciple of Jesus.
- Specifically, Jesus was offering this man to be one of His disciples like Peter, James and John.
- What an honor, and like those men who gave up everything to enter into full time ministry.
- Unfortunately this young man did not grasp what Jesus was offering him.
- Jesus was not telling him that he could not have anything to serve Him.

He was telling him, “I want you to transfer your wealth to my system. To exchange or convert your worldly goods into Kingdom currency.” For a number of reasons, the young rich man’s faith was in his stuff and needed to be in Jesus as his source.

Next, Jesus was telling him that his possessions would be safe in his heavenly account so he could have access to it in order to do all the things he will need to do in following Jesus in the ministry.

- Realize it or not, but it takes money to do Kingdom work in the earth.
- For all the giving to the poor, sending out missionaries, building churches- that all takes money.

So where is all that money going to come from- having invested in our Kingdom account, we will need to make a withdrawal. It takes faith to make deposits and it takes faith to make withdrawals.

Every time we put in a offering, we are making deposits, it gets multiplied, and then it is available for future withdrawals when we claim it by faith.

**Philippians 4:15-17, “Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account.”**

Notice the problem with the rich man was his “trust” in riches and comforts, and the so-called security it would afford him- **1 Timothy 6:17-19.**

He could have gotten ill and spent all his money on doctors and never got any better like the woman with the issue of blood- then where would his money be- **Mark 5:25-26.**

So his dependence on money was hindering him from entering into the Kingdom, because his trust would have to switch from money to Jesus as his source- **Luke 16:13-14.**

### **Luke 12:15**

**Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”**

### **Mark 10:22-23**

**At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"**

- It's not impossible for rich people to get saved, Jesus just said it was a challenge.
- People who want to get rich for selfish reasons, money becomes an idol and snare for the soul.
  - o **1 Timothy 6:6-12; Hebrews 13:5-6.**
- This life and world system is temporary and passing away- **James 4:13-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25.**

### **1 Corinthians 7:30-31**

**...those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.**

Jesus spoke figuratively about it being easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man, or any man at that matter, to enter into the Kingdom of God. The disciples, naturally astonished:

### **Mark 10:26-27**

**The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."**

- What Jesus said here is really important that all mankind must understand.
- It is impossible for man to save himself by his own good works; try to earn or deserve heaven.
- Yet all the false religions and cults base their salvation on a works based system.

**Galatians 2:15-16, "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."**

## **2. It doesn't Cost but Pays to Serve Jesus**

- Peter pipes up at this point and says, Mark 10:28, "*We have left everything to follow you!*"
- The heavenly account we have today and they had back then is for this life and the life to come.
- So giving and serving in God's Kingdom benefits us today as well- **Hebrews 6:10-12.**

Notice Jesus made the amazing statement that they would receive in this life one hundred times as much- not just in heaven. And persecutions for following Jesus- but it's always worth it to serve God!

Unfortunately, many Christian folks have added a verse to this passage that is not there, when Jesus said that we are laying up treasure in heaven, "and thou cannot touch it until thou are dead." So when we look at the whole context of this passage, Jesus said that we would receive now in this present age! We are blessed there and blessed here, we are blessed everywhere!

- Persecutions for being a Christian: insults, slandered, trials, tests and temptations.
  - o And not everyone is going to be happy about God prospering you!

There will be grace to overcome it, as we become more blessed to be a blessing. It's a win-win, blessed now and in all eternity- **Acts 20:35.**

# Discourse #46: A Mother's Request

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Reference: Matthew 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45

Theme: The Greatest in God's Kingdom is Measured by our Service of Love to Others

Context: The Mother of James and John came to Jesus with a Request to Promote her Sons



Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him. "What is it you want?" he asked. She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom." "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father." When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two

brothers. Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Matthew 20:20-28

Like most Jews of Jesus' time, they were expecting the Messiah to begin His millennial reign immediately as King over all the earth- **Luke 17:20; 19:11; Acts 1:6-8.**

- So she wanted to make sure her two sons were a shoe in for the best cabinet positions in Jesus' new administration- after all it doesn't hurt to ask right?
- This request may have been prompted in light of the 12 thrones mentioned in **Matthew 19:28.**
- However, there was a mystery that God kept hidden from the Jewish nation that would include salvation for the Gentile nations- **Ro. 11:25; 16:25-27; Eph. 1:9-40; 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-27; 4:3.**

## Luke 21:24

**They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

- We are currently living in the "times of the Gentiles" until the Gospel is preached throughout the world in fulfillment of the Great Commission according to **Matthew 28:18-20.**
- This dispensation of Grace or the Church Age, having started with the resurrection of Jesus, has been going on now for almost 2,000 years; ending with the rapture of the Church- **1 Th. 4:13-18.**
- Then the prophetic spotlight returns to the nation of Israel for the last 7 years of Daniel's 490 years to bring an end to sin & Jesus begins His 1,000 earthly reign- **Daniel 9:20-27; Rev. 20:1-9.**

To sit on the right and left hand of a prince was a token of confidence, and the highest honor granted to his friends- **1 Kings 2:19; Psalms 110:1; 1 Samuel 20:25.**

The disciples, here, had no reference to the Kingdom of Heaven, but only to the kingdom which they supposed Jesus was about to set up on the earth.

## 1. A Baptism of Suffering

- The doctrine of “baptisms” is mentioned in **Hebrews 6:2** as a elementary teaching of Jesus.
  - o Baptized into Christ when we are born again, added to the Body of Christ- **1 Cor. 12:13.**
  - o Water Baptism, a testimony and witness to the world- **Mt. 28:19; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21.**
  - o Baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues- **Acts 1:5; 2:4; 11:16.**
  - o Baptism of suffering into persecution and hardships- **Php. 2:17; Col. 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:6.**

### **Mark 10:38-39**

**“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with...”**

- Notice how confident they were to “Drink” the cup of suffering for Christ; not truly realizing what that meant for them personally- **Acts 12:2; Revelation 1:9.**
- To drink of a cup, in the Scriptures, often signifies to be afflicted, or to be punished.
  - o **Isaiah 51:17,22; Psalms 73:10; 75:8; Jeremiah 25:15; Rev. 16:9.**
- Like the cup Jesus took for us through His suffering in His death, burial and resurrection.
  - o **Matthew 26:39, 42; John 18:11; 19:28-30.**
- The Bible speaks of the cup of God’s wrath- **Revelation 14:9-11, 17-20; 15:5-8; 16:19.**
  
- James and John were named the “Sons of Thunder” in **Mark 3:17.**
- This was illustrated by their zealous and judgmental spirit of wanting to call down fire upon the Samaritans in **Luke 9:51-56.**
- John, zealous to protect Jesus’ inner circle of ministry, stopped a follower of Jesus from speaking in His Name to drive out demons- **Luke 9:49-50.**

John was later known as the Apostle of love as He matured in Christ, no longer had that critical spirit.

## 2. Servant of All

### **Matthew 20:26-27**

**Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.**

Understandably, when the other ten heard of James and John jockeying for position ahead of them, they no were no doubt incensed and infuriated. Thinking they would be cheated out of power and prestige.

- Selfish ambition along with pride is a great danger for Christians- **James 3:13-18; 4:1-4.**
- There was already plenty of discussions amongst themselves, who was going to be greatest.
  - o **Matthew 18:1-4; 23:1-12; Mark 9:33-35; Luke 6:46-48.**

Jesus set them and us straight on this matter by explaining that His Kingdom is not like the kingdoms of the earth, where those in authority lord it over those under them.

- Instead, God’s Kingdom was based on love, serving and preferring others before ourselves.
- Jesus came as our example, not to be served, but to serve and give His life for many.
- This is how the world would come to know that we are His disciples- **John 13:34-35.**
- By laying down our lives for one another- **John 15:9-17; 1 John 3:16.**

# Discourse #47: The Fig Tree Withers

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Reference: Matthew 21:18-22; Mark 11:12-14, 20-26

Theme: Moving the Mountains of Problems out of the Way takes Faith as a Seed- Speak to it  
Context: Jesus and His Disciples were leaving Bethany and Travelling to Jerusalem



**The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree, “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.” And his disciples heard him say it.**

**In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!” “Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will**

**happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”**

**Mark 11:12-14, 20-25**

The Lord has nothing against fig trees or Fig Newtons, he just happened to use a fig tree to illustrate how the spirit of faith operates. As a matter of fact, He used a fig tree later on as another example of Biblical truths concerning end time events- **Matthew 24:32-34.**

It was normal for the fig tree in the vicinity of Jerusalem to begin to put forth new leaves in the latter part of March or early April, the time of the Passover. This tree was apparently full of leaves, in which case it should have had ripened figs on it- **Luke 13:6-9.**

Jesus is the Word of God (**John 1:1; Revelation 19:13**) and it’s impossible for His words not to come to pass, otherwise God would cease to be God- **Psalms 119:89, 152, 160; Isaiah 55:10-11; Mark 13:31.**

Jesus is the Word of God (**John 1:1; Revelation 19:13**), and through those words He is continually, “...upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power” according to **Hebrews 1:3 AMP.**

**Hebrews 11:3, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.”**

- Words are invisible, but are just as real as any other microscopic thing in creation.

Words are the building blocks of the universe, they initiate God’s activities in the earth, and are what frames our own world that we live each day. Mountains in our lives are moved through speaking faith filled words!

- Did you know that every person has a spiritual sword- **Psalms 57:4; 64:3; 149:6; Eph. 6:17.**
- When words are formed in the mouth and spoken, they produce life or death, healing or injury.
  - o **Proverbs 18:21; 12:18; 25:18**
- Whenever we hear the Words of God, they produce faith and hope.
- When we hear and accept the words of the enemy, they produce fear and doubt.
- The Word of God is living and active- **Hebrews 4:12.**
- Jesus' words are spirit and they are life- **John 6:63.**
- The Word of God's grace is full of power- **John 1:14, 16- 17; Acts 20:32; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 3:7.**

## 1. The Word of Faith

The Word of Faith principles is where we first begin before we can "Curse" the fig tree or "Move" the mountain of problems and obstacles out of the way.

- The "Word of Faith" principles are found in- **Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:5-10.**
- The key is meditating or speaking the Word of God (seed), until it gets planted in our heart.
  - o **Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3; 119:11.**
- Faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's will- **1 John 5:14-15.**
- It's impossible to have faith apart from God's Word- **Hebrews 11:1.**
- Initially, confession of God's Word renews our mind and causes faith to come- **Ro. 10:17.**
- Over the course of time it will drop down in our spirit; that is when the seed gets planted.
- In **Mark 4:14-20**, we see the explanation of the parable of the sower, where the seed is the Word of God and the ground is our spirit where the seed is planted- **Luke 8:11.**
  - o **James 1:18, 21; 1 Peter 1:23-24.**
- We sow God's Word when we speak God's Word- the sowing is in the saying.
- The womb of our spirit is where the seed is conceived and germinates- **Luke 17:20-21.**
- Our spirit is where the Kingdom of God is, the production center for everything we need.
  - o **2 Corinthians 1:18-20; 2 Peter 1:2-4.**
- In **Mark 4:26-29** we see the parable of the growing seed, explaining the process of growth.
- There are two laws of Genesis that are universal in the natural and the spiritual realms:
  - o Every seed produces after its own kind- **Genesis 1:11-12, 29; John 12:24.**
  - o Seed time and harvest; reap what we sow- **Genesis 8:20-22; Galatians 6:7-10.**

Until the seed gets in our heart through the continual confession of God's Word, nothing happens. It may take a very long time until we finally believe God's Word in our heart. Most people often give up prematurely because in our society we are looking for instant results- **Galatians 6:9; Hebrews 6:11-12.**

- Suppose a farmer were to plant his seed one day and then the following week asks himself, "So where is the harvest? I guess this sowing and reaping thing does not work."
- So the farmer digs up the old seed and tries planting it again with new seed and repeats this process over and over again- well he will never get a harvest, because he won't let it grow.
- That's what a lot of Christians do with faith, they plant few seeds by speaking the Word and then later on dig those same seeds back up by speaking doubt and unbelief.
- Then when nothing happens, they rationalize and spiritualize the situation and say, "Well I guess it just was not God's will for me to receive." No they did not work the principles right.
- There is always a reason why people don't receive from God, but it's not because God failed.

### **Romans 3:3-4**

**What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.**

Abraham is a good example, his name means “Father of Many Nations” as mentioned in **Romans 4:17**.

For him it took 25 years from the time of receiving the promise until the time Isaac was born. So How do we know that we have faith in our heart as he did? By Romans 4:21 explains, “*being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*” To understand God’s Word is to be “fully persuaded” and believe that we receive what we have asked for in prayer, before we have it- **Mark 11:22-23**.

The words we hear on a continual basis (faith & doubt come by hearing words) will eventually register in our spirit. Once those words are in our heart, they will in turn come out of our mouth, and those things which we say will eventually come to pass- for good or evil.

The principle of believing in our heart, and confessing with our mouth is found in **Romans 10:9-10** concerning salvation. But these faith principles work in every area of our lives.

### **Mental Assent**

To believe with your heart versus believing with your head has created much confusion and disappoint concerning the Biblical operation of Faith.

- Mental assent has been called the, “devil’s counterfeit” to true Bible believing faith.
- A simple definition of faith is: To act on what we believe from our heart.
- Many people in the world mentally acquiesce to a historical Jesus, but that is not saving faith.
- Even the demons believe there is a God- **James 2:19**.
- In our culture we are accustomed to stuffing our heads with knowledge- **1 Corinthians 8:1**.
- Bible faith is a revelation, and understanding of God’s truth in our spirit that sets us free.
- This comes through consistent study of God’s Word- **John 8:31-32, 36; 2 Timothy 2:15**.
- For many Christians their knowledge of the promises of God are merely hearsay, what they heard their pastor or other Christian say, but it’s not real in their spirit yet- so no results.

So Mental assent can be simply defined as pre-mature faith in the form of head knowledge, accented by doubts in the mind. Contrast that with Bible faith of the heart that is fully persuaded- **Romans 4:21**.

Just as every human being operates in natural human faith, we all mentally ascend to all kinds of historical information. However, there is a big difference between acquiescing to a bunch of information in our head, and having revelation knowledge in our heart- **John 3:1-12; 20:24-29; Acts 19: 11-17**.

In school, we all had occasions when we crammed for an exam to only forget it all later. That is mental assent, a superficial, temporary, swallow possession of knowledge that has little affect on one’s life.

- We go to church and Sunday an only retain 10% of what we heard.
- Mental Assent is very passive, it’s simply mental agreement or acknowledging what we hear.
- Faith on the other hand puts that Word into practice in the form of confession and corresponding action. Faith believes the report and you can see it in a person’s countenance.
  - o **Isaiah 53:1; John 12:38; Romans 10:16**.
- Faith grows, increases in the life of the believer as they meditate and speak God’s Word.
  - o **Romans 12:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 3:2**.
  - o No Faith: **Mark 4:40**.
  - o Little Faith: **Matthew 8:24-26; Mark 6:5-6; 8:14; 9:14**.
  - o Great Faith: **Matthew 8:5-10,13; 9:2,6; 15:28; Luke 8:48; John 4:50**.

When the Word of God passes from our heads to our hearts over time, then we will see results.

## 2. The Spirit of Faith

Where the Word of Faith ends (getting God's Word into our spirit), the Spirit of Faith begins (getting God's word out of our spirit and back in our mouth) to move mountains of problems out of the way.

**2 Corinthians 4:13, "It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak..."**

Jesus is the Word of God and so everything He said came to pass, He only operated in the Spirit of Faith, so everything He said came to pass.

We on the other hand must first operate in the Word of Faith principles first, then we can operate in the Spirit of Faith as Jesus did- **John 14:12-14; 1 John 2:6.**

### **Mark 11:23**

**"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him."**

- As long as we have doubts in our heart, we are not operating in the Spirit of Faith just yet, so keep on in the Word of Faith, meditating and speaking the promises of God in His Word.
- A double minded man should not expect to receive anything from the Lord- **James 1:5-8.**
- We can still have faith in our heart and cast down thoughts of doubts that come to our mind.
- As long as we don't meditate and speak those doubts our faith will continue to work.

**Mark 11:24, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."**

- When we become "Fully Persuaded" as Abraham was, we believe it in our heart- **Ro. 4:21.**
- That's what it means to "believe it before you receive it."
- We see the answer through the "eye" of faith as already done in the spirit world.
- So then it's just a matter of praising and thanking God for the answer- **Hebrews 11:6.**

### **"Have Faith in God" - Mark 11:22**

Mark 11:22 literally in the Greek means, "Have the faith of God" or have the God kind of faith in order to move the mountains of problems out of our lives. Jesus wouldn't have said it if it was not possible.

- Changing things with words is at the heart of the "Spirit of Faith" in **2 Corinthians 4:13.**
- It is the Word of Faith principles that gets the Word in our heart to believe- **Romans 10:5-9.**
- But it is the Spirit of Faith that actually moves the mountains according to **Mark 11:22-23.**
  - o Jesus said, verse 23, *"I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain..."*
- The mountain representing the problem or obstacle- Jesus told us to speak to it, not pray about it.
- He did not tell us to submit a prayer request or ask God to move it for us did He?

### **Faith as a Seed**

God's Word that is conceived in your heart, then formed by the tongue, and spoken out of your own mouth, becomes a spiritual force releasing the ability of God within you.

**Luke 17:5-6, "The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."**

So faith as a seed is to “say to this mulberry tree” or as in Mark 11:22, “if anyone says to this mountain” to do something- do what?

- Mark 11:23- “Go, throw yourself into the sea...”
- Luke 17:6- “Be uprooted and planted in the sea...”
- And what would happen? It would obey you! Why us, because God gave us the dominion.
- So often Christians are waiting on God to deal with the problem, when God is waiting on us.
- As Christians are under God’s authority to exercise it on His behalf- **James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9.**
- Remember **Genesis 1:26**, Jesus has restored our lost authority that Adam had given to the devil in the Garden of Eden- **Luke 4:5-6.**
- Because of God’s Grace and the gift of righteousness we can reign in life through Jesus, or as the Amplified translation puts it, “reign as kings in life” in **Romans 5:17.**

Through the power of attorney Jesus gave us His Name to use on His behalf to deal with the devil and the junk he tries to put on us in life- **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 10:18-20.**

We don’t have authority over people’s wills, neither does God. But can trample the Satan under our feet! **Mark 16:17; Luke 10:18-20; Acts 10:38.**

- Our heavenly Father wants us to learn to imitate Him and release faith in every word we speak.
- Words are containers, they transmit substance- life or death- it matters what we say!
- Those that say they can, and those that say they can’t are both right.
- Words are the most powerful thing in the universe.
- The words we speak will either put us over or hold us in bondage.
- We need to train ourselves to agree with, and only speak God’s Word out of our mouths.

Unfortunately, when it comes to prayer, many of us pray the problem instead of the answer. We bind God’s hands from working on our behalf because of our unbelief. Praying and speaking the problem only makes it bigger, and releases the devil to enforce it more in our lives.

When God’s creative Word is spoken from your heart in faith- all things are possible to those who believe- **Mark 9:23.**

### 3. Faith Works by Love

#### **Mark 11:25-26 NKJV**

**“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”**

Everything we just said is awesome, wonderful and Biblical, but if we fail to walk in love, then everything we are trying to do through faith comes to a screeching halt!

