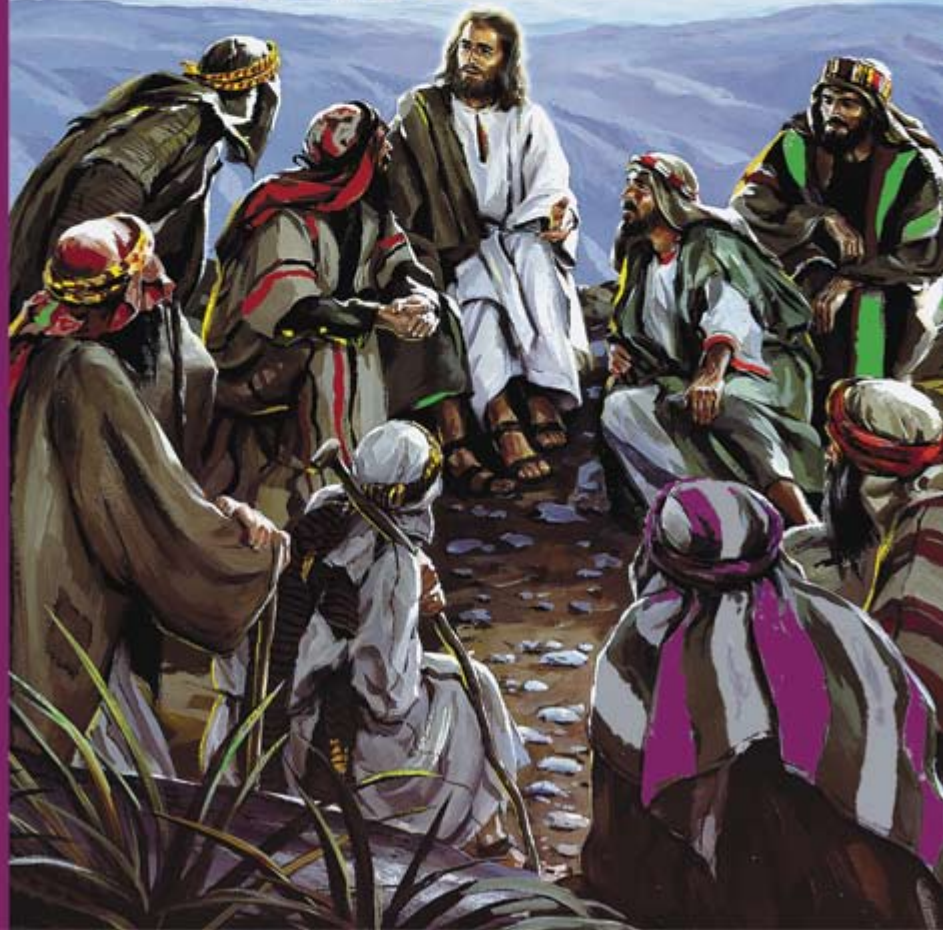


Christ's Object Lessons Bible Study Series

Growing in Wisdom



Growing in Wisdom

Christ's Object Lessons
Bible Study Series

Revela[†]tion Publications

*- Compatible with any Bible
- Individuals or groups
- Contains full
answer
key!*

Christ's Object Lessons was written by E.G. White and originally published in 1900 by Pacific Press Publishing Company. The subject matter is the parables of Christ—His method of revealing spiritual insight through practical life examples. Its Bible-based, Christ-centered, life-changing content has led a multitude to a greater understanding of the kingdom of heaven.

Growing in Wisdom is the second in a series of three Bible study guides utilizing the book entitled, *Christ's Object Lessons* as the commentary. The other guides in this series are *Seeds of Wisdom* (#1) and *Harvest of Wisdom* (#3). Since each guide is based on a unique set of parables, they can be completed in sequence, out of sequence, or used independently of each other.

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AN INVITATION TO THE READER

We are glad you have received the *Growing in Wisdom* Bible study guide. It is our prayer that you will go through these lessons and draw closer to Christ; the One who offers you friendship, peace, and eternal life.

If there is an address in the box below, this guide is offered to you as a gift from a Bible school. Your school may utilize this guide in one of two possible ways.

The guide may or may not contain an answer section in the back, but when there is one, you may refer to it to verify your answers. Upon completion, if you wish to have your certificate validated, remove and send only your certificate to the address below for signature by an instructor.

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In either situation, all you have mailed to us will be returned with additional free study materials. If at any time you have additional Bible questions, you may send them, and an instructor will respond.

You may have been a Christian all your life, or this may be your first opportunity to learn about the wonderful love of Jesus; in either case, this time you spend in the Word of God will be a rich blessing. May the Lord fill you with peace as you seek to know Him better.

FOR MORE STUDY MATERIAL WRITE:



SUGGESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- (1) PRAY FOR GUIDANCE** Each time you study, pray for discernment and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Approach your study with an open mind. Avoid preconceived ideas that may have a negative influence on your search for truth.

- (2) READ THE QUESTION** Read each question slowly taking extra time to contemplate and understand it. This will result in the greatest benefit from your study.

- (3) FIND THE ANSWER** Use any Bible to look up the reference text listed below the answer space. Read the reference and surrounding texts to gain an understanding of their context. Write a concise answer on the blanks provided in your study guide. If you want to confirm your answer you may look it up in the answer section located in the back.

For a deeper understanding, read and compare the reference texts in multiple versions of Scripture. Use a concordance, column references, and a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words and search for other related texts.

- (4) CONTEMPLATE THE RESULTS** Reread the question and answer, then read the commentary. Contemplate the significance of what you have just studied and ask for wisdom from the Lord to help you know how to apply it to your life.

- (5) CONTINUE TO STUDY** It is our prayer that you will continue to study God's Word. We encourage you to contact your source for this guide and obtain other inspirational materials that will aid in your spiritual growth.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUP STUDY

- (1) ASSIGN A LEADER** It is important to appoint an individual to lead your study group. This may be a pastor, church leader, or a shared responsibility among the group members. This individual's responsibility is to keep the discussion objective and encourage participation.
- (2) PREDETERMINE STUDY METHODS** Make a group decision whether to include outside materials in your study sessions. As a rule, study time will be the most fruitful when the focus is on Biblical references.
- (3) PRE-STUDY THE LESSON** Encourage each member of your group to study the lesson prior to meeting. This will result in the greatest benefit to each individual as well as enhancing his/her ability to participate in discussion.
- (4) BEGIN WITH PRAYER** Each time you meet always invite the Lord to be present in your study session and the Holy Spirit to be your guide.
- (5) READ QUESTION** The group leader may read or appoint another member of the group to read the questions.
- (6) READ ANSWER & COMMENTARY** The group leader can ask for volunteers to give the answer and related commentary. When time allows, ask for answers derived from various translations to increase participation and understanding.
- (7) DISCUSSION** The most benefit will be gained if the leader does not lecture the group but rather leads it. Each member of the group should be encouraged to participate in the capacity he/she is comfortable. One member of the group should not dominate the discussion. Encourage sensitivity to the feelings and opinions of others even in disagreement.
- (8) TESTIMONY** Have a time at the beginning or end of your session for brief testimonies. This can be general or limited to the subject matter being studied.

Why Christ Taught in Parables



In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching; the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly

things with which the people were most familiar.

The Scripture says, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; . . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matthew 13:34,35. Natural things were the medium for the spiritual; the things of nature and the life-experience of His hearers were connected with the truths of the written

word. Leading thus from the natural to the spiritual kingdom, Christ's parables are links in the chain of truth that unites man with God, and earth with heaven.

In His teaching from nature, Christ was speaking of the things which His own hands had made, and which had qualities and powers that He Himself had imparted. In their original perfection all created things were an expression of the thought of God. To Adam and Eve in their Eden home nature was full of the knowledge of God, teeming with divine instruction. Wisdom spoke to the eye and was received into the heart; for they communed with God in His created works. As soon as the holy pair transgressed the law of the Most High, the brightness from the face of God departed from the face of nature. The earth is now marred and defiled by sin. Yet even in its blighted state much that is beautiful remains. God's object lessons are not obliterated; rightly understood, nature speaks of her Creator.

In the days of Christ these lessons had been lost sight of. Men had well-nigh ceased to discern God in His works. The sinfulness of humanity had cast a pall over the fair face of creation; and instead of manifesting God, His works became a barrier that concealed Him. Men "worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator." Thus the heathen "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." Romans 1:25, 21. So in Israel, man's teaching had been put in the place of God's. Not only the things of nature, but the sacrificial service and the Scriptures themselves—all given to reveal God—were so perverted that they became the means of concealing Him.

Christ sought to remove that which obscured the truth. The veil that sin has cast over the face of nature, He came to draw aside, bringing to view the spiritual glory that all things were created to reflect. His words placed the teachings of nature as well as of the Bible in a new aspect, and made them a new revelation.

Jesus plucked the beautiful lily, and placed it in the hands of children and youth; and as they looked into His own youthful face, fresh with the sunlight of His Father's countenance, He gave the lesson, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow [in the simplicity of natural beauty]; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Then followed the sweet assurance and the important lesson, "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

In the sermon on the mount these words were spoken to others besides children and youth. They were spoken to the multitude, among whom were men and women full of worries and perplexities, and sore with disappointment and sorrow. Jesus continued: "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Then spreading out His hands to the surrounding multitude, He said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matt. 6:28-33.

Why Christ Taught in Parables

Thus Christ interpreted the message which He Himself had given to the lilies and the grass of the field. He desires us to read it in every lily and every spire of grass. His words are full of assurance, and tend to confirm trust in God.

So wide was Christ's view of truth, so extended His teaching, that every phase of nature was employed in illustrating truth. The scenes upon which the eye daily rests were all connected with some spiritual truth, so that nature is clothed with the parables of the Master.

In the earlier part of His ministry, Christ had spoken to the people in words so plain that all His hearers might have grasped truths which would make them wise unto salvation. But in many hearts the truth had taken no root, and it had been quickly caught away. "Therefore speak I to them in parables." He said; "because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . . For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed." Matt. 13:13-15.

Jesus desired to awaken inquiry. He sought to arouse the careless, and impress truth upon the heart. Parable teaching was popular, and commanded the respect and attention, not only of the Jews, but of the people of other nations. No more effective method of instruction could He have employed. If His hearers had desired a knowledge of divine things, they might have understood His words; for He was always willing to explain them to the honest inquirer.

Again, Christ had truths to present which the people were unprepared to accept or even to understand. For this reason also He taught them in parables. By connecting His teaching with the scenes of life, experience, or nature, He secured their attention and impressed their hearts. After-ward, as they looked upon the objects that illustrated His lessons, they recalled the words of the divine Teacher. To minds that were open to the Holy Spirit, the significance of the Saviour's teaching unfolded more and more. Mysteries grew clear, and that which had been hard to grasp became evident.

Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life. None who listened to the Saviour could feel that they were neglected or forgotten. The humblest, the most sinful, heard in His teaching a voice that spoke to them in sympathy and tenderness.

And He had another reason for teaching in parables. Among the multitudes that gathered about Him, there were priests and rabbis, scribes and elders, Herodians and rulers, world-loving, bigoted, ambitious men, who desired above all things to find some accusation against Him. Their spies followed His steps day after day, to catch from His lips something that would cause His condemnation, and forever silence the One who seemed to draw the world after Him. The Saviour understood the character of these men, and He presented truth in such a way that they could find nothing by which to bring His case before the Sanhedrim.

In parables He rebuked the hypocrisy and wicked works of those who occupied high positions, and in figurative language clothed truth of so cutting a character that had it been spoken in direct denunciation, they would not have listened to His words, and would speedily have put an end to His ministry. But while He evaded the spies, He made truth so clear that error was manifested, and the honest in heart were profited by His lessons. Divine wisdom, infinite grace, were made plain by the things of God's creation. Through nature and the experiences of life, men were taught of God. "The invisible things of Him since the creation of the world," were "perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity." Rom. 1:20, R. V.