- Bottom line: If we fail to forgive, then we won’t be forgiven and our faith will not work!
- Even if we have faith that moves mountains without love, we are nothing- **1 Corinthians 13:2.**
- Galatians 5:6 AMP, “*Faith activated, and energized, and expressed, and working through love.*”
- Love keeps our motives pure and allows are prayers to be answered- **James 4:1-3; 1 Peter 3:7.**
- We are born of God and made new creations with God’s nature of love in us- **Ro. 5:5; Gal. 5:22.**
- Our love for God is demonstrated by our obedience to His Word-**John 14:15; 1John 4:20; 5:2-3**
- So the secret to our faith working is to walk in love, simple right? **2 John 6.**

# Discourse #48: Paying Taxes to Caesar

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Reference: Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26

Theme: Since God is the Originator of Authority, we are to Respect those in Authority

Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem and The Pharisees and Herodians were trying to Trap Him



**Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?**

**Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription?” “Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.**

**Matthew 22:15-22**

The religious establishment hated (**John 15:25**) Jesus and saw Him as a threat to their power and position (**John 11:47-54**), so they endeavored by any means possible to discredit His ministry and get Him out of the way- **Matthew 26:59-62; Mark 14:55-59; 15:10.**

## **Luke 11:53-54**

**When Jesus left there, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, waiting to catch him in something he might say.**

Herod a Jew himself, had received the kingdom of Judea by appointment of the Romans, had a group of followers who were referred to as Herodians, whether they were employed by king Herod or just fans. The Jews thought they had Jesus trapped by asking them this question about paying taxes- **Luke 20:20.**

- If Jesus said, “Yes” you should pay taxes to Caesar, that was a very unpopular position with the people, and the Pharisees could use **Deuteronomy 17:15** against Him- support for a foreign king
- If Jesus said, “No” don’t pay taxes, they had legal grounds to hand Him over to the governor.
- The Jews later used the premise of “King of the Jews” to crucify Jesus- **John 18:33-19:22.**

Jesus’ catches them in their own craftiness (**1 Corinthians 3:19**), by turning the tables back on them. Since they themselves were already paying tribute to Caesar and the temple tax- **Exodus 30:11-16.**

**Luke 20:26, “They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.”**

- So Jesus simply tells those hypocrites to continue doing what they are already doing.
- As Christians we are obligated by Scripture to pay taxes and respect those in authority.
  - o **Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17.**
- Notice how the dialogue began with flattery and deceit- **Psalms 78:36; Ro. 16:18; Jude 16.**

# Discourse #49: Marriage and the Resurrection

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Reference: Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27; Luke 20:27-39

Theme: A Wonderful Expectation at the Resurrection to be United with the Godhead Forever

Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem being Tested and Scrutinized by the Religious Leaders



**Some of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus with a question. “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers. The first one married a woman and died childless. The second and then the third married her, and in the same way the seven died, leaving no children. Finally, the woman died too. Now then, at the**

**resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?” Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are considered worthy of taking part in that age and in the resurrection from the dead will neither marry nor be given in marriage, and they can no longer die; for they are like the angels. They are God’s children, since they are children of the resurrection. But in the account of the bush, even Moses showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord ‘the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ He is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive.” Some of the teachers of the law responded, “Well said, teacher!”**

**Luke 20:27-39**

A quick background on the Sadducees, members of a Jewish faction that opposed Jesus during His ministry. Known for their denial of the bodily resurrection, angels and spirits (**Acts 23:6-10**), the Sadducees came from the leading families of the nation- the priests, merchants, and aristocrats.

The high priests and the most powerful members of the priesthood were mainly Sadducees- **Acts 5:17**.

Jesus’ response may seem disappointing to those young Christian newlyweds who think they will be married together forever. As sacred as marriage is on earth, it is till death do we part- **Romans 7:1-3**.

- Jesus corrected the notion they had that marriage on earth continues on into eternity.
- Since the Sadducees did not believe in a bodily resurrection, Jesus corrected that error too.
- Paul also by the Holy Spirit points out the inescapable reality of a future resurrection- **Rev. 20:5**
  - o **Acts 24:14-16; Ro. 6:5; 1 Cor. 15:12-28, 35-58; Php. 3:20-21; Heb. 6:2; 1 Pet. 1:3.**

This is not a negative when you consider that earthly marriage, as wonderful as it is, is only a type and shadow of the marriage like relationship we will have with Jesus at the resurrection of the righteous. **Ephesians 5:22-33; Revelation 19:6-9; 21:1-14; 22:17**.

- In heaven we will be devoted and consecrated totally to the Lord- **1 Corinthians 7:32-35**.
- Like the angels who are totally committed to God, we too are His- **1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20**.
- To be one with our Creator in a beautiful union like marriage for all eternity- **1 Corinthians 6:17**

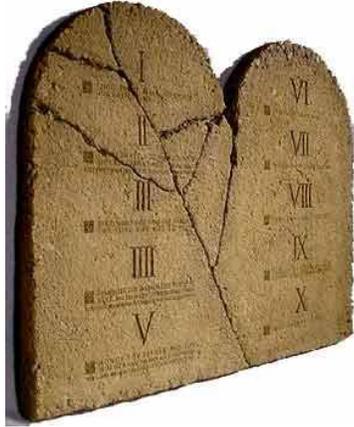
Right now we are engaged to the Lord, but the marriage supper of the Lamb will not occur until the middle of the Tribulation period- **Revelation 19:6-9**.

# Discourse #50: The Greatest Commandment

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Reference: Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34

Theme: Whether it's the Old or New Covenants- Loving God and People is the Greatest Commandment  
Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem being Tested and Scrutinized by the Religious Leaders



**One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” “Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”**

**When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.**

**Mark 12:28-34**

Please keep in mind that Jesus was born under the law (**Galatians 4:4-7**) in order to redeem those under the law. Jesus came to fulfill the law and so when He answered their question about the Greatest Commandment, He spoke to the Jews as those living under the Old Covenant- **Romans 13:8-10**.

**Matthew 5:17-18, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.”**

- Jesus was quoting **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** to answer the question of the greatest commandment.
- The Hebrew name for God in Deuteronomy is Yahweh, translated Lord or Jehovah.
- All the Gentile nations were polytheistic; worshipped many gods- **Psalms 96:5; 1 Cor. 10:18-22**
- Israel was unique in that they were monotheistic; worshipped only one God- Yahweh.
- God is one, expressed in three (Trinity) unique and distinct individual persons- one in unity.
  - o **Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:21-22; Ephesians 2:18; 1 Peter 1:2; 3:18; 1 John 5:6-14.**
- We see a greater revelation of the trinity in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles.

Under the Old Covenant, they were not born again, their sins were only covered- Levitical Priesthood. They did not have the Holy Spirit within them like we do- **1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30**.

- David and other Old Testament saints could only worship God in their strength- **2 Samuel 6:14**.
- As children of God we are expected to worship God in Spirit and in truth- **John 4:23-24**.
- Under the Old Covenant they were to love their neighbor as themselves, but because of the new birth the expectation is much higher, to love others as Jesus loved us- **John 13:34-35; 15:12**.

The teacher of the law understood correctly that to love God and people is greater than observing all the sacrifices and burnt offerings- **Matthew 9:12-13; 12:7; 23:23-24**.

# Discourse #51: Whose Son is the Christ

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Reference: Matthew 22:41-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44

Theme: Jesus is the Promised Messiah, as God with Us

Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem being Tested and Scrutinized by the Religious Leaders



**While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?” “The son of David,” they replied. He said to them, “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says, “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “‘Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet.” ‘ If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?” No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.**

**Matthew 22:41-46**

Jesus was challenging the Pharisees in regards to their ignorance of prophetic Scripture about the Messiah’s genealogy, that He simply descending from human ancestry as any other man.

**Psalms 110:1, “The Lord says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’”**

- In other words David by the Holy Spirit, was saying, “Yahweh said to my Lord (the Messiah) sit at my right hand...” So God the Father was speaking to God the Son, Jesus Christ.
- This same reference to **Psalms 110:1** was also made in **Hebrews 1:13**, reaffirming Jesus’ deity.
- Jesus, seated at the right hand of God the Father reveals His position and place of authority.
- When Jesus was asked by the High Priest whether He was the Messiah, God in the flesh, Jesus made reference to Himself sitting at the right hand of the Father.

**Matthew 26:63-65**

**The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied. “But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy.**

When Stephen was on trial and soon to be martyred, he had a heavenly vision concerning Jesus, as the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God- **Acts 2:24-25; Philipians 2:5-11.**

**Acts 7:55-56**

**But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”**

The name the Son of man does not designate Jesus' humanity; it is a Messianic title, based upon **Daniel 7:13-14**, and designates the Messiah as a heavenly, supernatural being. This is the only place outside the Gospels where the title is applied to Jesus; though used around 100 times in the New Testament.

## 1. Without Father or Mother

As is stated in **Hebrews 7:3**, Jesus is without beginning of days or end of life, without father or mother and without genealogy. The fact that Jesus is worshipped points to His deity- **Revelation 22:9**.

**Matthew 1:23**, "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him 'Immanuel'-which means, 'God with us.'"

- Jesus was born of a virgin, and Mary was a descendent of David and so was Joseph- **Rev. 3:7**.
- This "godly" line is traced all the way back to Adam- **Mathew chapter one; Luke 3:23-38**.
- But those who knew Jesus growing up, had big problems with accepting His deity.

### **John 6:42**

**They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"**

- They were not aware of what the arch angel Gabriel said to Mary concerning Jesus' birth.
- Jesus' birth is referred to as the incarnation, God taking on human flesh.
- It is also referred to as the hypostatic union, Jesus being 100% God and 100% man.
- The name "Jesus" was a common name to the Jews, it was a transliteration of the Hebrew "Joshua" meaning "Jehovah is salvation" hence the meaning of His name as Savior.

**Matthew 1:21**, "She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

- Before His incarnation, He was referred to and still is called the "Word of God"
  - o **John 1:1-2; Revelation 19:13**.
- Jesus came as the Last Adam to purchase our eternal redemption from sin.
  - o **Matthew 20:8; 1 Corinthians 15:45; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:12**.
- God had to become a man in order to redeem mankind- **Matthew 26:52-54; Luke 24:7**.
- There was a heresy that claimed that Jesus as God did not take on human form- **1 John 4:3**.

**2 John 7**, "Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist."

Nothing has been under such attack by Satan than the deity of Jesus Christ- **2 Peter 2:1**. The incarnation of the Word of God, the Second person of the Godhead is a mystery and miracle beyond description.

- Either Jesus was a mad man, an incredible liar, or He spoke the absolute truth.
- Jesus was God speaking to Moses in the burning bush- **Exodus 3:13-15**.

### **John 8:58-59**

**"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.**

The deity of Jesus- **Mark 2:5-12; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3**.

# Discourse #52: The Seven Woes

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Reference: Matthew 23:1-36; Mark 12:38-40; Luke 11:37-54; 20:45-47

Theme: A Complete Condemnation and Exposure of the true Nature of the Religious Elite

Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem Surrounded by Large Crowds



**Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy loads and put them on men’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. “Everything they do is done for men to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted in the marketplaces and to have men call them ‘Rabbi.’**

**“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have only one Master and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you to be called ‘teacher,’ for you have one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.**

**Matthew 23:1-12**

## **So Is Religion Bad?**

The Pharisees in the Gospels represent everything bad about religion, the legalism, self-righteousness and critical spirit. I believe this religious spirit is encouraged and energized by demons- **1 Tim. 4:1-5.**

- Before we bash the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Experts in the Law and Priests too much, they do deserve a little credit; not all of them were bad- **Mark 15:43; John 3:1-2; 19:38.**
- Their original intent was to preserve, protect, teach and live the law out before the people.
  - o **Acts 5:33-39.**
- They have wonderfully preserved manuscripts of the Old Testament, accurately recorded for thousands of years, thanks large in part to the professional clergy.

Notice that Jesus recognized their positions as teachers of the Mosaic law; since God’s Word should still be honored in spite of the poor example set by their religious leaders- they were hypocrites.

## **Matthew 23:3, “But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.”**

- They make up their own traditions and expect others to follow them while they were exempt.
- Instead of living for God’s glory and for the service others, their mentality was of self-exaltation.
- Notice the interesting point Jesus made that we are not to be called: Master, Father or Teacher.
- Rather we are to refer to each other as “Brother ...” or “Sister...”
- Not all religion is bad, it depends on the context in which it is used.

### **James 1:26-27**

**If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.**

- Religion- The word has negative connotations.
- What is the relationship between religion and theology?
- We understand that theology is the study of God.
- In contrast, religion has to do with the practice of faith; that is, the way in which we worship God

Religion is the combination of beliefs, practices, customs and institutions through which the followers of Christ express their faith and worship to God.

- Every Bible believing church has a set of core values and tenants of their faith.
- This is referred to as a dogma, or the expression of cardinal points of doctrine.
- Dogma summarizes the fundamental points of the faith.
- In this aspect, it is used as a positive term.

Our goal as Christians is to maintain a good balance between doctrine and religion thus avoiding the extremes. Too much emphasis on theology(knowledge of God), we can become dry and lifeless with a lot of head knowledge. Yet too much religion(the practice) at the expense of theology we are in danger of becoming religious fanatics.

Let's now turn our attention to the seven woes Jesus levied against the religious elite in public before a large crowd of people. Definition of "woe": Grief, misery, condemnation, & anticipation of punishment.

I can only imagine what those religious leaders felt like while Jesus spoke those fire filled words.  
**Jeremiah 20:9; 23:29; Hebrews 12:29.**

### **Luke 24:32**

**They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"**

#### 1. Stumbling Block to Others

### **Matthew 23:13**

**"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to."**

So at the top of the list is the most serious charge that could be levied, and that was preventing people from being saved. Unfortunately, the Jews were quite adept at doing just that.

- In **Luke 11:52**, a reference was made to them taking away the "Key to Knowledge" and hindering those who were trying to know the truth and so be saved.
- One of the greatest offenses is to tinker with the Gospel message- **1 Cor. 15:1-8; Gal. 1:6-9.**
- Paul Himself before his conversion was a Pharisee, and tried to destroy the Early Church.
  - o **Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 26:9-12; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13-14; Philippians 3:3-6.**
- The other Jews were trying to do the same thing- **Acts 14:1-2; 13:49-51; 17:13; 1 Th. 2:14-16.**
- Scripture is clear about not being a stumbling block- **1Cor. 8:7-13; 10:23-33; 2Cor. 6:3; Ro. 14.**

Let's consider verse 14 which is not included in the NIV translation, but is mentioned nonetheless in **Mark 12:38-40; Luke 20:45-47.**

#### **Matthew 23:14 NKJV**

**Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.**

- The Pharisees were very short on dispensing mercy, for as they tried to portray their piety, they were committing atrocities to those most helpless in society of their time- widows.
- The Old Testament is clear, that the poor, widows and orphans were to be protected.
  - o **Psalms 10:17-18; 68:5-6; 82:3-4; 146:9; Isaiah 1:10-23; 10:1-4; 58:1-10.**

Their prayers are said to have been often three hours in length. One rule among them, was to meditate an hour, then pray an hour, and then meditate another hour- all of which was included in their "long prayers or devotions."

## 2. Blind Leading the Blind

#### **Matthew 23:15**

**"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are."**

- The Pharisees took every means, and spared no pains to gain proselytes.

**Proselyte:** one that comes over from a foreign nation, religion, or sect as a convert. Among the Jews there were two kinds of proselytes:

**Proselytes of Righteousness:** those who wholly and fully embraced the Jewish religion, who were baptized, who were circumcised, and who conformed to all the rites of the Mosaic laws/ordinances.

**Proselytes of the Gate:** Those who approved of the Jewish religion, renounced the pagan superstitions, and conformed to some of the rites of the Jews, but were not circumcised or baptized.

- The statement Jesus made, "twice as much a son of hell" was a Hebrew phrase, signifying to be deserving of hell, to be awfully wicked.
- These folks were referred to as the "scabs of Israel" who were thought to have hindered the coming of the Messiah, because of their great wickedness.

The Pharisees recruited them either to increase their own numbers, or to extort them of money under various pretences. And when they had accomplished that, they made no effort to instruct them or to restrain them. So they were left alone to fulfill their own indulgences and vices.

#### **Matthew 15:13-14**

**He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."**

### 3. Self-Appointed Authorities

#### Matthew 23:16-22

**“Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is bound by his oath.’ You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, he who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And he who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.”**

- I believe the Pharisees were control freaks, they wanted their hands in everything.
- They were power hungry, with a great lust for money, prestige and authority over the people.
- Using their intellectual and religious political influence to position themselves as an established order that oversaw much of Jewish religious affairs of that time.

The religious elite viewed Jesus as newcomer from the backwoods of Judea, threatening the established order of things and worse, exposing their hypocrisy to the people- **John 7:45-52; 11:47-54.**

- The Pharisees were notorious for preoccupying themselves with trivialities.
- It is bad enough that a man’s word cannot be trusted apart from an oath. But the Pharisees had taught that there were distinctions in the binding force of various oaths.
  - o Psalms 15:4 *“who keeps his oath even when it hurts”*
- Remember that the Pharisees and experts of the law were skilled at creating loop holes.
- By differentiating between the gold and the temple artifact, they could create various degrees of obligation. All of this folly is of course absurd, and Jesus pointed that out very clearly to them.
- Jesus at the sermon on the mount, condemned oath taking- **Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12.**

### 4. Preoccupied with the Minutia

#### Matthew 23:23-24

**“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”**

- Talk about being lost amongst the trees, and in the wrong jungle.
- Apparently their priorities were all messed up, majoring on the minors, and minored on the major issues of the Scriptures.
- For example, Jesus used tithing under the Old Covenant to illustrate this point.
- Under the Mosaic Law, a tenth of their produce was given to support the Levites and the temple.
  - o **Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:20-24; Deuteronomy 14:22-24, 28-29;**
- Moses said nothing about herbs, just the produce; another example of their strict observances.
- Yet the Pharisees conveniently dismissed themselves from the weightier matters of the law.
  - o Justice, Mercy and Faithfulness- **Micah 6:8.**

The gnat as you may know are those annoying little flies, considered the smallest of unclean things that can get into the Holy place and on things. Contrast that with the largest unclean animal in the region, the camel- **Leviticus 11:4.**

### **John 5:38-40**

**Nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.**

The words translated “diligently study” was applied to miners, who search for precious metals- anxiously and intensely looking for things of value. The Pharisees knew the Scriptures, but rejected their Messiah, so what have they gained by knowing the Scriptures since it all led to Jesus’ coming?

## 5. Caught up in the Exterior

### **Matthew 23:25-26**

**“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.”**

The Pharisees were diligent in observing all their traditions regarding proper washing and purification regulations according to Rabbinic rules and not Mosaic laws- **Galatians 1:14**.

- Please read **Mark 7:1-23**, and you will see the account, where Jesus corrected their tradition concerning what is considered clean and unclean.
- Jesus addresses the heart of man while the Pharisees were hung up on the exterior.
- For the Pharisees, it was all about the outward appearance.
- As long as one observed their rules and traditions, it didn’t matter what was in one’s heart.
  - o **1 Samuel 16:7; Galatians 2:6; 1 Peter 3:3**.
- The Pharisees on the most part were crooks, extorting others to support their pompous lifestyle.
  - o **Mark 7:9-13; Luke 16:13-15**.

## 6. Self-Righteous

### **Matthew 23:27-28**

**“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.”**

Each spring, following the rainy season, graves were whitewashed lest the unwary defile themselves ceremonially by accidentally touching them- **Numbers 19:16; Ezekiel 39:15**.

- This local custom provided an excellent illustration for Jesus to describe their external attractiveness to people, but expose their inward corruption of heart.
- **Luke 11:44** uses graves in a slightly different way, as unmarked, so people could accidentally come in contact with them and thus become defiled.
- The Pharisees, by their example, unconsciously caused other men to break the Law and defile themselves, because of their man made rules and traditions.

### **Luke 11:44**

**“Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it.”**

## 7. Murderers

### **Matthew 23:29-36**

**“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the sin of your forefathers! “You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.**

The tombs that were built did not have the actual remains of the prophets, it was meant to be a memorial out of respect and reverence for those individuals.

- In effect, the Pharisees were distancing themselves from the atrocities of their forefathers.
- Yet Jesus completely discredited their pretense for what it was, more hypocrisy.
- The religious leaders were already plotting the murder of Jesus, their Messiah.
  - o **Matthew 21:46; 22:15; Mark 14:1; Luke 19:47; John 5:18; 7:19; 8:37-40; 11:47-53.**
- The parable Jesus gave of the vineyard perfectly describes God’s dealings with the nation of Israel to fulfill their purpose to be a light to the Gentiles- **Luke 20:9-19.**
- The Lord indeed sent many prophets and righteous men over hundreds of years to warn the people to repent, but instead they murdered and persecuted them- **Hebrews 11:35-38.**

Then Jesus made a remarkable statement, that upon that generation, they would be taking upon their shoulders the wrath of God for all the righteous blood spilled from upon the earth up to that time. From Abel (**Genesis 4:8**) to Zacharias (**2 Chronicles 24:20-22**).

The failure of the Jews to learn the lessons of the past and repent of their wickedness, resulted in that generation sharing in the same judgment as their forefathers.

When Jesus was handed over to Pilate by the religious leaders out of envy (**Mark 15:9-15**), Pilate was ignorant of who Jesus was, but the Jews knew Jesus was their Messiah- **John 19:6-18.**

- Pilate tried to relinquish himself of all responsibility, realizing that Jesus was innocent.
- The Jews said something that makes me shudder, *“Let his blood be on us and our children.”*
- They accepted full responsibility and guilt for the rejection of their Messiah- **1 Th. 2:14-16.**

### **Matthew 27:24-26**

**When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!” All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!” Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.**

This happened in 70 AD, when the people of Israel rebelled against the Romans, the General Titus came and destroyed Jerusalem, the temple and scattered the people- **Luke 19:41-44; 21:5-6, 20-24.**

# Discourse #53: Jesus Weeps Over Jerusalem

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Reference: Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 13:31-35

Theme: Jesus was Grieved over all that was going to befall Jerusalem and the Jewish People

Context: Jesus had just finished Speaking to Large Crowds and Rebuking the Religious Leaders



**“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”**

**Matthew 23:37-39**

The name Jerusalem, in the Hebrews means “City of Peace” but when you study its history, it has been anything but that. Jerusalem in its history serves as a good example of God dealing with a large group of people. It has been destroyed twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times.

God is longsuffering, but it’s not everlasting and when a people fail to repent, the door is opened for Satan to come in and kill, steal and destroy- **John 10:10.**

- Notice what Jesus said in Luke 13:33, “...for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!”
- Yet the city carries with it an illustrious history during the golden years of King David and Solomon. Matthew 5:35, “...by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.”
- This city also had a great reputation for murdering God’s messengers- **Acts 7:51-53.**
- A long trail of blood and murder in Jewish History. God would send His servants to call His people back to repentance; instead they persecuted and martyred many of them- **Heb. 11:35-38. 1 Sam. 22:18; 1Ki. 19:10; 22:24; 2 Chr. 24:20-21; 36:16; Neh. 9:26; Jer. 20:1-2; 37:15; 38:6; 44:4-6**

## **Diaspora- Dispersed among the Nations**

This refers to the scattering (Greek- “To Scatter”) of the Jewish people among other nations. Throughout their history, the Jews have experienced many dispersions- some voluntary while others forced.

- Since the Jewish nation as a whole rejected their Messiah, severe judgment came upon them.
- Jesus knew this would happen and wept over Jerusalem in **Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24.**

Within a short period of time (40 years) after the resurrection of Jesus, Jerusalem and the temple was completely destroyed in 70 AD, under the Roman general Titus- **1 Thessalonians 2:14-16.**

With the Early Church birthed at the Day of Pentecost and now the Jewish nation dispersed, God had established a new priesthood, a new holy nation in the Church of Jesus Christ, to take the Gospel to the world and fulfill the Great Commission- **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; 1 Peter 2:9-10.**

At Jesus’ Second return the Jews as a nation will recognize their rejected Messiah, and welcome His return- **Psalms 118:26; Zechariah 12:10; John 12:12-16; Romans 11.**

# Discourse #54: Repent or Perish

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Reference: Luke 13:1-5

Theme: The Wages of Sin is Death, so the only way to Escape Death is to Repent of Sin

Context: Jesus was brought up to Speed on Some Current Events in Jerusalem



Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them — do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Luke 13:1-5

Common thought at that time as it is today, is that God has some esoteric sovereign purpose behind every unfortunate tragedy that occurs. In this specific case the rationale was because of sin.

- The same logic was applied by the disciples to the man who was born blind- **John 9:1-3**.
- Many times God is said to be responsible for the things He only **permits** or allows to be done.
- Certainly sin does create open doors for Satan to attack people- **Ro. 6:23; Eph. 4:27**.
  - o **Psalms 78:61-62; Judges 2:14-15; Jeremiah 22:25; 1 Cor. 5:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:19-20**.
- Satan is the god of this world system- **Job 1:6-7; Luke 4:5-8; 2 Cor. 4:4; Gal. 3:22; 1 Jn. 5:19**.
- We live in a fallen world, people are mortal and accidents happen- *Romans 8:18-25*.
- Thankfully we can be led by the Spirit at not be at the wrong place at the wrong time.
  - o **Psalms 23:3; 32:8; 37:23-24; Proverbs 3:5-6; Isaiah 58:11; Romans 8:14**.

There is a lot of danger to hyper-spiritualizing the tragedies of life, there are reasons why bad things happen to good people, and we won't know all those reasons, but it's not God's perfect will- **Jn. 10:10**.

- John the Baptist and Jesus preached a message of repentance; turn from sin to God.
  - o **Joel 2:12-13; Matthew 3:2; Mark 6:12; Acts 3:19; 20:21**.
- Repentance is not just lip service, but backed up by forsaking sin.
  - o Matthew 3:8-9, “*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*”
- A beautiful display of repentance by the woman with the alabaster jar of rare perfume.
  - o **Luke 7:41-43**.

## Matthew 4:17

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”

- The sinner is to come to Christ just as they are, with a wiliness of Heart to leave sin.
- A sinner can't stop sinning, that is their nature, but they have to want to be free from it.
- A drunkard can't come to Christ with the intent to remain a drunkard and have Jesus too.
- It's all or nothing. We come to Jesus to be Born Again, so we can be freed from sin.
  - o **1 John 3:9-10; Jude 22-23**.
- As a result, “Eternal Life” operating in our spirit produces the fruit of righteousness.

# Discourse #55: The Widow's Offering

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Reference: Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4

Theme: Giving from the Heart by Giving Ourselves First to the Lord and Trusting in Him

Context: Jesus was in the Temple watching as People gave into the Treasury



**Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on.”**

**Mark 12:41-44**

The two small copper coins “Mites” were the smallest denomination of coins at that time- 1/3 of a cent.

**Amount:** In proportion to what the wealthy gave, the widow woman gave the largest amount since it was all she had left; the rich gave a portion of their wealth.

- Jesus looks at the gift in proportion to what we have, not what we don't have.
- Giving out of one's poverty continued with the Early Church- **2 Corinthians 8:1-4.**
- The best thing for the poor to do is to give their way out of poverty- **Philippians 4:14-19.**
- Sure it may be small at first, but the law of increase will kick in for them- **2 Cor. 9:6.**
- If a person has absolutely nothing to give, there is a promise in the Bible that Jesus, the Lord of the harvest will give financial seed for them to sow; don't eat it- **2 Corinthians 9:10-11.**
- Our giving is an important part of our worship services; represents part of our lives- time.

In Malachi 1:11 a reference is made to “pure offerings.” A pure offering is done from a right heart, in faith and in love. It is giving our best to God in order to honor Him.

Not giving Him the junk, but the first of what we have, and it is not the amount, but the heart of faith in love, just like this poor widow. Jesus is still watching what people put in the offering bucket today.

**Heart:** The Lord is not impressed with large offerings. What He looks at first are the motives of the heart, along with faith and joy that are mixed in with our giving- **Acts 10:1-4.**

- If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable- **2 Corinthians 8:11-12; 9:7-9.**
- Our first motive is to honor the Lord with our giving so His work is funded in the earth.
- We should want to be blessed in return so we can bless others more- **Pr. 11:25; Acts 20:35.**
- Finally, our giving takes money out of Satan's hands- **Proverbs 13:22.**
- God gives us the ability to produce wealth- **Deuteronomy 8:18; 28:11-13.**
  - o Psalms 35:27 NKJV, “*Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.*”
- Our Heavenly Father wants His children to prosper, but not be greedy and covetous.
  - o **Pr. 3:9-10; 10:22; Mt. 6:33; 7:9-11; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; James 1:16-17; 3 John 2.**

# Discourse #56: Signs of the End of the Age

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Reference: Matthew 24:1-35; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-36

Theme: God's Sovereign Plan will Come to Pass Exactly as Jesus Predicted it to be

Context: Jesus was leaving the Temple and the Disciples Commented to its Buildings



Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. “Do you see all these things?” he asked. “I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; everyone will be thrown down.” As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:1-3

## 1. The Mystery

- God in His wisdom, left out some critical facts concerning the timing of the end of the world.
- Based on the knowledge the Jews had of Daniel's 70 weeks time table (490 years), they were right on schedule for the end of the world to come during Jesus' time- **Daniel 9:20-27**.
- This makes sense why even after the resurrection the disciples thought the end had come.
  - o **Luke 19:11, 41-42; 24:21; John 18:36; Acts 1:6-8**.
- The Lord also through types and shadows in the Old Testament, had disguised His redemptive plan in saving mankind from sin 2,000 years ago- **1 Corinthians 2:6-10; 1 Peter 1:10-12**.

It was revealed to Daniel by the Archangel Gabriel, that ‘Seventy Sevens’ or in other translations ‘Seventy Weeks’ were decreed for the people of Israel to end all things for the world. Each week is equivalent to 7 years, so this amounts to 70 x 7 years = 490 years.

According to **Daniel 9:25**, this prophetic clock began ticking when the decree was made while Israel was in captivity- for them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild it. The first decree was made by the Persian King Cyrus in 538 B.C. in **Ezra 1:1-2; Isaiah 44:28; 45:13**. But it was not until 444 B.C. Persian King Artaxerxes sends Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem- **Nehemiah 2:1-9**.

From the issuing of King Artaxerxes's decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the crucifixion of Jesus, 483 years had transpired. Leaving 7 years for the Tribulation period to be fulfilled in the future.

Like most Jews of Jesus' time, they were expecting the Messiah to begin His millennial reign immediately as King over all the earth, but God had a mystery that was soon revealed.

This mystery that God had kept hidden from the Jewish nation, would include salvation for the Gentile nations- **Romans 1:16; 11:25; 16:25-27; Ephesians 1:9-40; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:25-27; 4:3**.

- Israel was described in a parable as a barren fig tree (**Luke 13:6-9**), and also as wicked tenants in **Matthew 21:33-46** that would not produce the fruit of winning souls for God- **Mark 11:12-14**.

The advantages this fig tree had in this parable, by being planted in a vineyard is that it was exposed to better soil and personal cultivation in contrast to those that grew in the wilderness on their own. So there was no excuse for this fig tree to be barren- **Romans 2:17-24; 3:1-2; 9:1-5.**

- The Jewish people had great advantages, being God's covenant people.
- Since God called Abraham, Genesis 12:3, "*all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*"

### **Exodus 19:5-6**

**"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."**

The Israelite nation was expected to bear fruit by leading righteous lives and by communicating God's truth to the other nations of the world. God wants all men to be saved- **1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9,15.**

### **Isaiah 49:6**

**"I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."**

- Unfortunately the Jews failed in that calling to bring God's covenant message to the Gentiles.
- For centuries Israel struggled with idolatry, trying to be like the nations of the world.
- Then they went to the other extreme, became legalistically religious and despised the Gentiles.
  - o Like Jonah, was indifferent to their fate- **Jonah 4:1-11.**
- As a result, they never fulfilled their God ordained mandate to be a light to the nations.
- They resented how the Gentile nations around them had influenced them, though no one forced them to worship idols- they did that on their own.
- As a result, they hated and despised them and would have nothing to do with them.
- This also included the Samaritans, half Jews and half Gentiles, but Jesus reached out- **John 4:7-9**
- Even Peter needed a vision to preach the gospel to the Gentiles since there was such a great bias and prejudice against them- **Acts chapter 10.**

### **Acts 11:1-3**

**"The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, 'You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.'"**

- Well hello, this is what Israel was called to do, bring salvation to the rest of the world.
- When Paul explained to his own countrymen God's call on Him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, they tried to kill him and almost succeeded- **Acts 22:21-23.**

When Jesus as a baby was being presented to the Lord in Jerusalem, there was a righteous and devout man named Simeon that took Jesus in his arms and among other things made this statement about Him: Luke 2:32, "*...a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.*"

### **John 12:46**

**I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.**

- Even though the Apostle Paul was raised in a strict sect of the Pharisees, God dealt with Him about His heart for the nations, and made Paul an apostle to take the gospel to them.
  - o **Acts 26:1-23; Romans 11:13; Galatians 2:8; Ephesians 2:11-13; 3:1-13.**

## 2. Times of the Gentiles

So Jesus as the keeper of Israel comes to earth as their Messiah to call them back to repentance and fulfill their purpose to be a light to the Gentiles. Sadly they rejected God's last great offer to get with the program, so He turned the task of reaching the lost over to Church- **Matthew 21:43**.

### **Luke 21:20-24**

**“When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**

The people of Israel rebelled against the Romans, so in 70 AD the General Titus came and destroyed Jerusalem, temple and scattered the people- **Luke 19:41-44; 21:5-6, 20-24; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16**.

### **Diaspora- Dispersed among the Nations**

This refers to the scattering (Greek- “To Scatter”) of the Jewish people among other nations. Throughout their history, the Jews have experienced many dispersions- some voluntary while others forced.

- We are currently living in the “Times of the Gentiles” also known as the Church Age or the Dispensation of Grace. When the good news of the Gospel message is being preached.
- It began with the birth of the Church in Acts chapter 2 and continues till this day.
- We have been given a Gospel message under the New Covenant just as the Jews had their Gospel message under the Old Covenant to proclaim- **Hebrews 4:1-11**.
- This Gospel message is encapsulated in the Great Commission.
  - o **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8**.
- So the obvious question is asked, when does the “Times of the Gentiles” end? **Mark 13:10**.

**Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”**

### **False Christs and Prophets**

False Teachers, Messiahs and Prophets have been a plague throughout the ages, discrediting Christianity and causing a lot of confusion in the Body of Christ.

### **Matthew 24:4-5**

**Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.”**

- Often times they begin as legitimate Christians and then get off on false doctrines.
  - o **1 Timothy 1:3; 2:17-18; 6:3; 3 John 9-11**.
- Other times they were never saved to begin with and came as wolves in sheep's clothing.
  - o **Acts 20:28-31; 2 Peter chapter 2; Jude 3-19**.
- Until the Tribulation period comes, those who are dubbed antichrists are merely men and women who are totally opposed to the Lord Jesus Christ and deny Him.
  - o **1 John 2:18-19, 22-23; 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7-11**.
- The “One” antichrist who is to come is unique from an end times prophetic standpoint.

## **Wars and Rumors of Wars**

For the last 2,000 years since Jesus made these statements, world history has certainly seen its share of these things, but have you noticed the increase. Especially the last century experienced horrific losses.

**Matthew 24:6-8, “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.”**

- In Luke 21:9-11 we see reference to “wars, revolutions, pestilences” and “fearful events and great signs from heaven.”
- What is amazing to note is that as bad as things have been, they are only the beginning, only a glimpse of what is going to befall the earth- **Romans 8:18-22.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-3, “Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.”**

## **Great Persecution**

When we look at the history of the Early Church, the predominate theme we see is persecution and great signs and wonders by the Holy Spirit- consider “Foxe’s Book of Martyrs” as a reference.

### **Matthew 24:9**

**“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me”**

### **Mark 13:9**

**“You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them.”**

### **Luke 21:12-13**

**“But before all this, they will lay hands on you and persecute you. They will deliver you to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. This will result in your being witnesses to them.”**

- We would be hated by all nations- **John 15:18, 25; 1 John 3:13.**
- James and Stephen were put to death; one by the sword & the other stoned- **Acts 7:54-60; 12:2.**
- Peter and John were flogged by the religious leaders- **Acts 5:40-42.**
- Paul was a tremendous witness to kings and Caesar himself- **Acts 9:15; 25:10-12; 26:1-3; 27:24**

Persecution does not sound like a very comfortable thing does it? It would be a natural reaction to shun, recoil and avoid it due to the unpleasant nature of it- **Hebrews 10:32-39.**

- Who wants to experience the pain of rejection, scorn or worse martyrdom? **Heb. 11:35-38.**
- Yet as disciples of Jesus Christ, it’s an unavoidable circumstance of life.
- Fortunately the New Testament provides ample passages of scripture to prepare us for it.
  - o **Mt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; 16:1-4; Acts 19:23-40; 26:9; 2 Tim. 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12.**
- In spite of what the devil means for evil to destroy us, God can turn it around for our good and for His glory- **Acts 13:50; 14:2, 19; 17:5; Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 1:17.**

- We are warned in the Epistles that there will be terrible times in the last days.
- Even to the point where the pressures are so great, that some will abandon the faith.
- The key is to remain faithful to the end- **Php. 2:12-13; Heb. 3:14; James 5:8; 2 John 2:8.**

### **Matthew 24:10-13**

**At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**

- When we are put on the spot, the Holy Spirit is there to give us what to say and how to say it.
  - o **Matthew 10:17-23; John 12:49.**
- Even within one's own family, betrayal will occur, even to the point of being put to death.
  - o **Mark 13:10-13; Luke 21:14-19.**

I believe that the first 4 seals mentioned in **Revelation 5:1-6:17; 8:1** are in effect right now, during this age we are living in now, and the other three will be carried out in the tribulation period.

### **3. Tribulation Period**

This period is only seven years in length, with indescribable things happening during this time from the Rapture of the Saints to the Second Advent of Jesus, and God's Wrath upon the world system.

- Speaking of the antichrist, he will bring a temporary peace to the Middle East for seven years.
- In this peace pact, apparently the Temple sacrifices will be restored to the Jews, but he will break it in the middle of the 7 years by setting up an idol- abomination that causes desolation.

### **Daniel 9:27**

**“He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’ In the middle of the ‘seven’ he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”**

### **Rapture of the Church**

However, before all that happens, a great event will first take place, where all those born again believers on this earth will be instantly taken into heaven, and so we will be with the Lord forever.

- This event will happen without any warning, we will be changed and receive our glorified bodies
  - o **1 Corinthians 15:35-58; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**
- Why is this event so important, for a couple of reasons:
  - o As believers we are called the salt and light of the earth, through our faith and prayers we are able to minimize evil in the world, take us out and its gone- **Mt.5:13-16; 2 Th. 2:6-7.**
  - o Second reason, what a witness to the world when a billion people disappear!

### **Great Tribulation Period**

This takes place during the last 3½ years of the Tribulation period. The severity of the judgments are so intense that if this time period went any longer, no one would be left on the earth.

- The 7 trumpets unleash global judgments that affect 1/3 of the earth, rivers, ocean and sky. Other plagues and torments are turned loose on the earth as well- **Revelation 8:1-9:21; 11:15-19.**
- There will be many tribulation saints martyred during this time. Those who were not born again at the time of the rapture still have a chance to receive salvation- **Revelation 7:13-17.**

- The antichrist will murder all those who do not take his mark on their hand or forehead. Nor can anyone buy or sell anything without this mark. Tremendous suffering for those who serve Jesus.
  - o **Revelation 13:1-18.**
- Mind you those who do receive the mark still suffer under God's wrath- **Revelation 14:9-12.**

#### **Matthew 24:15-25**

**“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel — let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now — and never to be equaled again. If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.”**

- The abomination that causes desolation mentioned in **Daniel 9:27; 12:11** speaks of an idol.
- This event marks the beginning of the Great Tribulation period.
- Since there will be many saved during this time, Jesus was warning them in advance to get away from the epicenter of where the judgments will take place- **Revelation 14:20; 16:16.**

#### **Anti-Christ and False Prophet**

He goes by a few names, ‘Son of Perdition’, ‘Man of Sin’, ‘The Wicked One’, ‘The Beast’; however his name, “Antichrist” simply means, “The one against Christ, God’s anointed.”

#### **Matthew 24:23-25**

**“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect — if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time.”**

The spirit of the antichrist is the essence of Satan’s rebellion in the earth- also known as the ‘secret power of lawlessness’. All this evil will be embodied in one man, who will be totally possessed of Satan for a grand show of rebellion on a scale never seen before.

- The antichrist of the Tribulation period will be a puppet of Satan, even performing lying signs and wonders; every sort of evil that deceives- **2 Thessalonians 2:5-12.**
- He will be a leader of the European Union or the revived Roman empire.
- The antichrist is depicted as coming from the ‘sea’ which is symbolic of the Gentile nations. While the false prophet is seen as coming from the ‘earth’ which is symbolic of Israel.
  - o **Revelation 13:1-2, 11-14.**
- He too will perform false signs and wonders on behalf of the beast- **Revelation 13:11-18.**

## **4. The Second Advent**

The Second Return of Jesus Christ is what we are all looking forward to, marking the end of Adam’s lease on the earth- **Psalms 115:16; 24:1-2; 96:5; Isaiah 45:18; Matthew 8:29; Revelation 12:7-13.**

- In Jesus’ first advent, He came as a Lamb, the Second Advent He comes as a Lion to rule.
  - o **John 1:29, 36; Revelation 5:5.**
- The Jewish Nation was anticipating the coming of their Messiah to usher in a 1,000 year reign.
- They just missed the timing of it, 2,000 years ago because of the mystery- Church Age.

### Matthew 24:26-31

“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather. “Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

- This glorious return of Jesus is often referred to in Scripture as the “Day of the Lord.”
  - o Acts 2:20; 1 Corinthians 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; 1 Th. 5:2; 2 Th. 2:2; 2 Peter 3:10.
- We automatically know that a person is wrong when they say that Jesus is here or there on earth.
  - o Luke 17:24.
- When Jesus returns, it will be in the same manner He had left- Acts 1:10-11.
- This time everyone will all see Him; sinners will mourn and saints will rejoice- Rev. 6:15-17.
  - o Luke 21:25-28.