In the Saviour's parable teaching is an indication of what constitutes the true "higher education." Christ might have opened to men the deepest truths of science. He might have unlocked mysteries which have required many centuries of toil and study to penetrate. He might have made suggestions in scientific lines that would have afforded food for thought and stimulus for invention to the close of time. But He did not do this. He said nothing to gratify curiosity, or to satisfy man's ambition by opening doors to worldly greatness. In all His teaching, Christ brought the mind of man in contact with the Infinite Mind. He did not direct the people to study men's theories about God, His word, or His works. He taught them to behold Him as manifested in His works, in His word, and by His providences.

Christ did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the

development of character, that which will enlarge man's capacity for knowing God, and increase his efficiency to do good. He spoke to men of those truths that relate to the conduct of life, and that take hold upon eternity.

It was Christ who directed the education of Israel. Concerning the commandments and ordinances of the Lord He said, "Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Deuteronomy 6:7-9. In His own teaching, Jesus showed how this command is to be fulfilled—how the laws and principles of God's kingdom can be so presented as to reveal their beauty and preciousness. When the Lord was training Israel to be the special representatives of Himself, He gave them homes among the hills and valleys. In their home life and their religious service they were brought in constant contact with nature and with the word of God. So Christ taught His disciples by the lake, on the mountainside, in the fields and groves, where they could look upon the things of nature by which He illustrated His teachings. And as they learned of Christ, they put their knowledge to use by cooperating with Him in His work.

So through the creation we are to become acquainted with the Creator. The book of nature is a great lesson book, which in connection with the

Why Christ Taught in Parables

Scriptures we are to use in teaching others of His character, and guiding lost sheep back to the fold of God. As the works of God are studied, the Holy Spirit flashes conviction into the mind. It is not the conviction that logical reasoning produces; but unless the mind has become too dark to know God, the eye too dim to see Him, the ear too dull to hear His voice, a deeper meaning is grasped, and the sublime, spiritual truths of the written word are impressed on the heart.

In these lessons direct from nature, there is a simplicity and purity that makes them of the highest value. All need the teaching to be derived from this source. In itself the beauty of nature leads the soul away from sin and worldly attractions, and toward purity, peace, and God. Too often the minds of students are occupied with men's theories and speculations, falsely called science and philosophy. They need to be brought into close contact with nature. Let them learn that creation and Christianity have one God. Let them be taught to see the harmony of the natural with the spiritual. Let everything which their eyes see or their hands handle be made a lesson in character building. Thus the mental powers will be strengthened, the character developed, the whole life ennobled.

Christ's purpose in parable teaching was in direct line with the purpose of the Sabbath. God gave to men the memorial of His creative power, that they might discern Him in the works of His hand. The Sabbath bids us behold in His created works the glory of the Creator. And it was because He desired us to do this that Jesus bound up His precious lessons with the beauty of

natural things. On the holy rest day, above all other days, we should study the messages that God has written for us in nature. We should study the Saviour's parables where He spoke them, in the fields and groves, under the open sky, among the grass and flowers. As we come close to the heart of nature, Christ makes His presence real to us, and speaks to our hearts of His peace and love.

And Christ has linked His teaching, not only with the day of rest, but with the week of toil. He has wisdom for him who drives the plow and sows the seed. In the plowing and sowing, the tilling and reaping, He teaches us to see an illustration of His work of grace in the heart. So in every line of useful labor and every association of life, He desires us to find a lesson of divine truth. Then our daily toil will no longer absorb our attention and lead us to forget God; it will continually remind us of our Creator and Redeemer. The thought of God will run like a thread of gold through all our homely cares and occupations. For us the glory of His face will again rest upon the face of nature. We shall ever be learning new lessons of heavenly truth, and growing into the image of His purity. Thus shall we "be taught of the Lord"; and in the lot wherein we are called, we shall "abide with God." Isa.54:13; 1 Cor. 7:24.

Shall Not God Avenge His Own



Lesson 1

Christ had been speaking of the period just before His second coming, and of the perils through which His followers must pass. With special reference to that time He related the parable “to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

“There was in a city,” He said, “a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God

avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”

(1) FOR WHAT REASON DID THE UNJUST JUDGE AVENGE THE WIDOW OF THE INJUSTICE DONE TO HER?

Luke 18:5

The judge who is here pictured had no regard for right, nor pity for suffering. The widow who pressed her case before him was persistently repulsed.

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Again and again she came to him, only to be treated with contempt, and to be driven from the judgment seat. The judge knew that her cause was righteous, and he could have relieved her at once, but he would not. He wanted to show his arbitrary power, and it gratified him to let her ask and plead and entreat in vain. But she would not fail nor become discouraged. Notwithstanding his indifference and hardheartedness, she pressed her petition until the judge consented to attend to her case. "Though I fear not God, nor regard man," he said, "yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." To save his reputation, to avoid giving publicity to his partial, one-sided judgment, he avenged the persevering woman.

(2) WHAT PROMISE OF JUSTICE DOES GOD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, OFFER UNTO THE NEEDY AND DISTRESSED WHO PRESENT THEIR CASE TO HIM?

Luke 18:7, 8

Christ here draws a sharp contrast between the unjust judge and God. The judge yielded to the widow's request merely through selfishness, that he might be relieved of her importunity. He felt for her no pity or compassion; her misery was nothing to him. How different is the attitude of God toward those who seek Him. The appeals of the needy and distressed are considered by Him with infinite compassion.

(3) WHAT IS THE ROOT CAUSE OF OUR NEEDS, DISTRESSES,

AND ULTIMATELY OUR SEPARATION FROM GOD?

Isaiah 59:2

The woman who entreated the judge for justice had lost her husband by death. Poor and friendless, she had no means of retrieving her ruined fortunes. So by sin, man lost his connection with God. Of himself he has no means of salvation.

(4) WHO SUFFERED THE EFFECT OF SEPARATION CAUSED BY SIN SO WE, THROUGH HIM, CAN BE RECONCILED TO THE FATHER?

Hebrews 2:9, 10

But in Christ we are brought nigh unto the Father. The elect of God are dear to His heart. They are those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, to show forth His praise, to shine as lights amid the darkness of the world. The unjust judge had no special interest in the widow who importuned him for deliverance; yet in order to rid himself of her pitiful appeals, he heard her plea, and delivered her from her adversary.

(5) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE VALUE OF GOD'S CHILDREN WHO ARE TREATED UNJUSTLY?

Zechariah 2:8

But God loves His children with infinite love. To Him the dearest object on earth is His church.

“For the Lord’s portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.” Deut. 32:9,10.

(6) WHAT IS SATAN, THE GREAT ADVERSARY, CONSTANTLY DOING TO DESTROY GOD’S CHILDREN?

Revelation 12:10

The widow’s prayer, “Avenge me”—”do me justice” (R.V.)—”of mine adversary,” represents the prayer of God’s children. Satan is their great adversary. He is the “accuser of our brethren,” who accuses them before God day and night. He is continually working to misrepresent and accuse, to deceive and destroy the people of God. And it is for deliverance from the power of Satan and his agents that in this parable Christ teaches His disciples to pray.

(7) WHO IS THE ADVOCATE THAT COMES TO OUR DEFENSE?

1 John 2:1

In the prophecy of Zechariah is brought to view Satan’s accusing work, and the work of Christ in resisting the adversary of His people. The prophet says, “He showed me Joshua the high priest

standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel.” Zech. 3:1-3.

The people of God are here represented as a criminal on trial. Joshua, as high priest, is seeking for a blessing for his people, who are in great affliction. While he is pleading before God, Satan is standing at his right hand as his adversary. He is accusing the children of God, and making their case appear as desperate as possible. He presents before the Lord their evil doings and their defects. He shows their faults and failures, hoping they will appear of such a character in the eyes of Christ that He will render them no help in their great need. Joshua, as the representative of God’s people, stands under condemnation, clothed with filthy garments. Aware of the sins of his people, he is weighed down with discouragement. Satan is pressing upon his soul a sense of guiltiness that makes him feel almost hopeless. Yet there he stands as a suppliant, with Satan arrayed against him.

(8) WHAT LOVE INSPIRED ACTION OF GOD’S CHILDREN INFURIATES SATAN?

2 John 6

The work of Satan as an accuser began in heaven. This has been his work on earth ever since man’s fall, and it will

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be his work in a special sense as we approach nearer to the close of this world's history. As he sees that his time is short, he will work with greater earnestness to deceive and destroy. He is angry when he sees a people on the earth who, even in their weakness and sinfulness, have respect to the law of Jehovah. He is determined that they shall not obey God. He delights in their unworthiness, and has devices prepared for every soul, that all may be ensnared and separated from God. He seeks to accuse and condemn God and all who strive to carry out His purposes in this world in mercy and love, in compassion and forgiveness.

(9) WHAT LOVE INSPIRED ACTION OF GOD INFURIATES SATAN?

1 Peter 5:10

Every manifestation of God's power for His people arouses the enmity of Satan. Every time God works in their behalf, Satan with his angels works with renewed vigor to compass their ruin. He is jealous of all who make Christ their strength. His object is to instigate evil, and when he has succeeded, throw all the blame upon the tempted ones. He points to their filthy garments, their defective characters. He presents their weakness and folly, their sins of ingratitude, their unlikeness to Christ, which have dishonored their Redeemer. All this he urges as an argument proving his right to work his will in their destruction. He endeavors to affright their souls with the thought that their case is hopeless, that the stain of their defilement can

never be washed away. He hopes so to destroy their faith that they will yield fully to his temptations, and turn from their allegiance to God.

(10) WHEN FACED WITH SATAN'S ACCUSATIONS, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM IF WE APPEAL TO OUR DIVINE ADVOCATE IN FAITH?

Romans 3:26

The Lord's people cannot of themselves answer the charges of Satan. As they look to themselves they are ready to despair. But they appeal to the divine Advocate. They plead the merits of the Redeemer. . . . With confidence the Lord's children cry unto Him to silence the accusations of Satan, and bring to naught his devices. "Do me justice of mine adversary," they pray; and with the mighty argument of the cross, Christ silences the bold accuser.

(11) WHAT DOES CHRIST TELL SATAN AS HE INTERVENES TO RESCUE PERISHING SOULS?

Zechariah 3:2

When Satan seeks to cover the people of God with blackness, and ruin them, Christ interposes. Although they have sinned, Christ has taken the guilt of their sins upon His own soul. He has snatched the race as a brand from the fire. By His human nature He is linked with man, while through His divine

nature He is one with the infinite God. Help is brought within the reach of perishing souls. The adversary is rebuked.

(12) WHAT DOES GOD REMOVE FROM US AND THEN REPLACE WHEN WE REPENT AND BELIEVE?

Zechariah 3:4

Notwithstanding the defects of the people of God, Christ does not turn away from the objects of His care. He has the power to change their raiment. He removes the filthy garments, He places upon the repenting, believing ones His own robe of righteousness, and writes pardon against their names on the records of heaven. He confesses them as His before the heavenly universe. Satan their adversary is shown to be an accuser and deceiver. God will do justice for His own elect.

(13) WHO IS IN CONTROL OF THOSE WHO TRY TO MISREPRESENT, TEMPT, AND DESTROY GOD'S PEOPLE?

Ephesians 6:12

The prayer, "Do me justice of mine adversary," applies not only to Satan, but to the agencies whom he instigates to misrepresent, to tempt, and to destroy the people of God. Those who have decided to obey the commandments of God will understand by experience

that they have adversaries who are controlled by a power from beneath. Such adversaries beset Christ at every step, how constantly and determinedly no human being can ever know. Christ's disciples, like their Master, are followed by continual temptation.

(14) WHAT IS THE ROOT OF EVIL?

1 Timothy 6:10

The Scriptures describe the condition of the world just before Christ's second coming. James the apostle pictures the greed and oppression that will prevail. He says, "Go to now, ye rich men, . . . ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton. Ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you." James 5:1-6. This is a picture of what exists today. By every species of oppression and extortion, men are piling up colossal fortunes, while the cries of starving humanity are coming up before God.

(15) HOW DO THOSE CONTROLLED BY SATAN TREAT GOD'S LOYAL FOLLOWERS?