When Jesus returns with the armies of heaven, all those whose names are not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life is slain with the sword proceeding from Jesus’ mouth. Hence the reference to vultures.

### Matthew 24:40-41

**Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.**

- The above verse is not talking about the “Rapture” of the Church.
- After the Second Advent of Jesus, the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ begins from Jerusalem for a 1,000 year period. I look forward to working for Jesus full-time in His earthly Kingdom!

In **Revelation 20:1-10**, the Millennial period is revealed, notice that nations are mentioned. Meaning lots of people will repopulate the earth. Only by those who survived the Great Tribulation period.

- So those who are left in **Matthew 24:40-41**, are the Tribulation Saints (saved believers) who have not been martyred for their faith. Those martyred are resurrected- **Revelation 20:4-6**.
- They get to go on living in their natural bodies, along with having children- **Revelation 20:7-8**.

In these passages: **Isaiah 11:1-9; 65:20-25** we see a glimpse of what it will be like in the Millennium.

- Those who are taken, are the unsaved; they are put to death and taken to hell by the angles.
- These unfortunate ones accepted the mark of the Beast and are doomed - **Revelation 14:9-12**.
- Consider the manner in which Jesus returns and what He does to the nations, **Revelation 19:15**, “*Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations.*”
- During this global judgment (**Rev. 19:17-21**), multitudes of people will be put to death (**James 2:26**) by Jesus and cast into hell to be reserved for judgment at the Great White Throne- **Revelation 20:11-15**.

**Matthew 13:42-43**, “They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

## 5. Lesson from the Fig Tree

### **Luke 21:29-36**

**He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. “I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”**

- A fig tree is often used as a metaphor for the Jewish people in the Bible.
- Often times the Bible mentions both the vine (grape vine) and fig tree together.
  - o **1 Kings 4:25.; Joel 2:22; Micah 4:4.**
- When Jesus was talking about His Second Return at the end of the Great Tribulation period in **Matthew 24:27-31**, the context was speaking to the nation of Israel at that time and in the future.
- Jesus used the fig tree as an illustration that points to signs or evidence of His imminent return.
  - o **Matthew 24:32-33; Mark 13:28-29; Luke 21:29-30.**
- We are to keep our eyes on Israel as a sign post to the timing of the end of this age- **Luke 21:28.**

In 1948, Israel became a nation once again after having been dispersed amongst the nations for almost two thousand years.

It is a great sign for us that the Church Age is winding down fast, and we will be removed from center stage and the prophetic spot light will shine on the nation of Israel one last time to fulfill God’s purpose.

So this is how we know that the time is near, the other great sign is seeing the Gospel being preached to every people group in the world.

### **Matthew 24:14**

**And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.**

There are a number of parables Jesus had given to warn people to stay alert to His coming so they are not caught unaware- **Matthew 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-40, 42-48**

- Not even Jesus knows when He will return, only the Father God knows- **Matthew 24:36.**
- So we need to live in a state of readiness, the rapture can take place at any hour.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:4-6**

**But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.**

# Discourse #57: The Day and The Hour Unknown

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Reference: Matthew 24:36-51; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 17:22-37

Theme: Not Knowing the Day or Hour Means we must Always be Ready at any Moment for His Return  
Context: Jesus is Concluding His Discourse of the End of the World on the Mount of Olives



**“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be**

**taken and the other left. “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.**

**Matthew 24:36-44**

- God the Father in His sovereignty has hidden the day and hour of when Jesus returns.
- When anyone claims he/she knows when the Lord will return, that’s automatic error- **Acts 1:6-7**
- From the viewpoint of the world, this will take them totally by surprise.
- Since we have God’s Word to show us the signs of the times, we can know the season.
- For instance, after the rapture those who get saved can look in the Bible and know that in seven years Jesus will return, so they just need to hang on- **Matthew 24:13; Revelation 13:5-10.**

## 1. Be Ready

Notice the example Jesus uses, “the days of Noah” or in Luke’s account he adds the people in Sodom just before they were destroyed- **Luke 17:26-29.** They were totally unaware of their impending disaster.

Like with the parable of the Wedding Banquet (**Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:35-40**), the central theme is about being ready, watchful and alert for the Lord’s return.

- The concept of not knowing the Lord’s return applies to both the Rapture and Second Advent.
- Living in a state of readiness, eagerly expecting His return at any moment is key.
- The goal is to “watch” and be ready when the Lord returns, not distracted or detached.
- Half in the world and half in the Kingdom of God, being lukewarm- **Revelation 3:16.**
- We are to encourage one another long these lines so none of us falls behind.
  - o **1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; Hebrews 3:13; 10:25.**

## Revelation 16:15

**“Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake and keeps his clothes with him, so that he may not go naked and be shamefully exposed.”**

- The key is to keep from being distracted by the world and our own agenda- **1 John 3:3.**
- Keeping our minds fixed on Jesus will keep us in a state of readiness whether the Lord comes in our lifetime or not- **Colossians 3:1-2; Philippians 4:4-9; Hebrews 3:1.**
- We must be focused and disciplined- **1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12.**
- Knowing that it's how we finish, and not how we start our Christian race that counts.
  - o **2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12; Hebrews 10:36; 2 John 8; Revelation 3:11**

### **1 Peter 4:7**

**The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:1-4**

**Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief.**

- For Christians, the primary way we stay ready for the Lord's return is to live right.
- If we allow ourselves to backslide and live in sin, we are taking an awful risk.
  - o **Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-48.**
- Knowing that it's how we finish, and not how we start our Christian race that counts.
  - o **2 Timothy 4:7-8; James 1:12; Hebrews 10:36; 13:14; 2 John 8; Revelation 3:11.**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:5-8**

**You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.**

The context of our main text is Jesus speaking to the Jews in regards to His Second Advent; making reference to *"Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left"* in verses 40-41.

- Therefore the above verse is not talking about the "Rapture" of the Church.
- The ones who are left are those living tribulation saints at the Second Coming of the Lord.
- Those who were martyred are resurrected to reign with Jesus- **Revelation 20:4-6.**
- The ones who will be taken are those who are put to death by Jesus Himself and taken to hell, because they had rejected Him as their Savior and took the mark of the beast & worshiped him.
  - o **Revelation 14:9-12; 19:17-21; 20:5.**

### **Matthew 24:45-51**

**"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."**

So bottom line, Jesus gives each of us today a charge to be ready- **Mark 13:34-37; Luke 17:45-51.**

# Discourse #58: Sheep and the Goats

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Reference: Matthew 25:31-46

Theme: Who we Treat the Lord's People is how we are Treating Him

Context: Jesus was still Speaking to His Disciples about End Time Events



**“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”**

**Matthew 25:31-33**

The context is Jesus speaking to those who are left until His Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation period.

- The act of separating the sheep and the goats occurs in **Revelation 19:17-21**.
- Those who are taken or killed and sent to hell are the goats, and those who are left to live on in the Millennium are the sheep.
- This is the “End of the World” the disciples were asking Jesus about in **Matthew 24:3**.
- However, the final end of Satan, death and hell does not occur until the end of the Millennium.
  - o **1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 20:7-15**.
- Jesus returns to the earth in the same manner that He had left 2,000 years ago- **Mt. 24:30-31**.

## Acts 1:11

**“Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”**

### 1. Sheep versus Goats

- The Bible depicts sheep as innocent and harmless so they are used as a metaphor for the saints.
  - o **John 10:7,14-16,27; Psalms 100:3; 74:1; 23**.
- By nature they are more submissive than goats, though not too smart- **Isa. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:25**.
- Being at the right hand of something in the Bible represents a place of honor, favor & authority.
  - o **Ps. 110:1; Ec. 10:2; Acts 2:25,33; 7:55-56; Ro. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3**.
- Likewise receiving something from someone's right hand is also a gesture of favor.
  - o **Genesis 48:13-20; Galatians 2:9; Revelation 1:16-17, 20; 2:1; 5:1, 7; 10:5**.
- The goats on the other hand are depicted in Scripture as wicked- **Ezekiel 34:17**.
- Also when you think of a goat, what personality trait comes to mind- stubbornness.
  - o **Jeremiah 11:6-8; Mark 3:1-6; Romans 2:4-5; Hebrews 3:12-19**.
- Being on the left hand of something is a place of dishonor and condemnation- **Ecclesiastes 10:2**.
- Jesus is judging the people of the world in how they treated the Jewish believers from the nation of Israel who became evangelists for Jesus- **Joel 3:1-2; Revelation 7:8**.

## 2. The Righteous

### **Matthew 25:34-40**

**“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’“**

Referring to those people within the Gentile nations, who refused to take the mark of the Beast, and treated the Jewish believers who were persecuted (**Revelation 12:17**), with love and care.

- Risking their own safety to care for them, Jesus will take it personally as though their acts of kindness will be done to Himself.
- They did not stand idly by as these Jewish believers were being persecuted for preaching the Gospel to the world, they did something about it and helped them.
- The Inheritance Jesus speaks of is for them to go on living their natural lives in Jesus Kingdom on the earth.
- Whether they or their descendents will unfortunately take part in a final rebellion against God.
  - o **Revelation 20:7-10.**

## 3. The Wicked

### **Matthew 25:41-46**

**“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ “He will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”**

The Bible is clear that all those who will receive the mark of the Beast are doomed (**Revelation 14:9-11**). However for those who did not receive the mark, and yet were indifferent to the plight of His people suffering, they too will be cast into hell.

Even though this account Jesus gives of the sheep and the goats applying to a future end time event, it still has relevance to us today. The manner in which we or the world treats God’s people is taken personally- **Matthew 10:42; 1 Corinthians 3:17.**

- When people take advantage God’s people, the Lord takes it very personally.
  - o **Proverbs 14:31; 17:5; 19:17; Luke 11:52; 20:45-47; Acts 12:2, 23; 26:14.**
- When we give to the poor and God’s people, the Lord takes it personally in a good way.
  - o **Proverbs 19:17; 28:27; Matthew 25:40; 2 Corinthians 8:19.**
- Investing in the lives of people is the only thing that counts for eternity!

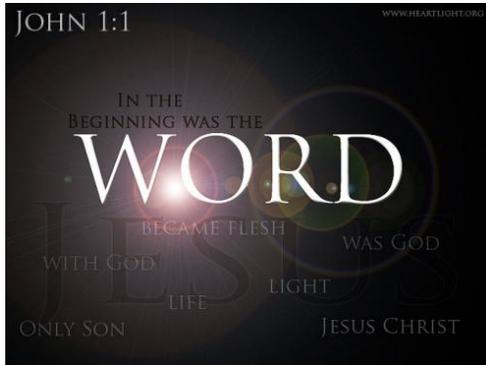
# Discourse #59: The Word Became Flesh

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Reference: John 1:1-18

Theme: Jesus, the Word of God is God and has Come to give us Grace and Truth

Context: The very Beginning of the Gospel of John



**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**

**John 1:1-3**

The name of the Second Person of the Godhead is the “Word” which may seem like an odd name, but names in the Bible describe their nature, characteristics and function- **1 John 1:1; Revelation 19:13.**

- The everlasting and divine Godhead is made up of three distinct and unique individuals.
- God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, known as the Trinity- **Matthew 28:19.**
- All three are co-equal in divinity, no beginning or ending, equal in power and majesty.
  - o **Psalms 19:1-4; 90:2; Romans 1:18-20; Colossians 1:17; 1 Timothy 1:17.**

However, there is leadership within the Trinity, where the will of the Godhead proceeds from the Father, is executed by the Son and is enforced/revealed by the Holy Spirit- all three work as a team.

## **Romans 11:36**

**For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.**

- So the will of the Godhead proceeds from the Father: **Matthew 7:21; 12:50; John 6:40.**
- This will is carried out through the Son: **John 3:16; Romans 5:2, 11; 1 Cor. 8:6; Hebrews 1:2.**
- The Holy Spirit Reveals and Enforces it: **John 14:24; 15:26; 16:7-8; 13-15; 1 Cor. 2:10.**
- The Holy Spirit is the power of God in manifestation in accordance with the Word of God.
- **1 Sam. 16:13; Isaiah 11:2; Luke 1:35; 4:14, 36; Acts 10:38; Ro. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4; Eph. 3:16**

**Hebrews 1:3, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”**

- It was through the Word of God that the universe was created- **Hebrews 11:3.**
- Just because the Word of God took on human form, that does not diminish His deity.
  - o **John 8:58-59; Philippians 2:5-11; Titus 3:4; Hebrews 1:8-9.**
- Cults try to discredit the deity of Jesus, like Jehovah Witness that pervert the Greek in their new world translation and change John 1:1 to read, “The word was a god.” **2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4.**

**John 17:5, “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”**

## 1. The Manifestation of Light and Life

### John 1:4-9

**In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**

- Light in the Bible speaks of revelation truth revealed to people- **Eph. 1:17-19; Col. 1:19; 2:2.**
- Since Jesus is the Word of God, it makes sense that He is the Light of the world.
  - o **Ps. 19:8; 43:3; 119:105, 130; Mt. 4:16; Jn. 8:12; 12:35-36, 46; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Jn. 1:5.**
  - o John 9:5, *“While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”*
- Those who walk in darkness (evil) hate the light- **John 3:19-21; 1 John 1:5-7.**

### Luke 2:30-32

**“For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”**

- Apart from the Word of God, Jesus Christ, there is no eternal life for mankind.
  - o **John 5:26; 3:14-16; 5:39-40; 6:27-29, 40, 53-58; 10:28; 12:50; 17:2-3; 1 John 5:11-13.**

### John 5:24-25

**“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”**

## 2. Born Again through the Word of God

### John 1:10-13

**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.**

- On the most part, the creator was rejected by His creation.
- Even the nation of Israel, even though they had numerous prophecies, failed to recognize their Messiah- **Matthew 9:12; Luke 3:23-38; 7:30; 9:22; 17:25; 19:44; Romans 1:3; 9:5.**
- There is no Name under heaven by which we must be saved- **John 14:6; Acts 4:12.**
- The Greek word for “Life” is *zoe*, which speaks of the life and nature of God within our spirit.
  - o **John 3:3-6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 3:15.**
- It’s through the seed of God’s Word that life springs up within our spirit-**Luke 8:11; James 1:21**

### 1 Peter 1:23

**For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.**

- God is the Father of our re-created human spirits.
  - o Hebrews 12:9, *“How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!”*
- God the Father is our Heavenly Father, who we can call “Abba Father” or daddy, daddy!
  - o **Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:14-21.**

### 3. Full of Grace and Truth

#### **John 14-15**

**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”**

- The Word of God is more than just a book, the Second Person of the Godhead Jesus Christ.

The “Word became flesh” speaks of the incarnation of the Word of God, taking on a human body and the human name Jesus. The name “Jesus” was a common name to the Jews, it was a transliteration of the Hebrew “Joshua” meaning “Jehovah is salvation” hence the meaning of His name as Savior.

#### **Matthew 1:23**

**“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”— which means, “God with us.”**

- God the Father sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world- **John 3:16.**
- John the Baptist was from a natural point of view, Jesus’ cousin; born six months prior.
  - o **Luke 1:36.**
- Yet John testified of Jesus’ divinity in that He always existed.
  - o John 1:15, “... *because he was before me*”

#### **John 1:16-18**

**From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.**

Definition of Grace- The power of God at work in us who believe; to do in and for us what we are unable to accomplish ourselves; the power and ability of God- **Acts 14:3; Ephesians 3:7**

Greek (Charis)- The divine influence upon the heart and its reflection in the life- benefit, favor, gift.

#### **Acts 20:32**

**“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”**

- God’s Word is alive and active, full of the spirit and life of God.
  - o **Proverbs 4:20-22; John 6:63; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Peter 1:2.**
- The Grace of God is released in our lives through our faith in God’s Word.
  - o **Ephesians 2:8-9; Hebrews 4:1-3.**
- It’s the truth of God’s Word that makes us free and God’s Word is truth- **John 17:17.**

#### **John 8:31-32 NKJV**

**Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”**

The Grace of God is released in our lives through our faith in God’s Word. The Lord works in our lives by His Grace, but it also requires our cooperation and faith for it to have its way in us.

# Discourse #60: Jesus the Lamb of God

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Reference: John 1:29

Theme: In His First Advent He came as the Lamb of God to Take Away our Sins; to Redeem Mankind  
Context: John the Baptist was Bearing Witness to who Jesus was as the Lord walked to John



The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

John 1:29

## 1. Why Jesus Came

The only power Satan has over people is through sin, when you remove the sin, Satan’s power to afflict and oppress people is taken away. That is why when Jesus came, the greatest act of spiritual warfare against the devil was in paying the penalty for our sins!

- This left Satan without any legal claim to our lives, to kill, steal and destroy- **John 10:10.**
- Had Satan known that crucifying Jesus would paralyze him, he wouldn’t have done it.
  - o **1 Corinthians 2:8; Colossians 2:13-15; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8.**
- That is why Jesus came to earth, to pay the price for our ransom to redeem us from sin.
  - o **Matthew 20:28; 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:15.**

Sin is what gives legal authority to Satan over humanity, and since all have sinned (**Romans 3:23**), we all are in need of a Savior. Since the blood of Jesus atones for our sins and wipes them away, Satan has lost his authority or right to afflict us with these curses- **Deuteronomy 28:15-68; Galatians 3:13, 22.**

That is why sickness, poverty and anything else the devil can muster against us has no more place in our lives, because of the atoning and redeeming work of Jesus Christ through His death, burial and resurrection- **Titus 2:14.**

- Let’s briefly consider the doctrine of the double cure- bore our sins and sicknesses.
- Sin is what opens the door for death (**Romans 6:23**), to afflict humanity; which manifests in sickness, disease, weakness and all kinds of oppression- **Acts 10:38.**
- Through the blood of Jesus our sins are washed away so we don’t have to be sick anymore.
  - o Like the paralytic on a mat, Jesus forgave his sins and then healed him- **Matthew 9:2-8.**
  - o **Psalms 103:2-5; Isaiah 53:4-5.**

So strategically and also legally, the greatest act of spiritual warfare was for Jesus to take from Satan what gave him authority over mankind to begin with- sin.

## 2. Background

When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, God pronounced judgment upon them, but He also spoke of a promised deliverer, born of a woman who would crush Satan's head- breaking his authority. **Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:12-14; Galatians 4:3-7.**

- Through deception, Satan stole Adam's dominion and became the god of this world system.
  - o **Job 1:6-7; Luke 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19.**
- Jesus came as the last Adam to undo what was done in the fall of man- **Ro. 5:14; 1 Cor.15:22,45**

### **Abraham Offers Isaac**

Abraham had a blood covenant with God and in ancient times, men were willing to give that which was most dear to them. Devotees of pagan gods would give their first-born; however this was something the Lord never required of His people to do- **Deuteronomy 12:29-31; 18:10-13; Jeremiah 19:5.**

Yet in Abraham's case, God tested him with this very thing, to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. However, God would never let Abraham go through with this act- **Genesis 22:1-2.**

- Notice the faith statement that Abraham makes in **Genesis 22:5**- they will return together.
- Abraham reasoned that even if he did offer Isaac as a burnt offering, could would raise him from the dead- **Hebrews 11:17-19.**
- The point is what Abraham said in response to Isaacs question, "where's the offering?"

**Genesis 22:8, "Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together."**

Isaac symbolizes humanity in that we deserved to die for our sin. However, Jesus is the lamb of God that God had provided as our substitute, to take our place upon the altar of sacrifice and tasted death for us so we could receive eternal life- **Genesis 22:13-14.**

The huge revelation here is that through Abraham's obedience in willingly offering his son as a sacrifice, made it legal for God the Father to do the same and send His only Son (Jesus) into the world as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world- **Hebrews 9:26.**

Abraham had a covenant with God, through his willingness to offer his son, God was able to reciprocate and offer His Son, Jesus- Satan could not challenge this, it was perfectly legal in the court of heaven.

### **Passover**

On the night before Israel's exodus out of Egypt's bondage (type of being in the world, bound by sin), the Lord instructed the Hebrews to select a one year old spotless male lamb and slaughter it.

- They were then to take the blood and apply it to the sides and tops of the doorframes.
- The lamb was to be roasted and eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened bread.
- This meal was to be eaten in haste as they were fully dressed and ready to leave.
- Notice the lamb had to be perfect, like Jesus as our sacrificial Lamb of God- **Isaiah 53:7.**

Although the family was inside the house and couldn't see the blood covering, they had faith that God would save them because of it. As they ate their meal, God allowed death to sweep through the land. If the entrance was covered by blood the angel of death could not get in, but had to pass over that house. Because of the blood of Jesus, death likewise has to Passover over our lives as well- **Hebrews 2:14-15.**

## **A Better Word than Abel**

After the fall of man, God killed some animals (perhaps sheep) and clothed them with the skins in (**Genesis 3:21**) as an object lesson that the wages of sin is death, and only blood can atone for sin.

- Cain and Abel were their sons and were taught about animal sacrifice as a covering for sin.
- Cain brought the fruit of the earth while Abel brought a blood sacrifice.
- God accepted Abel's sacrifice of blood and rejected Cain's work of his hands- **Hebrews 11:4**.

**Genesis 4:6-7, "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.'"**

- Well Cain ends up murdering his brother over it- **Matthew 23:35; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11**.
- When innocent blood is spilled, it has a voice that is heard by God- **Genesis 4:10**.
- The blood of Abel calls for justice (**Rev. 6:10**), the blood of Jesus calls for mercy- **Luke 23:34**.

**Hebrews 12:24, "To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel."**

### 3. The Blood of Jesus

- As the old hymn goes, "what can wash sins away, nothing but the blood of Jesus."
- The Bible makes countless references to blood in the Old and New Testaments.
- Unlike the false religions of the world that base their salvation on a works based system. Christianity is centered around the blood sacrifice and blood covenant of Jesus Christ.

**Romans 3:25, "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood."**

- Atonement means, "One who turns aside wrath by taking away sin."
- Under the Old Covenant they had the Levitical Priesthood and animal sacrifices that could only cover sin, but not take it away- **Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:18-22; 10:11**.
- Sin is spiritual crime, and the penalty is eternal death, separation from God in the Lake of Fire.
- The currency of blood is all that God recognizes as payment for sin, but not just any blood.
- The life of something is in the blood (**Leviticus 17:11**), and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins- **Hebrews 9:22**.
- Since Jesus is God His eternal life was in His blood shed on the cross to satisfy God's justice for our spiritual crimes. So in turn we go free, justified, sanctified and made righteous- **1 Cor. 1:30**.
- Jesus bore our sins & died for the ungodly- **Isa. 53:6, 12; Ro. 5:6-8; Heb. 13:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:24**.

We are no longer talking about covering sin, but actually taking it away as though it had never existed. **Colossians 1:13-14; Hebrews 7:11, 18-22; 8:12**.

The divine exchange states that Jesus gave all He was for us, by bearing all we were on the cross; "He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay, I needed someone to wash my sins away."

- The New Testament has a lot to say about the Blood of the Lamb shed to redeem mankind.
- **Ro. 3:24; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:7-8; Heb. 9:12; Rev. 1:5-6; 5:6, 9, 12; 7:14; 12:11; 19:11-13**.

Jesus came as the Lamb of God, but He will return as a Lion to execute judgment on this world system and bring an end to Satan's kingdom- Hallelujah! **Hebrews 9:28**.

# Discourse #61: The New Birth

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Reference: John 3:3-10

Theme: A Human Being must be Born Again in order to Enter Heaven

Context: Nicodemus comes to see Jesus at night and in secret



In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?”

**John 3:3-11**

The Pharisee Nicodemus came to Jesus at night and in secret to find out more about Him, knowing that God was with Him due the miraculous signs that were performed through His life and ministry.

- Jesus in usual style cuts right to the heart of the issue and brings up the New Birth.
- His words according to **John 6:63** are spirit and life, alive and active- **Hebrews 4:12**.
- One must be born again to go to heaven; Jesus was speaking of a spiritual new birth.
  - o This was emphatically stated, no other options, no workarounds or exceptions.
  - o Regardless of whether a person is a Jew or Gentile- **Romans 3:9; 11:32**.

This must have seemed like a radical idea to Nicodemus, so he tried to analyze what Jesus said from a natural standpoint. Not a foreign concept, there is a reference to being born again in the Old Testament.

## **Ezekiel 36:26-27**

**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.**

- Jesus goes on to explain that this new birth is about being born of water and Spirit.
  - o Water is used in the Bible as a type for the Word of God- **Ephesians 5:26**.

**1 Peter 1:23, “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.”**

**Titus 3:5, “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”**

When a person is born again by the Holy Spirit, the evidence cannot be seen by the naked eye, but like the wind, we can see the affect that is has on what it touches.

## 1. A New Creation

The greatest of all God's miracles is the transformation, re-creation and metamorphosis of the human spirit from Satan's nature to God's nature; from Death to Life, from Darkness to Light.

**2 Corinthians 5:16-17, "So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"**

- The new birth is the rebirth of the human spirit, it is the recreation of the spirit of man.
- One translation for "New Creation" is a "New Species," something that never existed before.
- That's why we are called spiritual babes in Christ, we were born brand new with no past.
  - o **1 Corinthians 3:1; Ephesians 4:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 1 Peter 2:2.**
- We are translated from the kingdom of darkness and born into God's family- **Jn. 5:24; 1Jn. 3:14**

### **Colossians 1:13-14**

**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

- It's not about getting religion or turning over a new leaf or trying to be a good person.
- It's not putting a new coat of paint on the outside of a condemned building. God razes the building and lays a brand new foundation- **1 Corinthians 3:10-15.**
- Our spiritual nature takes on the life and nature of God which is love = eternal life.
  - o **Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22-23; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9.**
- The God of the universe becomes our spiritual Father, adopted into His family.
  - o **Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 John 3:10.**
- We are to see each other by our new human spirit and through the eyes of God's Word.
- The first ones born again were the Lord's disciples just after He was resurrected from the dead.

### **John 20:21-23**

**Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

- Jesus was the first one to be Born Again since He became sin for us- **Isa. 53:9; 2 Cor. 5:21.**
  - o **Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15, 18; Revelation 1:5.**
- We were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ- **1 Corinthians 12:12-20, 27.**
- We are God's Workmanship in Jesus; we are not saved by good works, but having God's nature in us to do works as a new creation- **John 15:1-8; Ephesians 2:10.**
- Our spirit is saved instantly, our soul progressively & our body in the future- **Ro. 12:2; Php 3:21**

As we learn to walk in this new reality, then the lingering habits of an old sinful life becomes eliminated from our lives. That is referred to as progressive sanctification, becoming Christ-like over time.

**Romans 6; 8:13; 13:12-14; Ephesians 4:17-5:14; Colossians 3:1-14; 1 Peter 4:1-2.**

Water baptism, symbolizes the death of the old man and the emergence of the new man in Christ. The actual change of regeneration is an instantaneous experience brought about by the Holy Spirit. An outward demonstration of an inward work by God's grace- **Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.**

### **Galatians 6:15**

**Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.**

# Discourse #62: Life Through The Son

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Reference: John 5:16-30

Theme: Jesus is the Source of Eternal Life for all who put their Trust in Him

Context: Jesus had Healed a Crippled Man on the Sabbath



**So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him. Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.” For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.**

**John 5:16-18**

I love how Jesus would heal on the Sabbath, and upset their religious applecart. I guess they would not have such a problem with that if they would just accept that He is the Lord of the Sabbath- **Luke 6:5**.

A little background, Jesus had just healed a crippled man at the pool of Bethesda, and to show their gratitude and thanks to God for healing a man who had been crippled for 38 years, they persecute Him.

So Jesus stirs up the pot a lot more, by taking it to the next level and reveals that He is the Son of God, co-equal with God the Father- **John 8:58**.

- At Jesus’ trial it was that very thing that prompted them to condemn Him- **Matthew 26:63-68**.
- This central truth that Stephen attested to got him stoned to death- **Acts 7:55-60**.
- Yes the simple fact is, Jesus is God the Son, co-equal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, in what we call the Holy Trinity- **Mt. 28:19; John 17:5; Php. 2:6; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:9**.
- These plain Biblical truths have been distorted by cults to their own destruction- **2 Peter 3:16**.

## **John 5:19-23**

**Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.”**

- While Jesus was on the earth, He modeled for us what it meant to be submitted and obedient to the will of God; totally consecrated and dedicated- **Luke 22:42**.
- Many people have confused that as Jesus being one who is less than God but greater than man.
  - o **2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:22; Jude 4**.
- Within the Godhead, God the Father is the leader, but that does not diminish or detract deity from God the Son and God the Holy Spirit- **1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Hebrews 2:2-4**.
- We are to honor the Son as much as the Father- **John 3:31-36; 1 John 5:9-13**.
- So all judgment will come through the Word of God- **John 5:27; 12:47-50; 2 Corinthians 5:10**.

### **John 5:24-27**

**“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.”**

- Heaven and earth may pass away, but Jesus’ words will never pass away- **Mark 13:31.**
- His words are spirit and they are life- **John 6:63.**
- He is the true God and eternal life- **John 10:10; Colossians 1:13-14; 1 John 5:20.**
- Jesus is the Word of God (**John 1:1**), receiving His words is the same as receiving Him.
- Jesus is the only way heaven, and calling on His Name is the only way to receive salvation.
  - o **John 14:6; Romans 10:12-13; Acts 4:12.**

### **John 10:9 NKJV**

**I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.**

- Jesus is the resurrection and the life- **John 11:25; Revelation 1:17-18.**
- The “dead” Jesus was referring to, were the living dead (spiritually speaking) that is.
- It’s not having heard the Word of God, but truth acted upon is what sets us free.

### **John 8:31-32**

**To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

- The term “Son of Man” is used around 80 times in the Gospels by Jesus in describing His humanity in becoming a man and yet still God; the God-Man representing both God and man.
  - o **John 19:5; 1 Timothy 2:5.**
- As a man he was tempted at all points as we are, and yet never sinned- **Hebrews 4:15.**
- He shared in our humanity, He walked in our shoes, He totally understands- **Heb. 2:14-18.**

### **John 5:28-30**

**“Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”**

- The doctrine of the “Resurrection of the Dead” is mentioned in **Hebrews 6:2.**
- There will be a resurrection of the righteous and the wicked- **Acts 24:15-16.**
- The first resurrection was Jesus as the first born (again) from the dead.
  - o **Romans 8:29; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 1:5.**
- Next we have the Rapture of the Church, those who already fell asleep and those still alive.
  - o **1 Corinthians 15:12-58; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**
- At the Second Advent of Jesus, those Tribulation Saints who were martyred are raised.
  - o **Revelation 20:4-6.**
- The wicked dead are raised from the beginning of time until the end of the Millennium.
  - o **Revelation 20:5, 11-15.**
- John 5:30, *“I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”*

Isn’t it amazing that Jesus, being co-equal with the Father is so willing to be submitted to Him.

# Discourse #63: Jesus' Testimony about Himself

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Reference: John 5:31-47

Theme: The Testimony Surrounding Jesus are Irrefutable Proofs that He is God and Savior of the World  
Context: Jesus had Healed a Crippled Man on the Sabbath



**“If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.”**

**John 5:31-32**

When it comes to credibility, speaking for ourselves does not make a convincing case since we generally will speak highly of ourselves. However, when we have others speak about us and vouch for us, their witness concerning our lifestyle and accomplishments adds validity to our character and integrity.

- We see this very principle in a different encounter Jesus had with the Pharisees, when He had not condemned the woman caught in Adultery.

**John 8:13, “The Pharisees challenged him, ‘Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.’”**

- There is an ancient principle in the Bible that a person cannot be condemned, nor can a matter be confirmed unless it is established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.
  - o **Dt. 17:6; 19:5; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.**
- Jesus Himself quoted that principle, but there are numerous witnesses that testify of Jesus.

**John 8:17-18**

**In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.**

## 1. John's Testimony

**John 5:33-45, “You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.”**

John the Baptist was sent for the sole purpose to bear witness that Jesus is the Messiah and to prepare the people of Israel to receive Him as Lord- **John 1:6-9.**

- Most in Israel accepted John as a prophet- **Malachi 3:1; Mt. 9:12-13; Luke 1:17; 7:24-28.**
- John's Baptism was a baptism of repentance- **Mark 1:4-8; Luke 3:3-18; Acts 19:4.**
- But the Pharisees rejected John's testimony; due to their self-righteous- **Luke 7:29-35.**

There is a wonderful narrative of John the Baptist speaking to the Pharisees concerning his mission in the Gospel of **John 1:15-31**. The next day he makes that famous statement to his disciples.

**John 1:29, “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’”**

When Jesus was baptized by John in the Jordan river, a most wondrous thing happened, we see the Trinity is full representation and the validation of Jesus’ ministry by the Father and the Holy Spirit. **Matthew 3:16-17; John 1:32-36.**

## 2. The Father’s Testimony

**John 5:36-38**

**I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.**

- God the Father is the ultimate witness of Jesus being God the Son and Savior of the world.
  - o **John 8:54; 13:31-32; 17:1-5.**
- We see the Father God telling Peter, James and John to listen to Jesus- **Luke 9:28-36; 2Pet. 1:18**
- When people do not honor who Jesus is, they are dishonoring the entire Godhead- **John 5:23.**
- We have a litmus test in Scripture; truth and error is judged by how people view Jesus.
  - o **2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 2:18-23; 4:1-3; 2 John 7; Jude 4.**
- The meaning of life comes down to this one simple question, “What are we going to do with Jesus?” The answer determines where we spent eternity- **John 3:35-36; Heb. 2:1-4; 1 John 5:5.**

Speaking of testifying to Jesus being the source of eternal life, there is a powerful portion of Scripture in **1 John 5:6-13** that speaks of three additional witnesses to the Father.

- The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus: **John 15:26; 16:8-15.**
- The Water: Speaking of what took place at His water Baptism in the Jordan- **Matthew 3:16-17.**
- The Blood: Did you know blood has a voice; Jesus’ blood speaks mercy- **Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24**

## 3. The Scriptures Testimony

**John 5:39-40, 45-47**

**You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?**

- Jesus came to the earth for the express purpose to fulfill the Law and Scriptures- **Matthew 5:17.**
- His whole ministry was centered around fulfilling Old Testament prophecies.
  - o **Matthew 26:54; Luke 4:17-21; 24:25-27, 32, 44-47; John 3:14**
- It’s impossible to accept Jesus apart from the Word of God; final authority- **Luke 16:30-31.**

Finally, we see a description of invalid testimony in **John 5:41-44** when men seek praise and honor from one another and compare themselves with themselves- **2 Corinthians 10:12-18.**

# Discourse #64: Jesus The Bread of Life

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Reference: John 6:25-59

Theme: Jesus is the Bread of Life who gave His Life so we could receive Eternal Life

Context: Jesus was Teaching in a Synagogue in Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee



**When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”**

**John 6:25-27**

- The crowds had just been fed miraculously by Jesus- **John 6:5-13.**
- Now they wanted to make Him king! Just think of it, a welfare state where Jesus would supply them with all the food they would ever need, no one will ever be hungry again- **John 6:14-15.**
- Jesus knowing their motives corrected them that what was of greatest importance was their eternal soul, and not temporal things of this present world- **Matthew 16:26.**
- Receiving the gift of eternal life should be our first priority in life- **Romans 6:23.**

## 1. The Work of God

### **John 6:28-34**

**Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So they asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “from now on give us this bread.”**

- I absolutely love this question, “*What must we do to do the works God requires?*”
- That is a question the world and the religions of men try to answer themselves- **Romans 10:1-3.**
- Fallen man defaults to works based philosophies out of pride to earn or deserve their salvation.
  - o **Colossians 2:16-23.**
- The only requirement for salvation is to simply believe on Jesus as Savior and Lord- **Ro. 10:9-13**
- God made it simple on purpose so that as many as possible would be saved- **1 Timothy 2:1-4.**
- Remember the thief on the cross who asked Jesus to remember him- **Luke 23:42-43.**
- Even a young child can call on upon the Name of Jesus and be saved.

So these folks were looking for a perpetual free lunch, like the manna the children of Israel had in the desert for forty years. Jesus was attesting to manna as an Old Testament type pointing to Himself.

## 2. Never Hungry or Thirsty

### **John 6:35-40**

**Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

The manna and water from the rock that the Israelites had while in the desert left them hungry for more, it could never satisfy, because it was natural food for the physical body.

- Jesus was offering them spiritual bread and drink that would satisfy the deep desires of the heart.
- All over the world today, people are looking for physical things that would satisfy their souls.
  - o Religion, money, relationships, power and fame etc.

### **Luke 12:15**

**Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”**

Nothing of this world can fill the void that only God can fill that was lost in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned and lost their relationship and fellowship with their Creator God- **Genesis 3:7-13.**

- Remember the account of the woman at the well in Samaria who had five prior husbands and the current man she lived with was not her husband- **John 4:4-42.**
- She clearly represents humanity in their relentless pursuit of seeking for something that will satisfy and make them happy, but is always elusive and evades them- **Revelation 3:20.**
- Jesus speaking in reference to saving people, called it His food and the will of God- **John 5:34.**
- Solomon when backslidden from God became frustrated, even though he had so much wealth, power and fame, it was all meaningless without the Lord- **Ecclesiastes chapter 2.**

Solomon realizing how short life is and temporal things are, concluded that a life of self-indulgence is meaningless and pointless- **James 4:13-17; 1 Peter 1:23-25.**

### **1 Peter 1:18-19**

**For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.**

- This is why living and investing our lives in eternity and for that which lasts is not in vain.
  - o **Mark 10:21; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:1-11; 1 Timothy 6:19.**
- Realizing that this life is primarily about choosing where we will spend eternity.
  - o **Deuteronomy 30:19-20; John 3:36**

Jesus declared that His mission was to do the will of the Father and purchase eternal life through His death, burial and resurrection from the dead. Anyone who comes to Jesus will never be driven away.

- All is not lost, Jesus is the resurrection and the life- **John 11:21-27; Php. 3:20-2; 1 Th. 4:13-18.**

### 3. Jesus is the Bread of Life

#### **John 6:41-51**

**At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven?’” “Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”**

Jesus was in Capernaum in Galilee, a place where He frequented and was well known. So naturally many would be privy to His childhood and upbringing in Nazareth.

- Jesus rebuked them for this perpetual preoccupation, and instead pointed them to His ministry of miracles and the consistent fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies as the coming Messiah.
- *“They will all be taught by God”* was speaking of Jesus in **Isaiah 54:13**.
- The drawing of the Father is done through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit- **John 16:8-15**.
- Once again Jesus refers to the physical resurrection of our bodies- **1 Corinthians 15:12-58**.

No one has ever seen the Ancient of Days (**Exodus 33:17-23; Daniel 7:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:16**), God the Father except God the Son, Jesus Christ, but someday we will see Him face to face- **1 Cor. 13:12**.

**John 6:47-48, “ I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life.”**

Jesus is the bread of life, and we partake of that bread and receive eternal life through our faith in Him!

### 4. Cannibalism?

#### **John 6:52-59**

**Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever.” He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.**

Of course Jesus was speaking figuratively about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, just as we partake of communion, the bread and juice are symbols representing the body and blood of Jesus given for us to redeem us from sin- **Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26**.

- On Calvary Jesus offered His body and blood as the Lamb of God- **John 1:29**.
- Jesus was lifted up on the cross so we would be reconciled to God- **John 3:14-15; 12:32-33**.
  - o **2 Corinthians 5:18-21**.

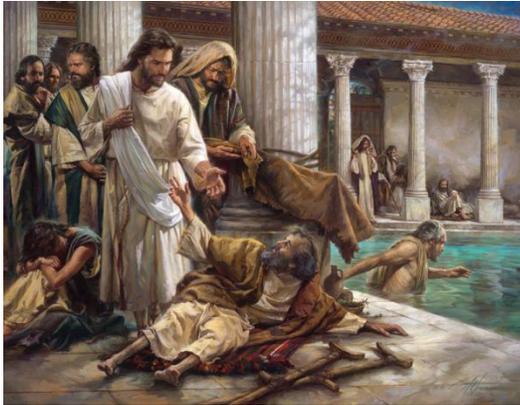
# Discourse #65: Jesus' Teaching Ministry Questioned

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Reference: John 7:14-24

Theme: Jesus was not Representing Himself, but God the Father as Savior of the World

Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles



**Not until halfway through the Feast did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews were amazed and asked, “How did this man get such learning without having studied?” Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. He who speaks on his own does so to gain honor for himself, but he who works for the honor of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him. Has not Moses given you the law? Yet not one of you keeps the law.**

**Why are you trying to kill me?” “You are demon-possessed,” the crowd answered. “Who is trying to kill you?” Jesus said to them, “I did one miracle, and you are all astonished. Yet, because Moses gave you circumcision (though actually it did not come from Moses, but from the patriarchs), you circumcise a child on the Sabbath. Now if a child can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses may not be broken, why are you angry with me for healing the whole man on the Sabbath? Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment.”**

**John 7:14-24**

It must have been a real shock to the religious elite that someone from the backwoods of Galilee could have such wisdom and understanding of the Scriptures- **John 7:52.**

- The same assessment was made of the apostles just after the Lord’s resurrection- **Acts 4:13.**
- Notice what Jesus said in verse 17, *“If anyone chooses to do God’s will.”*
  - o God’s Word is God’s will, so Jesus is talking about obeying God’s Word- **Luke 11:28.**
- Jesus became a man in order to redeem mankind from sin and become sons of God- **Gal. 4:4-7.**
- By becoming a man, Jesus humbled and submitted Himself to the Father’s will, to speak on His behalf to humanity-**Luke 10:22; John 5:17; 8:54-59; 10:18,34-39;12:48-50;15:15; Php. 2:5-11**

Concerning Jesus’ statement that they were trying to kill Him, this was in reference to the healing of the man on the Sabbath in **John 5:1-18.** At that time they tried to kill him for healing on the Sabbath.