Matthew 24:9

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“Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.” Isa. 59:14, 15. This was fulfilled in the life of Christ on earth. He was loyal to God’s commandments, setting aside the human traditions and requirements which had been exalted in their place. Because of this He was hated and persecuted. This history is repeated. The laws and traditions of men are exalted above the law of God, and those who are true to God’s commandments suffer reproach and persecution. Christ, because of His faithfulness to God, was accused as a Sabbath breaker and blasphemer. He was declared to be possessed of a devil, and was denounced as Beelzebub. In like manner His followers are accused and misrepresented. Thus Satan hopes to lead them to sin, and cast dishonor upon God.

(16) WHO WILL MANY BE BROUGHT BEFORE TO TESTIFY FOR THEIR FAITH?

Mark 13:9

The character of the judge in the parable, who feared not God nor regarded man, was presented by Christ to show the kind of judgment that was then being executed, and that would soon be witnessed at His trial. He desires His people in all time to realize how little dependence can be placed on earthly rulers or judges in the day of adversity. Often the elect people of God have to stand before men in official positions who do not make the word of God their guide and counselor, but who follow their own unconsecrated, undisciplined impulses.

(17) WHO CAN WE RELY ON AS OUR REFUGE AND DELIVERER?

Psalms 91:2, 3, 9

In the parable of the unjust judge, Christ has shown what we should do. “Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?” Christ, our example, did nothing to vindicate or deliver Himself. He committed His case to God. So His followers are not to accuse or condemn, or to resort to force in order to deliver themselves.

(18) IF WE COME TO GOD DURING THESE TRIALS IN PRAYER WITH SUPPLICATION, WHAT ARE WE PROMISED WILL BE GIVEN TO US?

Philippians 4:6, 7

When trials arise that seem unexplainable, we should not allow our peace to be spoiled. However unjustly we may be treated, let not passion arise. By indulging a spirit of retaliation we injure ourselves. We destroy our own confidence in God, and grieve the Holy Spirit. There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light.

(19) WHAT ARE WE INVITED TO DO WITH OUR PERPLEXITIES?

(21) HOW AND WHERE CAN WE TAKE OUR PRAYERS?

Psalms 50:15; 1 Peter 5:7

While the world is progressing in wickedness, none of us need flatter ourselves that we shall have no difficulties. But it is these very difficulties that bring us into the audience chamber of the Most High. We may seek counsel of One who is infinite in wisdom.

He invites us to present to Him our perplexities and necessities, and our need of divine help. He bids us be instant in prayer. As soon as difficulties arise, we are to offer to Him our sincere, earnest petitions. By our importunate prayers we give evidence of our strong confidence in God. The sense of our need leads us to pray earnestly, and our heavenly Father is moved by our supplications.

(20) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM WHEN WE ARE PERSECUTED FOR CHRIST?

Hebrews 13:5; Revelation 2:10

Often those who suffer reproach or persecution for their faith are tempted to think themselves forsaken by God. In the eyes of men they are in the minority. To all appearance their enemies triumph over them. But let them not violate their conscience. He who has suffered in their behalf, and has borne their sorrows and afflictions, has not forsaken them.

Hebrews 4:16

The children of God are not left alone and defenseless. Prayer moves the arm of Omnipotence. Prayer has “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire”—we shall know what it means when we hear the reports of the martyrs who died for their faith—“turneth to flight the armies of the aliens.” Heb. 11:33, 34.

(22) WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM WHEN OUR PERPLEXITIES SEEM OVERWHELMING?

Psalms 50:15

If we surrender our lives to His service, we can never be placed in a position for which God has not made provision. Whatever may be our situation, we have a Guide to direct our way; whatever our perplexities, we have a sure Counselor; whatever our sorrow, bereavement, or loneliness, we have a sympathizing Friend. If in our ignorance we make missteps, Christ does not leave us. His voice, clear and distinct, is heard saying, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” John 14:6. “He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.” Psalms 72:12.

The Lord declares that He will be honored by those who draw nigh to

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Him, who faithfully do His service. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee.” Isa. 26:3. The arm of Omnipotence is outstretched to lead us onward and still onward. Go forward, the Lord says; I will send you help. It is for My name’s glory that you ask, and you shall receive. I will be honored before those who are watching for your failure. They shall see My word triumph gloriously. “All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” Matt. 21:22.

(23) HOW MANY AFFLICTIONS WILL GOD DELIVER US FROM IF WE COME TO HIM WITH A CONTRITE HEART?

Psalms 34:19

Let all who are afflicted or unjustly used, cry to God. Turn away from those whose hearts are as steel, and make your requests known to your Maker. Never is one repulsed who comes to Him with a contrite heart. Not one sincere prayer is lost. Amid the anthems of the celestial choir, God hears the cries of the weakest human being. We pour out our heart’s desire in our closets, we breathe a prayer as we walk by the way, and our words reach the throne of the Monarch of the universe. They may be inaudible to any human ear, but they cannot die away into silence, nor can they be lost through the activities of business that are going on. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the confusion of the multitude, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard.

(24) WHAT HAS OUR GOD, WHO SPARED NOT HIS ONLY SON FOR US, PROMISED IF WE SEEK HIM?

Romans 8:32

You who feel the most unworthy, fear not to commit your case to God. When He gave Himself in Christ for the sin of the world, He undertook the case of every soul. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” Will He not fulfill the gracious word given for our encouragement and strength?

(25) WHY DOES GOD PERMIT US TO UNDERGO TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS?

Job 23:10

Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan’s power without, we must be delivered from his power within. The Lord permits trials in order that we may be cleansed from earthliness, from selfishness, from harsh, unchristlike traits of character. He suffers the deep waters of affliction to go over our souls in order that we may know Him and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, in order that we may have deep heart longings to be cleansed from defilement, and may come forth from the trial purer, holier, happier. Often we enter the furnace of trial with our souls darkened with selfishness; but if patient

under the crucial test, we shall come forth reflecting the divine character. When His purpose in the affliction is accomplished, "He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Ps. 37:6.

(26) WHAT DOES THIS TEXT ADMONISH US TO DO DURING OUR TRIALS WHICH WILL PREVENT OUR DISCOURAGEMENT?