- During the time of this feast, the Lord had commanded the people of Israel to do no work.
  - o **Leviticus 23:26-36; Matthew 23:23-24.**
- So the Jews supposed Jesus was going to do more healing aka “Work” during this feast.
- Jesus is the Great I Am, the one who gave them the Sabbath commandment-**John 8:58; Ex. 3:14**
- Therefore, He had the authority to do what He wanted on the Sabbath, but He did not violate it.
  - o **Luke 13:10-17; John 5:1-18; 7:21-24; 9:1-41.**

The Pharisaic tradition, by Jesus’ day, had developed into an array of petty rules having to do with the minutiae of the Law. It focused on physical works that had little to do with the spirit and intent of the law; and which, in fact, often violated the law- **Mt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13; John 7:19; Galatians 6:13.**

# Discourse #66: Is Jesus the Christ?

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Reference: John 7:25-32

Theme: Jesus was the Long Awaited Messiah, Savior and Christ that the World was looking for  
Context: Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles Teaching in the Temple Courts



At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, “Isn’t this the man they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him. Have the authorities really concluded that he is the Christ? But we know where this man is from; when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from.” Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple courts, cried out, “Yes, you know me, and you know where I am from. I am not here on my own, but he who sent me is true. You do not

know him, but I know him because I am from him and he sent me.” At this they tried to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. Still, many in the crowd put their faith in him. They said, “When the Christ comes, will he do more miraculous signs than this man?” The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. John 7:25-32

- Jesus’ life was all about timing, when He was born- **Matthew 2:1-6; Luke 2:25-38; Gal. 4:4.**
- When Jesus started His ministry- **Matthew 4:12-17; John 2:4.**
- And when He would die- **Matthew 26:2; John 3:30; 12:27.**
- There were so many occasions when the Jews tried to arrest and kill Jesus but couldn’t.
- **Mt. 21:46; 26:3-5; Mark 12:12; Luke 13:31-33; John 7:32, 45-49; 8:59; 10:31-33; 11:57.**

**John 10:18, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”**

- In the minds of the Jews, they struggled with the prospect that Jesus could be their Messiah.
- But there was one major problem, He did not come as they expected- to destroy the Romans.
  - o **Luke 19:11, 41-42; 24:21; John 18:36; Acts 1:6-8.**
- Nor did the religious leaders expect that He would expose their hypocrisy and corruption.
  - o Jesus fulfilled **Isaiah 8:14-15; Romans 9:33; 1 Peter 2:8.**
  - o He also fulfilled **Psalms 118:22-23; Matthew 21:44; Luke 20:17-18.**
- The word “Christ” in the Greek means anointed, and refers to Jesus as the Messiah.
- Many people saw Jesus as a prophet- **Mt. 21:11, 46; Mk. 6:14-15; Lk. 7:16, 39; 24:19; Jn. 9:17**
- Some believed Jesus was the Christ at that time- **Matthew 16:16; John 11:27.**
- Reference to Jesus being the “Christ” or Messiah is made over 500 times in the New Testament.

The same questions are being asked today, is Jesus the Savior of the world- the answer is YES!

**John 7:40-44, “On hearing his words, some of the people said, ‘Surely this man is the Prophet.’ Others said, ‘He is the Christ.’ Still others asked, ‘How can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that the Christ will come from David’s family and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?’ Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.**

# Discourse #67: Streams of Living Water will Flow

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Reference: John 7:37-39

Theme: Being Baptized with the Holy Spirit, Rivers of Living Water to Flow through us to Others  
Context: On the Last Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus made a Wonderful Declaration



**On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

**John 7:37-39**

Remember when Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well, and He offered her living water in **John 4:10** as the gift of God. The gift of God here is “Eternal Life” through faith in Jesus- **Ro. 6:23**.

The act of receiving this living water is accomplished by drinking it, receiving Jesus (**Ephesians 2:8-9**), which in turn becomes a well of water within us, springing up to eternal life- **John 4:13-14**.

- This well of living water is received through the New Birth, when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell inside the believer- **John 20:22; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14; 4:30**.
- In order that Acts 3:19, “...times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” **1 John 2:20, 27**.
- This well of salvation, the Holy Spirit within the believer manifests God’s nature- **Gal. 5:22-23**.

I believe that the rivers or streams of living water (depending on the translation), that Jesus is referencing here speaks of the Holy Spirit coming upon a believer through the Baptism of the Spirit.

**Luke 24:49, “I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”**

Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience that is separate and distinct from being born of the Spirit. When Jesus spoke to His disciples in **Acts 1:4-8**, they were already born again in **John 20:22**.

- We see the Spirit coming upon the Early Church in power in Acts chapter 2.
- Jesus commanded (**Acts 1:4**) His followers to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God- **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18**.
- Like Jesus who was anointed with the Holy Spirit to minister the Gospel- **Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38**

We see a clear pattern in the Book of Acts, that after a person was born again, soon after they would have hands laid on them to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit- **Acts 8:4-21; 19:1-7**.

- Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit and with Fire- **Luke 3:16**.
- The evidence of speaking with other tongues is an initial sign of a believer receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit- **Acts 2:4; Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-17**.
- There is a ministry side to tongues in a group setting- **1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5-12, 19-40**.
- A personal devotional side of tongues- **Ro. 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 14:1-4, 13-18; Eph. 5:18; Jude 20**.

# Discourse #68: Jews Continue in Unbelief

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Reference: John 7:46-53; 12:37-43

Theme: The Religious Leaders were a Great Example of Unbelief, Denying the Undeniable

Context: At the End of the Feast of Tabernacles, The Pharisees were trying to Arrest Jesus



**“No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared. “You mean he has deceived you also?” the Pharisees retorted. “Has any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law — there is a curse on them.” Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, “Does our law condemn anyone without first hearing him to find out what he is doing?” They replied, “Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee.”**

**John 7:46-52**

The religious leaders had sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus, since the people were whispering that He could be their long awaited Messiah- **John 7:31-32.**

- When the guards had listened a little bit to what Jesus was saying, they themselves were amazed at Jesus’ teaching and could not bring themselves to arrest Him.
- The Pharisees were so deceived that they retorted in pious, elitist arrogance that the people were a mob under a spell, for them to have believed on Jesus.
- The power of the Holy Spirit was convicting the people of the truth- **John 16:8-11.**

Pharisees claimed that no prophet came out of Galilee, but there was Jonah son of Amittai (**Jonah 1:1**), from a town in Gath Hopher, just 3 miles north east of Nazareth of the tribe of Zebulun- **2 Kings 14:25.**

- It was the sign of Jonah that Jesus gave to the Pharisees in **Matthew 12:38-40.**
- The problem was deeper than Jewish indifference, it was a stubbornness of the heart and unbelief
  - o **Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:7-9; Mark 7:6-9; Romans 11:20-23.**
- Israel on the most part persisted in unbelief & rejected Jesus as their Messiah as it is till this day.

Stephen, the first martyr of the Church articulated it perfectly by the Holy Spirit, concerning the overall spiritual assessment of the people of Israel throughout their history.

**Acts 7:51-58**

**“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.” When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.**

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## 1. Unbelief – Sin of the Heart

Unbelief is a stubborn refusal to believe, it is a deliberate rejection of known truth, and I believe is the greatest of all sins.

- While doubt is of the head (**James 1:6-8**), unbelief is rebellion of the heart- **Hebrews 3:7-19**.

In Hebrews chapter three the author provides a sad commentary of the children of Israel failing to enter into their Promise Land because of the unbelief, due to the hardness of their hearts- **Numbers 14:1-4**.

**Acts 7:39, “But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.”**

### **Stiff-Necked**

Stubborn, unyielding, arrogant, and proud. The phrase was used in the Bible as a figure of speech for rebellion and disobedience taken from stubborn domestic animals, such as oxen that turn their shoulders away from the yoke and refuse to follow directions- **Luke 7:29-35; 16:27-31**.

- Israel was stiff-necked in refusing to obey the Word of God; following after idolatry/immorality.
- Jesus too was grieved at their hardness of heart and stubborn refusal to believe- **Mark 3:5-6**.
  - o John 5:40, “...yet you refuse to come to me to have life.”

**John 12:37, “Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.”**

There is a danger for us today as Christians, to become stubborn and proud and miss out on God’s will. **Mark 16:14; Hebrews 4:1-11**.

### **Don’t give up on the Jews**

I don’t want you to be left with the impression that God has given up on the Jews. On the contrary, God in His mercy allows them to play a crucial role in His plan of redemption for mankind in the future.

### **Romans 11:25**

**I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.**

- Sure, right now the Jews still reject Jesus as their Messiah and adhere to the Law - **2Cor. 3:13-16**
- But there has always been a remnant of Messianic Jews who have accepted Jesus.
- By reading Romans chapter 9 and 11 you will see God is not finished with Israel yet.
- In 1948, Israel became a nation once again as a prophetic sign that the end is near.
- When the Church of Jesus Christ finishes the Great Commission and is raptured out of the earth, Israel will once again take center stage for the seven year Tribulation Period.
- In Matthew Chapter 24 Jesus addresses end times events with Israel right in the middle of it.

Thank God for the Jews and the nation of Israel, we should be regularly praying for the peace of Jerusalem- **Psalms 122:6**. They are still God’s covenant people; as Christians today, we have so much that we have inherited from them, so thank God for the good they have done- **Romans 15:26-27**.

The real question now is, will the Church be faithful to God’s mandate given to us, to fulfill the Great Commission and preach the Gospel message to the world.

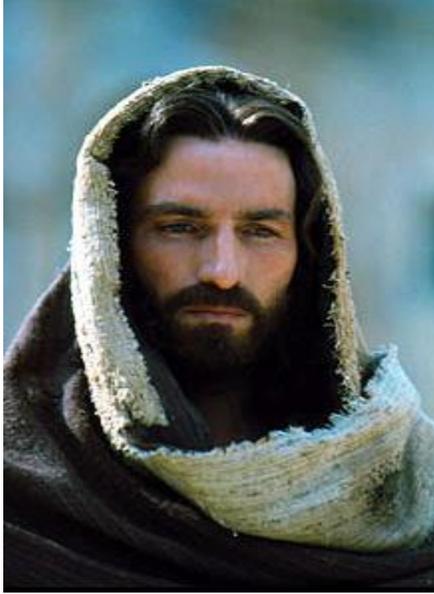
# Discourse #69: The Validity of Jesus' Testimony

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Reference: John 8:12-30

Theme: The Father has Testified of Jesus being the Messiah- Miracles and Fulfillment of Scripture

Context: Jesus was Teaching the People in the Temple Courts



**When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”**

**Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”**

**John 8:12-18**

The religious leaders of Jesus' day were obsessed with trying to invalidate Jesus and discredit His ministry. So here they are again questioning the validity of Jesus' testimony as the Messiah.

- Jesus has absolute knowledge of who He is as God, so there could be no human collaboration.
- The only other qualified witness of Jesus being the Messiah would be God the Father.
  - o **John 3:35; 5:23, 36-38; 8:54; 13:31-32; 17:1-5; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:18.**
- The miracles themselves was God's endorsement upon the mission and ministry of Jesus.
  - o **John 9:30-33; 10:25, 38.**

## **Hebrews 2:3-4**

**How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**

- There is an ancient principle in the Bible that a person cannot be condemned, nor can a matter be confirmed unless it is established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.
  - o **Dt. 17:6; 19:5; Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1; 1 Timothy 5:19; Hebrews 10:28.**
- Jesus Himself quoted that principle, but there are numerous witnesses that testify of Jesus.
  - o **John 8:17-18.**

Speaking of testifying to Jesus being the source of eternal life, there is a powerful portion of Scripture in **1 John 5:6-13** that speaks of three additional witnesses to the Father.

- The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus: **John 15:26; 16:8-15.**
- The Water: Speaking of what took place at His water Baptism in the Jordan- **Matthew 3:16-17.**
- The Blood: Did you know blood has a voice; Jesus' blood speaks mercy- **Gen. 4:10; Heb. 12:24**

## 1. In Darkness

### **John 8:19-22**

**Then they asked him, “Where is your father?” “You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come. Once more Jesus said to them, “I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come.” This made the Jews ask, “Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, ‘Where I go, you cannot come’?”**

The Jews were in deep spiritual darkness, and were clueless as to what Jesus was saying. They claimed to know God, but by their actions they denied Him- **John 8:39-47; Titus 1:14-16.**

- Jesus came into the world as light in a world dominated by the kingdom of darkness.
  - o **Matthew 4:15-17; John 1:4-9; Colossians 1:12-14; 1 John 1:5-7.**
- The verdict is that men loved darkness and would not come into the light- **John 3:19-21.**

**Isaiah 60:1-2, “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.”**

The religious leaders were so deluded that they interpreted Jesus comments, “*Where I go, you cannot come...*” as meaning that Jesus was going to commit suicide and in so doing be condemned to hell.

- Since they rejected Jesus as their Savior, it was they who would die in their sins and be condemned to hell- **Matthew 23:33.**

## 2. Die in their Sins

### **John 8:23-30**

**But he continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins.” “Who are you?” they asked. “Just what I have been claiming all along,” Jesus replied. “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.” They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.” Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.**

Outside of Jesus, people are spiritually dead in their sins, and if they die physically that way, their spiritual state and doom will become permanent- **Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 2:13-15.**

- Today is the day of salvation for those who receive God’s free gift of life- **2 Corinthians 6:1-2.**
- Those who reject God’s salvation in Jesus will have to suffer God’s wrath for their sins.
  - o **John 3:36; Romans 2:5; 1 Th. 1:10; 5:9; Hebrews 10:26-31; Revelation 6:16.**

Jesus attested to His death, burial and resurrection as the ultimate statement and culmination of His earthly life as a witness to them; the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy- **Luke 24:44; John 3:13-15.**

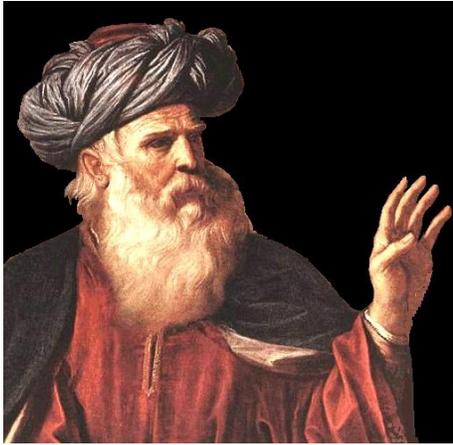
# Discourse #70: The Children of Abraham and the Devil

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Reference: John 8:31-47

Theme: Our True Spiritual Identity is based on What we do with Jesus- Accept or Reject Him

Context: Jesus was Teaching the People in the Temple Area where the Offerings were put



To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are ready to kill me, because you have no room for my word. I am telling you what I have seen in the Father’s presence, and you do what you have heard from your father.” “Abraham is our father,” they answered. “If you were Abraham’s children,” said Jesus, “then you would do the things Abraham did. As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things.

John 8:31-40

I love this passage concerning the truth that will “set” or as it is stated in the KJV, “make” you free.

- Pilate asked Jesus in **John 18:38**, “*What is truth?*” Great question- it’s the Word of God!
  - o John 17:17, “*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.*”
- The Word of God is living and active sharper than any two-edged sword- **Hebrews 4:12**.
- All Scripture is “God-Breathed” and is useful for teaching, rebuking and training- **2 Tim. 3:16**.
- Jesus’ words are full of “Spirit” and “Life” to feed our spirit- **Luke 4:4; John 6:63**.

So according to Jesus, a true disciple of His, holds onto, holds fast to and studies the Word- **2 Tim. 2:15**. It’s not a surface, head-knowledge of God’s Word that sets us free, but meditating/hiding it in our hearts. **Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3; 119:11; John 15:1-8; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13**.

I find it kind of amusing that they made that statement as decedents of Abraham and, “have never been slaves of anyone.” Their whole history as a nation was that of going in and coming out of slavery.

- However, Jesus was talking about the greatest form of slavery of all; being a slave to sin.
- Which translates in being in bondage to Satan and his world system- **Gal. 3:22; 1 John 5:19**.

**Romans 6:16, “Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?”**

- Jesus came expressly to destroy Satan’s works and free us from the bondage of sin and death.
  - o **Acts 10:38; Hebrews 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8**.
- The greatest act of spiritual warfare was for Jesus to pay the price for our sins- **John 1:29**.
- Delivered and ransomed us from the dominion of darkness- **Mt. 20:28; Col. 1:13-14; Heb. 9:15**.

## 1. Children of Abraham

- There's a big difference between being Abraham's decedents and children of Abraham-**Ro.9:6-8**
- It is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. **Gal. 3:6-9, 26-29.**
- What is it about people who put so much stock in cultural pedigree and human ancestry.
- I'm not saying it's bad to study your family tree, but human pride and prejudice seems to come from an over preoccupation of the subject; having caused many wars and even genocide.
- John the Baptist called the Pharisees to account for taking pride in being decedents of Abraham, that the Lord could raise up children for Abraham from amongst the stones- **Luke 3:7-9.**
- This same pride overflowed amongst themselves, seeing other Jews as less pious- **Luke 18:9.**

National pride is one thing, but Israel saw themselves as superior, and considered the Gentiles as dogs, and initially hindered the Early Church; took a spectacular vision to convince Peter- **Acts 10:1-20.**

### **Acts 10:28**

**He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean."**

So Peter preached the Gospel message to these Gentiles who got saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. When he returned to Jerusalem, he was criticized for entering a Gentile's house- **Acts 11:1-18.**

- Others preached the Gospel to Greeks at Antioch, the Lord's hand was with them- **Acts 11:19-21**
- Circumcision also became a point of pride amongst the Jews, who looked down on those who were not- **Acts 16:1-3; Ro. 2:25-29; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 2:3-16; 6:15; Col. 2:11; Tit. 1:10.**

## 2. Children of the Devil

### **John 8:41-47**

**"You are doing the things your own father does." "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."**

It is incorrect for people to say that we are all God's children. Sure, we are all created in God's image, but that does not automatically make us His children anymore than being born a Jew automatically makes that person a child of Abraham- **Genesis 1:26; Acts 17:28.**

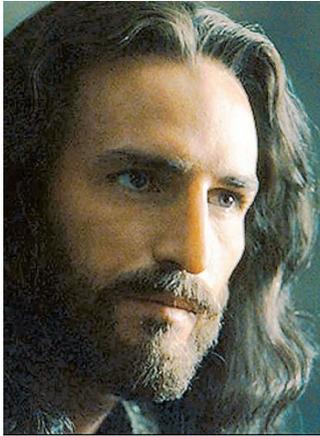
- The Bible is clear, either a person is a child of God or they are a child of Satan- **1 John 3:9-10.**
- There are innumerable nice, moral taxpaying children of the devil in this country.
- The Pharisees thought they were first in line to the Kingdom of God because of their good works
  - o **Matthew 8:10-12; 21:28-32; Luke 13:23-30.**
- Making this distinction is easy, to be a child of God one must be born into it and adopted.
  - o **John 3:3-10; Romans 8:15-16, 23; Galatians 4:5; Ephesians 1:5.**
- It must have been a shock for them to know that their spiritual father was Satan- lying/murderer.

# Discourse #71: The Claims of Jesus About Himself

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Reference: John 8:48-59

Theme: Jesus was not of this world, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob came to Save His Creation  
Context: Jesus was Teaching the People in the Temple Area where the Offerings were put



The Jews answered him, “Aren’t we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?” “I am not possessed by a demon,” said Jesus, “but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death.” At this the Jews exclaimed, “Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?” Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” “You are not yet fifty years old,” the Jews said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!” At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

**John 8:48-59**

Jesus had just laid out the plain truth that the Pharisees were children of the devil, by pointing out the obvious- they were liars and murderers just like their spiritual father Satan- **John 8:42-47**.

- As a result, they lashed back at Jesus and claimed that He was demon possessed, not the first time they had made such a ridiculous claim- **Mark 3:22-29; John 7:20; 10:19-21**.
- Sad, but I wonder what many of them are saying now, while they are in hell awaiting judgment.
- When Jesus spoke, He uttered spiritual revelation that natural men could not understand.
  - o **Mark 4:9-12, 24-25; John 3:10-12; 1 Corinthians 1:18-29; 2:6-16**.
- It can only be understood by those for whom God opens their understanding to grasp it.
  - o **Luke 10:21-22; 24:44-48; John 13:7**.
- The Jews were constantly misunderstanding Jesus- **John 2:19-22; 7:33-36; 8:21-22**.

So when Jesus said, “...if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death” He was not talking about physical death, but spiritual death- Jesus was talking about eternal life and being born again- **John 5:24**.

- The religious leaders just were not getting it, Jesus was the Messiah, God with us- **Matthew 1:23**
- So they challenged Jesus’ claim to be greater than Abraham and the prophets who all died.
  - o “Who do you think you are?”
- Great question, it was almost like Jesus was leading them up to this point in the discussion.
- So Jesus blows their minds away and uses a phrase that only God could use, “Before Abraham was born, I AM!” This is what God said to Moses in the burning bush- **Exodus 3:14**.

The objection of the Jews is that Jesus was not yet 50 years old and could not have seen Abraham. Jesus was pointing to His pre-existence as God- **John 1:1; 17:5; 20:31; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:8-12; Rev. 1:8**.

# Discourse #72: The Shepherd of His Sheep

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Reference: John 10:1-18

Theme: Jesus is our Good Shepherd who has Come to Give us Abundant Life

Context: Jesus had just Healed a Man Born Blind from Birth on the Sabbath



**“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.”** Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

**John 10:1-6**

The first verse may seem unclear, but allow me to explain. Jesus is making a contrast between thieves and robbers and the Good Shepherd. I believe in the first verse, Jesus is talking figuratively about Satan.

- Satan first came to Adam and Eve by hijacking the serpent’s body as a means to communicate.
  - o **Genesis 3:1-4.**
- The devil does not belong here in our time, he is a rebel spirit, an alien being, who was part of the previous creation that was destroyed on account of his rebellion against God.
  - o **Genesis 1:1-2; Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:11-19; Luke 10:18-19; Revelation 12:4.**
- The earth was recreated for mankind and the animal world- **Psalms 115:16.**
- We have a right to be here, because we were born here- **John 5:27.**
- Even Jesus came legally, by being born as a man to save mankind- **1 Cor. 15:45; Galatians 4:4.**
- That’s what He meant by Himself entering through the “gate”, the incarnation- **Mt. 1:21-25.**
- God is Sovereign, but that does not mean He will ever violate His own Word.
- Satan is the thief and robber who climbed in another way- he was not born here like us.

Remember, Adam had committed high treason in the Garden of Eden, and gave their God given dominion as gods of this earth over to Satan- **Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 82:6; John 10:34-35.**

- Jesus came to reclaim what was lost and restore it back to us and defeated Satan- **Ro. 5:17.**
- After the resurrection of Jesus, Satan is still called the god of this age- **2 Corinthians 4:4.**
- This world system is still under his control- **Luke 4:5-7; 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:22; Rev. 12:9.**
  - o **Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:8-9**
- For the time being- **Matthew 8:29; 1 Corinthians 7:31; Revelation 12:12; 20:1-3.**

We are now considered an occupation army in the earth, enforcing Satan’s defeat until Jesus returns a second time to rule an reign physically on the earth from Jerusalem- **1Cor. 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:9-10.**

- Sheep in the Bible is often used figuratively to speak of God’s people.
  - o **Mt. 9:36; 10:6, 16; 15:24; 25:32-33; 26:31; Luke 15:1-7; Jn. 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25**

## 1. Abundant Life

### John 10:7-10

Therefore Jesus said again, “I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

- The “Gate” is a small opening to a sheep pen that the shepherd lays in front of to guard them.
- This metaphor speaks of Jesus giving us “access” to green pastures- **Psalms 23**.
- Only through Jesus can we be saved- **Mt. 7:13-14; John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:9-13**.

I love how Jesus makes it so simple, even a child can understand it. Yet religious people try to make it complicated and add their own philosophical reasoning and confusing traditions to pure truth.

- “Good God versus Bad Devil”- simple theology. If it’s good it comes from God, if it’s bad then it come directly or indirectly from the devil because of the fall of man, sin and the world
- It’s important to identify the source, trials, tests and temptations come from Satan to kill, steal and destroy our lives; they are not a blessing from the Lord.
  - o Temptations- **Mt. 6:13; 26:41; 1Cor. 10:13; 1Th. 3:5; Heb. 2:18;4:15; Jas. 1:2-15**.
  - o Tests- **Luke 22: 31-32; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:6-9; Revelation 2:10**.
  - o Trials- **2 Cor. 8:2; 1 Th. 3:1-4; 2 Th. 1:4; 1 Peter 1:6; 4:12-19; 2 Peter 2:9**.

Yes God does work the good (**Ro. 8:28**) out of what the devil intends for evil, but the way Christians glamorize and talk about the devil’s work, they take “*Consider it pure joy*” in James 1:2 to an extreme.

- Instead of resisting the devil (**James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9**) when he attacks them with trials, tests and temptations, many Christians allow themselves to be a doormat for the devil.
- Because of false teaching, they become passive and submit to the enemy’s attacks.
- Instead of resisting cancer, they are deceived in thinking that God sent or allowed it to teach them some deep spiritual truth- “wouldn’t want to rests God’s will” rubbish!
- That’s why the Holy Spirit through James said in **James 1:16-17**, not to be deceived in thinking that trials, tests and temptations come from God.
- Only good gifts come from God and only bad things come from the devil; don’t confuse the two together, that’s when we get in trouble- **Matthew 7:7-11; 1 Timothy 6:17**.

If God were to make us sick or put us through difficulties just so He could then turn around and deliver us from it, then He would be divided or contradicting Himself- **Matthew 12:25-30; Galatians 2:17-18**.

- If Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, why would He also peddle in it as well.
  - o **Matthew 8:14-17; Acts 10:38; 1 John 3:8**.
- Not once did Jesus ever tell people that He had healed on earth, “Now I’m not going to heal you right now, I need you to suffer a little longer, until you learned your lesson in humility.”

Funny how these folks never talk about all the tragic stories of those who were overcome and consumed by their tests and trials, became bitter and turned from God- what about them!

- No my friends, we need to stay with a right and consistent interpretation of the Bible.
- Many use Paul’s thorn in the flesh to support the notion that God uses sickness to discipline us, if you read the context of **2 Corinthians 11 & 12**, there is no mention if sickness.
- Paul’s thorn was a demon that stirred up persecution for Paul- **Acts 13:50; 14:2; 21:27**.

## 2. The Good Shepherd

### **John 10:11-18**

**“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”**

- Jesus is the “Good” shepherd, because He lays His life down for the sheep.
  - o **Isaiah 40:11; Hebrews 13:20.**
- Jesus gave Himself as a ransom for all mankind- **Mark 10:45; 1 Timothy 2:6.**
- Jesus is our Good Shepherd as beautifully described in **Psalms chapter 23 & 1 Peter 2:25.**
- As Jesus was being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, His concern for the disciples was very evident- **John 17:12; 18:9.**

### **Matthew 9:36**

**When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.**

- The greatest responsibility of a shepherd is to guard and take care of the sheep at all costs.
- If a sheep was missing or hurt, the shepherd was personally responsible to pay restitution.
- David was a shepherd who likewise put his life on the line for the sheep.

### **1 Samuel 17:34-35**

**But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.**

- A hired hand does not own the sheep and watches the sheep for pay, so when danger comes, he runs away; why would he risk his life for someone else’s sheep.
- The religious leaders were hired professional clergy who did not care for the sheep or the people.
- They were more interested in following the letter of the law, like adding rules to the Sabbath.
  - o **Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; John 9:13-34.**
- And loading the people down with heavy requirements and traditions- **Matthew 23:1-4.**
- Shepherds who feed only themselves- **Ezekiel 34:1-16; Jude 12.**

A shepherd’s job is to feed, care and protect the sheep. A shepherd analogy is attributed to a pastor, who watches over the flock of God- **John 21:15-17; 1 Peter 5:1-4.**

In the parable of the shepherd with the 100 sheep and one goes missing, we can understand the passion, love and devotion of the shepherd to go to great lengths to retrieve that lost sheep- **Mt. 18:10-14.**

Thank you Lord for the “Keeping” power of God- **1 Cor. 1:8-9; Php. 1:6; 2:13; Eph. 2:10; Jude 24-25**

# Discourse #73: Jesus Prepares a Place for Us

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Reference: John 14:1-5

Theme: Jesus has Already Gone Ahead of us and is Preparing a Place for us to Spend Eternity with Him  
Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”**

**John 14:1-5**

The blessed assurance that we have as Christians is to know that after this life is done, we get to spend eternity in heaven with our glorious God and Savior.

## **Colossians 1:27**

**To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

- The hope of glory is one of the many reasons why we live for God today, persevere, and fight the good fight of faith- **2 Timothy 4:6-8; 2 Peter 1:10-11; 1 John 3:3.**
- Our present spiritual attacks in this life are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us- **Romans 8:18; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21.**

## **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

**Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.**

- Everyone is aware of their own mortality and how temporary and short this life is.
  - o **James 4:4; 1 Peter 1:24-25.**
- Yet many live for the moment without any regard for where they’ll spend eternity- **1 Cor. 15:32.**
- Jesus has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.
  - o **2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 2:14-15.**
- If we leave this earth before the Rapture, our spirit and soul will be present with the Lord.
  - o **2 Corinthians 5:1-10; Philippians 1:21-26; James 2:26.**
- One day we will receive glorified bodies- **1 Cor. 15:35-58; Php. 3:20-21; 1 Th. 4:13-18.**
- So one way or another, as Christians we will be with the Lord forever- **2 Corinthians 12:2.**

What a wonderful promise, that Jesus has gone ahead of us and has prepared a place for us in His presence for all eternity. We get a glimpse of being in God’s presence when we read the Book of Revelation when the New Jerusalem is described in Revelation chapter 21.

# Discourse #74: Jesus is the Only Way to the Father

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Reference: John 14:6

Theme: Jesus is the Only Way to the Father and Heaven

Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

**John 14:6**

Jesus was telling His disciples in the preceding verses not to be troubled about His departure, since He will return in the future, having prepared a place for us in heaven. Still Thomas asks the following:

**John 14:5**

**Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”**

- Jesus made it very clear that He is the only way to heaven; so clear that it can’t be confused.
- It’s either God’s way or no way at all; it’s not all relative or subjective as so many people think.
  - o **Judges 17:6; Proverbs 21:2; Matthew 7:13-14; John 14:6; 1 Peter 4:17-18.**
- The world will say, “Well you Christians are so exclusive and narrow minded.”
- Funny, that is the very point Jesus was making as well.

**Matthew 7:13-14, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”**

- Either Jesus was crazy, a liar or telling the truth- obviously the latter is the case!
- Salvation is found through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**
- The fact is, it’s not easy for people to turn from sin, overcome Satan’s lies & put faith in Jesus.
  - o **Matthew 19:23-26; 1 Peter 4:17-18; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:1-5.**

**Acts 4:12, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”**

Going to McDonalds does not make a person a hamburger any more than going to church makes them a Christian. Even the demons believe in God- **James 3:19.**

- It’s so tragic that so many sincerely want to know God but are deceived- **Proverbs 14:12.**
- There are multitudes of people who think they are going to heaven, but aren’t- **Mt. 7:21-23.**
- So many in North America claim to be a Christian without a new birth experience.
- Jesus stated it plainly, we must be born again to be saved- **Mt. 18:3; John 3:3-8; 2 Cor. 5:17.**

# Discourse #75: Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

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Reference: John 14:15-20, 26

Theme: Jesus and God the Father live Within us through the Person of the Holy Spirit Forever

Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”**

**John 14:15-20**

During the last days of Jesus life on the earth, He gave His disciples and all those believers that would come after them a promise. This promise is found in the third person of the Godhead, the precious, almighty Holy Spirit. Jesus had said that it was better for Him to go in order that the Holy Spirit would come in us through the new birth, and then rest upon us through the baptism of the Holy Spirit- **Acts 1:8**

## 1. The Person of the Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit? The Bible teaches us that He is more than an influence or impersonal power; the Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity- He is not a thing or an it, real and distinct like Jesus.

- The Holy Spirit can be sinned against, grieved and resisted- **Mt. 12:31-32; Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30**
- You cannot do these things against an impersonal force- **John 3:5-8.**
- The Spirit of God was in the beginning during creation- **Genesis 1:2.**

Up until the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit had never indwelt any of the Old Testament saints.

- The Spirit of God had only rested upon the prophet, the priest and the king.
- Jesus had foretold of something new and wonderful that would be part of the New Covenant.
- The Holy Spirit within the believer, dwelling within our recreated, born again spirit.
  - o **John 20:22; Ro. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 12:12-13; 2 Cor. 6:16; Titus 3:5-7.**
- We have received a deposit of our inheritance, the Spirit of God within us.
  - o **2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30.**
- We have receive an anointing within through the Holy Spirit- **1 John 2:20, 27.**
- Jesus had the Holy Spirit upon Him without measure- **Isaiah 11:2; 61:1; John 3:34-36.**
- That was the secret to His earthly ministry of miracles, deliverance and healings- ours too!
  - o **Mt. 12:28; Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38; Ro. 15:19; 1 Cor. 2:4-5; 12:7-11; Hebrews 2:1-4.**
- The Holy Spirit is the power of God in manifestation- **1 Kings 18:46; Luke 1:35; 5:17; Acts 1:8**
- Unless a person has the Holy Spirit within them, they are not saved- **Romans 8:9.**

The Greek word for “Counselor” in **John 14:15** is parakletos, means intercessor, advocate, comforter, helper or as one called alongside to help- **John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.** Helps us in prayer- **Ro. 8:26-27.**

## **The Holy Spirit Is Our Counselor**

Christian counselors are fine, and God uses them to integrate Biblical principles into a systematic format of analysis that is good. However, every believer needs to know and tap into the resident Counselor that resides within us. The Holy Spirit is on call 24 hours a day and seven days a week- **2 Cor. 3:17-18**.

- He is the Spirit of wisdom, understanding and counsel according to **Isaiah 11:2**.
- When we have a problem or dilemma in life, ask the Father God for wisdom- **James 1:5**.
- The Holy Spirit in our spirit will illuminate our mind with the answer- **Eph. 1:17-19**.
- Speaking, enlightening, and instructing our spirit in the way we should go- **Proverbs 1:20-21**.

## **Proverbs 20:27 KJV**

**The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.**

- As I said before the Holy Spirit leads us through the written Word of God- the logos.
- Next, He leads us by an inward witness, that always agrees with the Bible- **Romans 8:14**.
- He also speaks to us in an audible voice, or a rhema word, the spoken Word of God.
  - o **1 Kings 19:11-13; Acts 8:29; 10:10-20**.

## **Isaiah 30:21-22**

**Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."**

## **2. Teach you All Things**

### **John 14:26**

**But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.**

I personally believe that the greatest impact that the ministry of the Holy Spirit has upon the life of the believer, is as our personal mentor, coach, trainer and teacher- **Mt. 10:19-20; 2 Cor. 1:3-10; Php. 2:1**.

- He is our best friend, always there through the thick and thin urging us on to live for God.
- I love the Holy Spirit so much, even though I have grieved Him countless times, He never leaves
- The Holy Spirit's main objective is to conform us into the image of Jesus Christ.
- He is our Sanctifier, works holiness in our lives- **Romans 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:11**.
- To cause the nature and life of God within us to rise up, and change our lives- **Galatians 5:22-23**
- The Holy Spirit is a gentleman, He will not force God's will upon our lives without our consent.

He leads us into all truth, shows us things to come, reveals God's Word to us. He comforts us in our troubles and orders our steps and so much more- **John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Romans 8:14**.

- His primary text book is the Bible. He will never lead us apart from the Word of God- Jesus!
- He teaches, reveals and explains revelation truth to us- **1 Cor. 2:6-16; Col. 2:2-3**.
- He is the one who convicts and enlightens sinners to know Jesus- **John 16:8; Hebrews 6:4**.
- The Bible can only be understood as it is revealed by the Holy Spirit to the listener- **Eph. 3:1-11**.
- The Bible is a book that was given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the first place.
  - o **2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 1 John 4:6**.

Therefore, the more yielded and obedient we are to the Holy Spirit, the more revelation we can expect to receive from Him. So being Baptized with the Holy Spirit and speaking with other tongues only helps.

# Discourse #76: The Vine and the Branches

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Reference: John 15:1-17

Theme: To Abide in the Lord we Must Abide in His Word by Meditating and Putting it into Practice  
Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”**

**John 15:1-4**

When we were born again through the Holy Spirit (**Titus 3:4-7**), He joined us to the spiritual Body of Christ, and we became connected to the universal Church- **Ro. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:14-27; Eph. 4:11-16.**

## **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**

**The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.**

- Just like a branch is connected to a vine in this analogy, we have been joined to Jesus.
- Another way of wording it, is that we have been grafted into Jesus.

Grafting used in agriculture and horticulture, encouraging the fusing of tissues from one plant to another. It is most commonly used for the propagation of trees and shrubs grown commercially. In most cases one plant is selected for its roots and another for its stems, leaves, flowers or fruits.

**Romans 11:17-18, “If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you.”**

- Jesus is the vine and we are the branches and God the Father is the gardener.
- This living connection we have with Jesus supplies the “nourishing sap” or grace of God that sustains us as disciples of Jesus Christ- **Colossians 2:9-10.**
- This grace comes into our lives through the Word of God- **Jn. 6:63; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.**
- The Father cuts off those branches “Individuals” who are spiritually dead, evidenced by no fruit.
  - o **Luke 13:6-9; Romans 9:1-5; 11:22;**
- The act of “pruning” that the Father performs in us, is to cut out of our lives those dead works or sinful behaviors- **Ro. 8:13; Eph. 4:17-5:16; Col. 3:1-10; Heb. 6:1; 9:14; 12:1-11.**
- This work of sanctification is to make us more fruitful in God’s Kingdom- **2 Tim. 2:20-21.**
- It’s through the Word and the Spirit of God that we are sanctified- **2 Thessalonians 2:13.**
  - o **Jn. 17:17-19; Ro. 12:1-2; 15:16; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 5:25-27; Jas 1:21-25; 1 Pet. 1:2.**

## 1. Remain in Jesus by Abiding in His Word

### John 15:5-8

**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”**

- Apart from Jesus, it is impossible for us to live a successful, fruitful, Christian life.
- He is the vine, the source of life, providing the nourishing sap or virtue- **John 6:32-58.**
- If we remain in Jesus and He remains in us, then we will bear Christ-like fruit for God’s glory.
  - o **Ro. 7:4; 13:11-14; Eph. 5:9; Php. 1:11; Col. 1:6, 10; Jas. 3:17.**

### Galatians 5:22-23

**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

- Being connected to Jesus by the Word of God, through the Holy Spirit, we are well watered.
  - o **Psalms 1:1-3; John 4:7-15; 7:37-39; 11:24-25.**
- Jesus is the life line, umbilical cord, the spiritual life support system that keeps us alive.
  - o Acts 17:28, *“For in him we live and move and have our being.”*
- Those who are not connected to Him, born again, are spiritually dead in their sins- **Eph. 2:1-10.**
- Jesus describes them as dead branches that will eventual be burned in the fire.
  - o **Matthew 3:10; 13:37-50; 7:19.**

While we were still sinners, Jesus died for us so when we, a dry, dead and shriveled branch is grafted into the living vine of Jesus Christ, His grace flows into us and makes us alive, green, fresh and fruitful.

- God’s Word is God’s will, and faith begins where the will of God is known- **1 John 5:14-15.**
- So when the Word dwells in our hearts richly (**Colossians 3:16**), we will know and ask according to God’s will, with a pure heart and right motives- **James 4:1-3; 1 John 3:19-22.**
- Therefore, whatever we ask, we will receive, because we are full of Jesus through His Word.

### Romans 12:2

**Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is — his good, pleasing and perfect will.**

So the fruit Jesus is talking about, that shows that we are His disciples is being a doer of His Word, putting God’s Word into practice in every area of our lives. This brings glory to God the Father!