1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18

There is no danger that the Lord will neglect the prayers of His people. The danger is that in temptation and trial they will become discouraged, and fail to persevere in prayer.

(27) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF FERVENT PRAYER?

James 5:16

The Saviour manifested divine compassion toward the Syrophenician woman. His heart was touched as He saw her grief. He longed to give her an immediate assurance that her prayer was heard; but He desired to teach His disciples a lesson, and for a time He seemed to neglect the cry of her tortured heart. When her faith had been made manifest, He spoke to her words of commendation and sent her away with the precious boon she had asked. The disciples never forgot this lesson, and it is placed on record to show the result of persevering prayer.

(28) WHO WILL IN US TO SEEK RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Philippians 2:13

It was Christ Himself who put into that mother's heart the persistence which would not be repulsed. It was Christ who gave the pleading widow courage and determination before the judge. It was Christ who, centuries before, in the mysterious conflict by the Jabbok, had inspired Jacob with the same persevering faith. And the confidence which He Himself had implanted, He did not fail to reward.

He who dwells in the heavenly sanctuary judges righteously. His pleasure is more in His people, struggling with temptation in a world of sin, than in the host of angels that surround His throne.

(29) WHERE ARE THE WORDS AND DEEDS OF EVERY PERSON RECORDED?

Revelation 20:12

In this speck of a world the whole heavenly universe manifests the greatest interest, for Christ has paid an infinite price for the souls of its inhabitants. The world's Redeemer has bound earth to heaven by ties of intelligence, for the redeemed of the Lord are here. Heavenly beings still visit the earth as in the days when they walked and talked with Abraham and with Moses. Amid the busy activity of our great cities, amid the multitudes

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that crowd the thoroughfares and fill the marts of trade where from morning till evening the people act as if business and sport and pleasure were all there is to life, where there are so few to contemplate unseen realities—even here heaven has still its watchers and its holy ones. There are invisible agencies observing every word and deed of human beings. In every assembly for business or pleasure, in every gathering for worship, there are more listeners than can be seen with the natural sight. Sometimes the heavenly intelligences draw aside the curtain which hides the unseen world that our thoughts may be withdrawn from the hurry and rush of life to consider that there are unseen witnesses to all we do or say.

(30) WHAT IS THE ORDAINED MISSION OF THE ANGELS?

Hebrews 1:14

We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angel visitants. It would be well to consider that in all our work we have the cooperation and care of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim and angels that excel in strength—ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands—stand at His right hand, “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.”

By these angel messengers a faithful record is kept of the words and deeds of the children of men. Every act of cruelty or injustice toward God’s people, all they are caused to suffer through the power of evil workers, is registered in heaven.

(31) WHAT GREAT EVENT WILL ONE DAY BRING AN END TO THE CRIES OF GOD’S ELECT?

Revelation 1:7

“Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”

(32) WHY HASN’T GOD ALREADY AVENGED HIS ELECT?

James 5:7, 8

“Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” Heb. 10:35-37.

(33) WHAT TWO CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD’S GOVERNMENT MANDATE THAT ONE DAY HIS LONG-SUFFERING WILL END?

Psalms 97:2

The long-suffering of God is wonderful. Long does justice wait while mercy pleads with the sinner. But “righteousness and judgment are the establishment of His throne.” . . . “The Lord is slow to anger;” but He is “great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet.” Nahum 1:3.

(34) WHAT PROCLAMATION WILL MARK THE END OF GOD'S LONG FORBEARANCE WITH SIN?

Revelation 21:15

The world has become bold in transgression of God's law. Because of His long forbearance, men have trampled upon His authority. They have strengthened one another in oppression and cruelty toward His heritage, saying, “How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?” Ps. 73:11. But there is a line beyond which they cannot pass. The time is near when they will have reached the prescribed limit. Even now they have almost exceeded the bounds of the long-suffering of God,

the limits of His grace, the limits of His mercy. The Lord will interpose to vindicate His own honor, to deliver His people, and to repress the swellings of unrighteousness.

(35) PRIOR TO THE FLOOD, TO WHAT EXTENT HAD WICKEDNESS FILLED THE HEARTS OF MEN?

Genesis 6:5

In Noah's day, men had disregarded the law of God until almost all remembrance of the Creator had passed away from the earth. Their iniquity reached so great a height that the Lord brought a flood of waters upon the earth, and swept away its wicked inhabitants.

(36) WHAT CHARACTERISTICS OF LAWLESSNESS INDICATE THAT THE LAST GREAT CRISIS IS AT HAND?

2 Timothy 3:1-5

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From age to age the Lord has made known the manner of His working. When a crisis has come, He has revealed Himself, and has interposed to hinder the working out of Satan's plans. With nations, with families, and with individuals, He has often permitted matters to come to a crisis, that His interference might become marked. Then He has made manifest that there is a God in Israel who will maintain His law and vindicate His people.

In this time of prevailing iniquity we may know that the last great crisis is at hand. When the defiance of God's law is almost universal, when His people are oppressed and afflicted by their fellow men, the Lord will interpose.

(37) HOW WILL JUDGEMENT BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO HAVE PERSECUTED GOD'S PEOPLE?

James 2:13

The time is near when He will say, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." Isa. 26:20, 21. Men who claim to be Christians may now defraud and oppress the poor; they may rob the widow and fatherless; they may indulge their Satanic hatred because they cannot control the consciences of God's people; but for all this God

will bring them into judgment. They "shall have judgment without mercy" that have "showed no mercy." Not long hence they will stand before the Judge of all the earth, to render an account for the pain they have caused to the bodies and souls of His heritage. They may now indulge in false accusations, they may deride those whom God has appointed to do His work, they may consign His believing ones to prison, to the chain gang, to banishment, to death; but for every pang of anguish, every tear shed, they must answer. God will reward them double for their sins. Concerning Babylon, the symbol of the apostate church, He says to His ministers of judgment, "Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double." Rev. 18:5, 6.

(38) WHAT WILL BE THE PURIFYING AGENT USED BY GOD TO CLEANSE THE EARTH FROM MORAL CORRUPTION?