- This is not something we try, it’s not a fad or religion- it’s reality!
- The secret to obeying God’s Word, is to meditate on it until we believe it in our hearts.
  - o **Deuteronomy 30:11-14; Romans 10:5-13; 2 Corinthians 4:13.**
- How do we hide God’s Word in our hearts; by meditating or speaking God’s Word out loud.
  - o **Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3; 119:11; Romans 10:17.**
- It’s the truth of God’s Word that makes us free- **John 8:31-36.**
- The end goal is to simply put God’s Word into practice in every area of our lives = bearing fruit!
  - o **Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 8:21; James 1:22-25; 2:14-26.**

## 2. Love for God is to Obey His Word

### **John 15:9-17**

**“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other.”**

In Luke 6:46 Jesus said, *“Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”* A lot of what is called Christianity in the world today is lifeless lip service; we have all been guilty of it.

- Where the rubber hits the road concerning the authenticity of our faith is whether we are actually obeying the Lord’s commands in His Word- **John 14:21-24; 1 John 3:23-24.**

**1 John 4:8-10, “Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”**

- The essence of God’s commands centers around one common theme, Love- **1 Corinthians 13.**
- Why is that, simple, because God is love and that is what His Kingdom is all about- **John 3:16.**
- The New Birth is the rebirth of the human spirit by the Spirit of God into God’s image- **Ro. 5:5.**
- To walk in the God’s kind of love “Agape” requires this supernatural love via the New Birth.

### **1 John 5:2-4**

**This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.**

- When we walk in love, we automatically fulfill and obey all of God’s commands- **Ro. 13:8-10.**
- Every step outside of love is one step into sin, so what love is, is described by His commands.
- This is not about feelings or emotion, love is an act of our will, it’s a choice to obey His Word.
- In **John 13:34-35**, we see the Law of the New Covenant, to love as Jesus loved us.
- Jesus has raised the bar significantly because of greater grace given us in this dispensation.

Unlike the Old Covenant believers with their unregenerate spirit natures, who were permitted to love their neighbor as themselves, which was all they were capable of doing- **Leviticus 19:18.**

- But what if they did not love themselves, they could treat people poorly as a result.
- So to walk in love is to obey God’s Word which will direct us to lay down our lives for others.
- There is no greater joy than to follow Jesus and bear fruit this way, it all begins with the Word.
- Getting it into our hearts, so it renews our minds and causes us to grow in this God-kind of love.
  - o **1 Peter 1:22-25.**
- This is what the world is looking for, this is the greatest testimony to them- reality of God’s love!

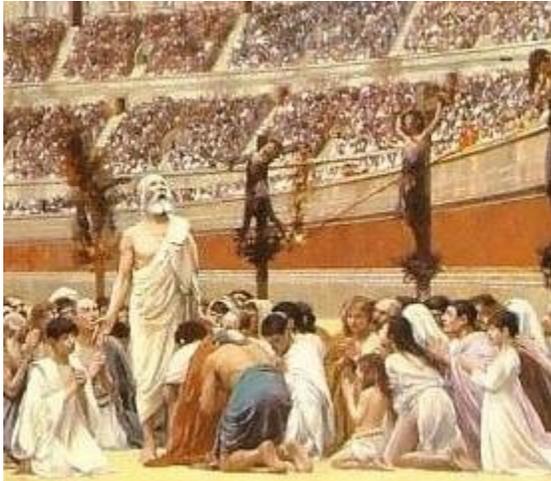
# Discourse #77: The World will Hate You

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Reference: John 15:18-25; 16:1-4

Theme: As Disciples of Jesus Christ, we will Suffer Persecution, so Don't be Surprised

Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: ‘No servant is greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. Now, however, they have no excuse for their sin. He who hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them what no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. But now they have seen these miracles, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’”**

**John 15:18-25**

According to the World Evangelical Alliance, over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied fundamental human rights solely because of their faith.

David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, and Peter F. Crossing in their 2009 report in the International Bulletin of Missionary Research (Vol. 33, No. 1: 32) estimate that approximately 176,000 Christians will have been martyred from mid-2008 to mid-2009. That's 482 deaths per day, one every 3 minutes.

This, according to the authors, compares to 160,000 martyrs in mid-2000 and 34,400 at the beginning of the 20th century. If current trends continue, Barrett, Johnson and Crossing estimate that by 2025, an average of 210,000 Christians will be martyred annually.

- We can never know the exact statistics of those martyred and persecuted in a given year, but the trend is clear, it is on the rise as we march ever closer to the Lord's Second Return.
- To be hated by the world comes with the package of being a disciple of Jesus Christ.
- That does not mean we purposely do foolish things so as to attract needless persecution.
  - o 1 Peter 3:17, *“It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”*
- Our goal is to live in Christ-like love and integrity that will silence our accusers.
  - o **1 Thessalonians 4:12; 1 Timothy 3:7; Titus 2:8; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:15-16.**
- We are told to live at peace with everyone, if it's possible as far as it depends on us- **Ro. 12:8.**
- Still, even when we live a life of peace and integrity, there will still be those who will hate and persecute us for our stand for Jesus.

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He was under constant persecution and harassment. They were constantly looking for ways to trap Him- **Matthew 19:13; 22:15-22; Mark 8:11; John 5:16; 8:1-11.**

- They insulted and treated Jesus without any respect; even when He was crucified- **Mt. 27:41-44.**
  - o **Luke 11:14-15; John 7:20; 8:48-49; 10:20-21.**
- The religious leaders had threatened to kill Him on many occasions.
  - o **Matthew 26:4; Mark 11:18; Luke 19:47; John 5:18.**
- When they finally arrested Him, they produced false witnesses to accuse Him- **Mt. 26:59-62.**

### **1 Peter 2:21-23**

**To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.**

Bottom line, if they treated Jesus this way, we should not expect anything less; however, just as there were those who had listened to Jesus, there will also be those who listen to the Gospel from us today.

### **1 John 4:5-6.**

There was no excuse for the Jews to deny Jesus while He was present with them as pointed out in **Matthew 12:39-42.** With greater revelation comes greater accountability- **1 Peter 1:10-12.**

Jesus raised the dead, healed the crippled, open the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf. He routinely cast out demons. What more did He have to do- **Luke 7:31-35; 16:28-31.**

- Jesus performed so many miracles and signs- **Mt. 11:20-24; John 10:25, 38; 14:11; Heb. 2:1-4.**
- He fulfilled many prophecies- **Luke 18:31; 24:25-27, 44; John 3:14; 5:46; 15:25; Acts 13:33.**
- The Jews had witnessed numerous signs and wonders; they had no excuse for their unbelief.
  - o **Matthew 13:11-17; Luke 12:47-48; John 12:37-43.**
- Certainly some in Israel accepted Jesus as their Messiah- **John 7:31, 8:30; 12:11, 42-43.**
- But on the most part, there was a national rejection of Jesus- **Matthew 23:34-36; John 19:15.**
- The truth concerning Jesus was hidden from their eyes- **Luke 19:41-44.**

Such irrational hatred of Jesus by so many who were looking for the Messiah, does not make sense to us today, but was foretold of in **Psalms 35:19;69:4.** Don't be surprised that the world hates us-**1 John 3:13**

### **Luke 13:34-35**

**“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”**

### **1. Persecuted for Jesus**

#### **John 16:1-4**

**“All this I have told you so that you will not go astray. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you. I did not tell you this at first because I was with you.”**

Jesus has warned us that the people in this world will treat us the same way they had treated Him, because they are deceived and motivated by Satan- **Acts 26:9-11; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 1 John 5:19.**

Notice what Jesus said in verse 2, “...in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God.” Isn’t that the truth today, so many are martyred in the name of God.

- Jesus spoke of a baptism of martyrdom in **Matthew 20:20-23; Luke 12:49-53.**
- Nothing seems to have fueled Church growth more than persecution; look at China for example.
- God will judge the world system for how it has treated His people in the end times.
  - o **Revelation 16:4-11; 18:20.**

Even after Paul has been stoned to death, he got up and continued preaching the gospel. I think most people would have quit at that point; God’s grace is sufficient for us- **Acts 14; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.**

There is a book called “Foxes Book of Martyrs” that describe actual stories of many who were put to death for their faith in the most hideous forms- **Hebrews 11:35-38.**

To torture, racks, and flames, before being put to death they were tormented in the most awful modes that human ingenuity could devise. They were crucified; were thrown into boiling oil; were burned at the stake; were roasted slowly over coals; were compelled to drink melted lead; were torn in pieces by wild animals; were covered with pitch and set on fire.

**2 Timothy 3:12,**

**In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.**

**Don’t Shrink Back- Hebrews 10:32-39**

The key is to keep moving, don’t shrink back when persecution comes, stay on the offensive. The whole point of Satan stirring up persecution is to shut us up, so we need to do the opposite and speak more. **Acts 4:23-31; 5:17-42; 8:1-8; 12; Philippians 1:12-21.**

No doubt Satan will use persecution to try to intimidate and pressure us to quit and fall away from the Lord- **1 Thessalonians 3:4-5; Revelation 2:10; Luke 21:16-19; 22:31.**

- These hardships are only temporary- **Romans 8:18; 1 Corinthians 7:31.**
- The key is to persevere and to endure, knowing these things will make us stronger in our faith and character if we overcome them through faith in God’s Word- **James 1:2-4; Ro. 5:3-5.**

**Matthew 10:21-23**

**Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. I tell you the truth, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

- Jesus warned that His servants would be persecuted for telling people the Good News.
  - o **Luke 11:47-51; 21:12-19; John 15:18-21; 16:4.**
- The Jews rejection of Jesus turned into great persecution as recorded in the book of Acts.
- Too many to mention, but here are a few- **Acts 4:21; 5:41; 7:57-60; 8:1-4; 9:1; 12:12; 13:50.**
- References to persecution continues all through the Epistles, from the Gentile nations as well.
  - o **1 Th. 3:7; 2 Timothy 3:12; Hebrews 10:32-39; 1 Peter 4:12-19; Revelation 2:10.**

This is why being baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire is so important for us to have the boldness and courage to stand against such things- **Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:4-5, 8; 4:13, 29-31; 5:29.**

# Discourse #78: The Work of the Holy Spirit

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Reference: John 16:7-15

Theme: It is better that Jesus Returned to Heaven so we could have the Holy Spirit within every Believer  
Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.**

**He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.**

**John 16:7-15**

The Greek word for "Counselor" in **John 14:15** is parakletos, means intercessor, advocate, comforter, helper or as one called alongside to help- **John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7**. Helps us in prayer- **Ro. 8:26-27**.

Jesus was stating that the Holy Spirit could not come and dwell in us forever until after Jesus' resurrection. At which time the Holy Spirit would be within and upon the believer in power.

- This is why Jesus said that it's better for Him to go, that way the Holy Spirit is in all of us.
- The Holy Spirit within the believer, dwelling within our recreated, born again human spirit.
  - o **John 20:22; Ro. 8:11; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 12:12-13; 2 Cor. 6:16; Titus 3:5-7.**
- We have received a deposit of our inheritance, the Spirit of God within us.
  - o **2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30.**
- We have receive an anointing within through the Holy Spirit- **1 John 2:20, 27.**

Receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is an experience that is separate and distinct from being born of the Spirit. When Jesus spoke to His disciples in **Acts 1:4-8**, they were already born again in **John 20:22**.

**Luke 24:49, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."**

- We see the Spirit coming upon the Early Church in power in Acts chapter 2.
- Jesus commanded (**Acts 1:4**) His followers to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill the Great Commission by the power of God- **Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18.**
- Like Jesus who was anointed with the Holy Spirit to minister the Gospel- **Luke 4:14; Acts 10:38**

We see a clear pattern in the Book of Acts, that after a person was born again, soon after they would have hands laid on them to receive the Baptism with the Holy Spirit- **Acts 8:4-21; 19:1-7.**

- Jesus is the baptizer with the Holy Spirit and with Fire- **Luke 3:16.**
- The evidence of speaking with other tongues is an initial sign of a believer receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit- **Acts 2:4; Acts 10:44-46; 11:15-17.**
- There is a ministry side to tongues in a group setting- **1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5-12, 19-40.**
- A personal devotional side of tongues- **Ro. 8:26-27; 1 Cor. 14:1-4, 13-18; Eph. 5:18; Jude 20.**

### **Convict the World**

One of the chief missions of the Holy Spirit is to enlighten, enable and appropriate the New Birth.

**John 3:3-8; Titus 3:4-7.**

### **1 Thessalonians 1:4-5**

**For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.**

- Thank God for the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, when the Gospel is preached.
- That is what is meant by being “Enlightened” in **Hebrews 6:4.**
- The Holy Spirit reveals the sinner’s need for Jesus; they are lost without Him.
- It’s like a divine appointment that people have a few times in their lifetime- to accept Jesus.
- For some people, they may have only one opportunity to receive the Lord.
  - o Where the invitation is made and the Holy Spirit is drawing them to receive Jesus.
  - o **John 6:65; Acts 13:48; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2**
- It is impossible for man to save himself, but not with God- **Matthew 19:25-26; 1 Peter 4:17-18.**

Here is a small point, nowhere in the New Testament do we see any Scripture that states that the Holy Spirit convicts Christians of sin. When we sin, it’s our own heart that condemns us- **1 John 3:19-22.**

- When it does, we are to confess that sin to God according to **1 John 1:9.**
- Remission of sins is for the sinner, and forgiveness of sins is for the Christian.
- Generally speaking, when a Christian sins, their fellowship is broken, not their relationship with God. So to restore that broken fellowship we confess our sins to God- **Proverbs 28:13.**
- Unbelievers who are born again, their sins and past life is remitted, blotted out and forgotten.
  - o **Hebrews 8:8-13; 10:15-18.**
- The KJV uses “Remission” instead of “forgiveness in **Acts 10:43; Hebrews 9:22; 10:18.**

The “sin” that the world is convicted of by the Holy Spirit, is not all the individual sins they have committed over a lifetime, it is the one sin that remains: the sin of rejecting Jesus as Savior- **John 3:36.**

- Jesus has already done away with all of the sins of humanity, once and for all, for all time.
  - o **John 1:29; Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:10; 1 Peter 3:18.**
- So all that is left for the sinner to confess is Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior- **Ro. 10:9.**
- Of “Righteousness” because Jesus has become our righteousness from God- **2 Corinthians 5:21.**
- Of “Judgment” because Satan is a defeated foe, those who follow him are on the losing side.
  - o **Eph. 1:19-23; Php. 2:5-11; Col. 2:13-15; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 1:18.**
- The Holy Spirit is also called the “Spirit of Truth” in **John 14:17; 15:26; 1 John 4:6.**
- He guides us into all “Truth” in Jesus Christ, the Word of God- **John 1:1; 17:17; 18:38.**
- The Holy Spirit’s job is to point everyone to Jesus, to exalt and lift Him up- **John 12:32.**
- The Holy Spirit is the great teacher, who will reveal the Word to us; future things- **Acts 11:28.**

Thank you Lord for the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead. Without Him we would not be saved, filled or know anything from the Word of God- **2 Peter 1:21.** His ministry is absolutely critical.

# Discourse #79: After the Resurrection

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Reference: John 16:17-33

Theme: The Resurrection of Jesus has Opened the Door to the Father, Heaven and Eternal Life

Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



Some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.” Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’?”

**I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.”**

**John 16:17-22**

## 1. Purchased Eternal Redemption

When Jesus told His disciples that they would no longer see Him, He was talking about His death on the cross. In response to Jesus’ death, they would mourn, but it would be brief, it would last only three days.

- When Jesus first appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, they were filled with joy.
  - o **Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:9-14; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-22.**
- So what did Jesus do after His death and before He appeared to His disciples.
- We know that Jesus spent three days and nights in the heart of the earth- **Matthew 12:40.**
- Right after Jesus died, He told one of the criminals crucified next to Him, that he would be with him in paradise- **Luke 23:43.**
- This is not talking about the third heaven or the throne of God, but Abraham’s Bosom.
  - o **Luke 16:19-31; 1 Peter 3:19.**
- On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead and took all those in Abraham’s Bosom to heaven.
  - o **Ephesians 4:8-10.**
- When Jesus reentered His body and came out of the tomb, He appeared to Mary Magdalene.
  - o **John 20:1-18.**
- He told her not to hold onto Him in **John 20:17**, because He had not yet returned to the Father.
- So what did Jesus do when He returned to the Father, before appearing to the disciples?

Jesus went into the heavenly Holy of Holies to offer His own blood upon the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant to purchase our eternal redemption, but this was done only once, never to be repeated again! His blood is the guarantee, so to speak, of our eternal redemption- **Hebrews 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:10-18.**

## 2. Only one Mediator between God and Man

### John 16:23-28

**“In that day you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”**

- Through His death, burial and resurrection we have been reconciled back to the Father.
  - o **Romans 5:11; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.**
- The veil that has separated humanity from their creator has been torn in two- **Mt. 27:50-54.**
- We have access to the Father by the Spirit through the Son- our one and only Mediator
  - o Ephesians 2:18, *“For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.”*
- Unlike the Old Covenant, that had a man represent the Hebrews before God- Jesus represent us.
  - o **1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 8:1-6; 9:15; 12:24.**

Jesus made an amazing statement that we could ask the Father for anything in line with His Word, through His Name. We call this the “Prayer of Petition.”

- So we are asking the Father for things that the Scriptures is specifically directing us to ask.
  - o **Matthew 7:7; 9:38; Ephesians 1:17; James 1:5-8.**

Yet there are Scriptures that in the Greek, the word for “ask” is actually rendered as “strictly a demand for something due.” Not that we demand of God, rather we are claiming our inheritance and commanding the devil to keep his hands off our lives- **Mark 11:22-24; John 14:13-14.**

## 3. Overcoming the World

### John 16:29-33

**Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.” “You believe at last!” Jesus answered. “But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”**

- The peace we have in this world is knowing and experiencing Jesus’ victory in our lives.
  - o **Romans 8:31-39; 1 Corinthians 15:54-58; 2 Corinthians 2:14.**

The world system (**1 John 2:15-17**), is designed with one main purpose in mind, to keep people from coming to Jesus. So when we receive Him as Lord of our lives, we have overcome this world.

**1 John 5:4-5, “For everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”**

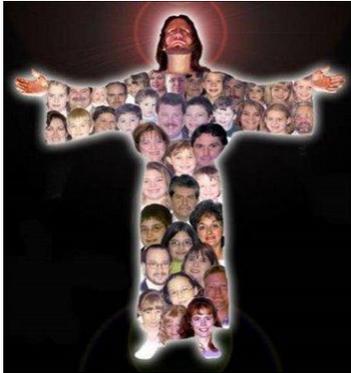
# Discourse #80: Jesus' Prayer for Us

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Reference: John 17:1-26

Theme: Jesus Prayed for His Church to be Protected, Sanctified and Unified in Love

Context: The Lord was Eating the Last Supper with His Disciples in Jerusalem



**“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”**

**John 17:15-21**

Jesus is our Lord and Master, that great Shepherd of the sheep, who gave His all that we may have life and have it more abundantly- **John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Hebrews 13:20.**

- It's no surprise then at the very end of the Last Supper, Jesus' primary focus was praying for all those who would come after Him as His disciples.
- The first point in our text is that the Father would protect us from Satan- **1 John 5:18.**
  - o Romans 16:20, *“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.”*
- Similar to how Jesus had prayed for Peter, whom Satan wanted to sift as wheat- **Luke 22:31-32.**
- God is faithful and He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear- **1 Cor. 10:13.**

## **2 Thessalonians 3:3**

**But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.**

There are two forms of Sanctification, that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God play in our lives. The first is instantaneous Sanctification, this takes place when a new believer is just born again. All born again children of God have been sanctified in Jesus. **Acts 20:32; 26:18; Ro. 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11.**

Sanctification is also a progressive work of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God over the course of a believers life. As our minds are renewed with God's Word and our physical body becomes subject to our spirit through the Word of God, we become a vessel for the Lord's own use.

- So what does Sanctification mean? According to the Greek, it simply means, “To Make Holy.”
  - o **Ephesians 5:25-27; 2 Timothy 2:21; Hebrews 13:12; 1 Peter 1:22; 3:15.**
- God's Word, as spiritual water washes the bad habits and attitudes out of our lives.

The end result that Jesus was praying for is that we may be united with God and with one another through the bonds of love- **Romans 15:5-6; Colossians 3:12-14.**

- A unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, just as God is one- **Ephesians 4:1-6.**
- A unity of faith through uniform teaching of God's Word- **Ephesians 4:11-16.**
- That the world may know we are His disciples, because of the love we have for each other.
  - o **John 13:34-35; 1 John 4:7-21; 2 John 6.**