Revelation 20:15

From India, from Africa, from China, from the islands of the sea, from the downtrodden millions of so-called Christian lands, the cry of human woe is ascending to God. That cry will not long be unanswered. God will cleanse the earth from its moral corruption, not by a sea of water as in Noah's day, but by a sea of fire that cannot be quenched by any human devising.

(39) WHAT CATASTROPHIC EVENT WILL PRECEDE THIS JUDGEMENT OF FIRE?

Daniel 12:1

(40) WHEN EARTH'S JUDGMENTS HAVE BEEN REVERSED, WHAT WILL BE THE REWARDS TO THE RIGHTEOUS?

Isaiah 25:8

Revelation 6:11

From garrets, from hovels, from dungeons, from scaffolds, from mountains and deserts, from the caves of the earth and the caverns of the sea, Christ will gather His children to Himself. On earth they have been destitute, afflicted, and tormented. Millions have gone down to the grave loaded with infamy because they refused to yield to the deceptive claims of Satan. By human tribunals the children of God have been adjudged the vilest criminals. But the day is near when "God is judge Himself." (Ps. 50:6). Then the decisions of earth shall be reversed. . . . And "they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." Isa. 62:12.

(41) WHAT WILL BE THE GREATEST REWARD AND THE HIGHEST HONOR GIVEN BY GOD TO HIS REDEEMED CHILDREN?

Revelation 22:4

Whatever crosses they have been called to bear, whatever losses they have sustained, whatever persecution they have suffered, even to the loss of their temporal life, the children of God are amply recompensed. "They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads."

I am grateful to have God as my loving heavenly Father who operates His government on the principles of mercy and righteousness

Circle: Yes Undecided

During this time of great controversy between good and evil when we are suffering trial and persecution, I am thankful I have God as my refuge and deliverer.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am grateful that He is a compassionate and righteous judge who will one blessed day avenge His elect with justice.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I am thankful that in the great day of judgement I will have an Advocate in Jesus Christ who will, in my defense, silence the voice of Satan, the great accuser.

Circle: Yes Undecided

This Man Receiveth Sinners



Lesson 2

(1) WHAT STATEMENT OF CRITICISM FROM THE RABBIS REVEALED THEIR DISPLEASURE WITH JESUS' STANDARDS FOR SOCIAL INTERACTION?

Luke 15:2

By this accusation they insinuated that Christ liked to associate with the sinful and vile, and was insensible to their wickedness. The rabbis had been disappointed in Jesus. Why was it that one who claimed so lofty a character did not mingle with them and follow their methods of teaching? Why did He

go about so unpretendingly, working among all classes? If He were a true prophet, they said, He would harmonize with them, and would treat the publicans and sinners with the indifference they deserved. It angered these guardians of society that He with whom they were continually in controversy, yet whose purity of life awed and condemned them, should meet, in such apparent sympathy, with social outcasts. They did not approve of His methods. They regarded themselves as educated, refined, and pre-eminently religious; but Christ's example laid bare their selfishness.

(2) WHY WERE ALL CLASSES OF PEOPLE DRAWN TO CHRIST'S PRESENCE?

THE SACRED SCROLLS REVEAL
BUT WAS OVERLOOKED BY THE
TEACHERS OF ISRAEL?

Luke 15:2

It angered them also that those who showed only contempt for the rabbis and who were never seen in the synagogues should flock about Jesus and listen with rapt attention to His words. The scribes and Pharisees felt only condemnation in that pure presence; how was it, then, that publicans and sinners were drawn to Jesus?

They knew not that the explanation lay in the very words they had uttered as a scornful charge, "This man receiveth sinners." The souls who came to Jesus felt in His presence that even for them there was escape from the pit of sin.

(3) WHAT IS OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S RESPONSE TO THE RETURN OF HIS WAYWARD CHILDREN?

Luke 15:20; Luke 15:5

The Pharisees had only scorn and condemnation for them; but Christ greeted them as children of God, estranged indeed from the Father's house, but not forgotten by the Father's heart. And their very misery and sin made them only the more the objects of His compassion. The farther they had wandered from Him, the more earnest the longing and the greater the sacrifice for their rescue.

(4) WHAT TRAITS OF OUR GREAT SHEPHERD'S CHARACTER DID

Micah 7:18

All this the teachers of Israel might have learned from the sacred scrolls of which it was their pride to be the keepers and expounders. Had not David written—David, who had fallen into deadly sin—"I have gone astray like a lost sheep, seek Thy servant"? Ps. 119:176.

The Lost Sheep

(5) WHAT METAPHOR DID CHRIST USE IN HIS PARABLE TO REPRESENT THE LOST?

Luke 15:4

Christ did not at this time remind His hearers of the words of Scripture. He appealed to the witness of their own experience. The wide-spreading tablelands on the east of Jordan afforded abundant pasturage for flocks, and through the gorges and over the wooded hills had wandered many a lost sheep, to be searched for and brought back by the shepherd's care. In the company about Jesus there were shepherds, and also men who had money invested in flocks and herds, and all could appreciate His illustration: "What man of *you*, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"

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(6) WHAT DOES GOD DO FOR THE SHEEP THAT HAVE WANDERED FROM HIS FOLD?

Ezekiel 34:12

These souls whom you despise, said Jesus, are the property of God. By creation and by redemption they are His, and they are of value in His sight. As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own.

(7) WHAT DOES OUR HEAVENLY SHEPHERD PROMISE?

John 12:32

In the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one.

(8) AS THE SHEPHERD TO THE SHEEP, THROUGH WHOM IS FALLEN HUMANITY'S SALVATION FOUND?

John 14:6

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God.

(9) WHAT GREAT EFFORT DOES CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD PUT FORTH FOR THE REDEMPTION OF EACH AND EVERY LOST SOUL?

Matthew 18:11, 12

The shepherd who discovers that one of his sheep is missing does not look carelessly upon the flock that is safely housed, and say, "I have ninety and nine, and it will cost me too much trouble to go in search of the straying one. Let him come back, and I will open the door of the sheepfold, and let him in." No; no sooner does the sheep go astray than the shepherd is filled with grief and anxiety. He counts and recounts the flock. When he is sure that one sheep is lost, he slumbers not. He leaves the ninety and nine with the fold, and goes in search of the straying sheep. The darker and more tempestuous the night and the more perilous the way, the greater is the shepherd's anxiety and the more earnest his search. He makes every effort to find that one lost sheep.

With what relief he hears in the distance its first faint cry. Following the sound, he climbs the steepest heights, he goes to the very edge of the precipice, at the risk of his own life. Thus he searches, while the cry, growing fainter, tells him

that his sheep is ready to die. At last his effort is rewarded; the lost is found. Then he does not scold it because it has caused him so much trouble. He does not drive it with a whip. He does not even try to lead it home. In his joy he takes the trembling creature upon his shoulders; if it is bruised and wounded, he gathers it in his arms, pressing it close to his bosom, that the warmth of his own heart may give it life. With gratitude that his search has not been in vain, he bears it back to the fold.

(10) WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE SHEPHERD'S SEARCH?

Luke 15:5, 6

Thank God, He has presented to our imagination no picture of a sorrowful shepherd returning without the sheep. The parable does not speak of failure but of success and joy in the recovery. Here is the divine guarantee that not even one of the straying sheep of God's fold is overlooked, not one is left unsuccored. Every one that will submit to be ransomed, Christ will rescue from the pit of corruption and from the briars of sin.

Desponding soul, take courage, even though you have done wickedly. Do not think that *perhaps* God will pardon your transgressions and permit you to come into His presence. God has made the first advance. While you were in rebellion against Him, He went forth to seek you. With the tender heart of the shepherd He left the ninety and nine and went out into the wilderness to find that which was lost. The soul, bruised and wounded and ready to perish,

He encircles in His arms of love and joyfully bears it to the fold of safety.

(11) WHAT INVITATION OF MERCY DOES JESUS OFFER TO EVERY WANDERING SOUL?

Matthew 11:28, 29

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Rom. 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent.

(12) WHAT IS HEAVEN'S REACTION TO THE RECOVERY OF ONE LOST SHEEP?

Luke 15:9, 10

When the straying sheep is at last brought home, the shepherd's gratitude finds expression in melodious songs of

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rejoicing. He calls upon his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, "Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." So when a wanderer is found by the great Shepherd of the sheep, heaven and earth unite in thanksgiving and rejoicing.

(13) WHOM DID CHRIST COME TO RESCUE?

Matthew 9:12, 13

You Pharisees, said Christ, regard yourselves as the favorites of heaven. You think yourselves secure in your own righteousness. Know, then, that if you need no repentance, My mission is not to you. These poor souls who feel their poverty and sinfulness, are the very ones whom I have come to rescue. Angels of heaven are interested in these lost ones whom you despise. You complain and sneer when one of these souls joins himself to Me; but know that angels rejoice, and the song of triumph rings through the courts above.

(14) HOW DOES THIS VERSE DESCRIBE THE ACT OF GOD IN THE DESTRUCTION OF SIN AND SINNERS?

Isaiah 28:21

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work

of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made.

(15) WHAT PROMISE CAN EVERY REPENTANT SINNER CLAIM WHO HAS WANDERED FAR INTO SIN?

1 John 1:9; Jude 24

When one who has wandered far in sin seeks to return to God, he will encounter criticism and distrust. There are those who will doubt whether his repentance is genuine, or will whisper, "He has no stability; I do not believe that he will hold out." These persons are doing not the work of God but the work of Satan, who is the accuser of the brethren. Through their criticisms the wicked one hopes to discourage that soul, and to drive him still farther from hope and from God. Let the repenting sinner contemplate the rejoicing in heaven over the return of the one that was lost. Let him rest in the love of God and in no case be disheartened by the scorn and suspicion of the Pharisees.

(16) BY WHAT AMAZING ACT DID GOD SHOW HIS LOVE FOR HIS FALLEN CHILDREN?

John 3:16, 17

The rabbis understood Christ's parable as applying to the publicans and sinners; but it has also a wider meaning. By the lost sheep Christ represents not only the individual sinner but the one world that has apostatized and has been ruined by sin. This world is but an atom

in the vast dominions over which God presides, yet this little fallen world—the one lost sheep—is more precious in His sight than are the ninety and nine that went not astray from the fold. Christ, the loved Commander in the heavenly courts, stooped from His high estate, laid aside the glory that He had with the Father, in order to save the one lost world. For this He left the sinless worlds on high, the ninety and nine that loved Him, and came to this earth, to be “wounded for our transgressions” and “bruised for our iniquities.” (Isa. 53:5.) God gave Himself in His Son that He might have the joy of receiving back the sheep that was lost.

(17) WHAT COMMISSION HAS CHRIST GIVEN TO EVERY SOUL WHOM HE HAS RESCUED?

John 15:16

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1. And Christ says, “As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world” (John 17:18)—to “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, . . . for His body’s sake, which is the church.” Col. 1:24. Every soul whom Christ has rescued is called to work in His name for the saving of the lost. This work had been neglected in Israel. Is it not neglected today by those who profess to be Christ’s followers?

(18) AS CHRISTIANS, WHO ARE WE CALLED TO INVITE BACK TO CHRIST’S FOLD?

Matthew 22:9; 25:40

How many of the wandering ones have you, reader, sought for and brought back to the fold? When you turn from those who seem unpromising and unattractive, do you realize that you are neglecting the souls for whom Christ is seeking? At the very time when you turn from them, they may be in the greatest need of your compassion. In every assembly for worship, there are souls longing for rest and peace. They may appear to be living careless lives, but they are not insensible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Many among them might be won for Christ.

(19) WHOSE WELFARE ARE WE INSTRUCTED TO SEEK?

Philippians 2:3, 4

If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it wanders until it perishes. And many souls go down to ruin for want of a hand stretched out to save. These erring ones may appear hard and reckless; but if they had received the same advantages that others have had, they might have revealed far more nobility of soul, and greater talent for usefulness. Angels pity these wandering ones. Angels weep, while human eyes are dry and hearts are closed to pity.

O the lack of deep, soul-touching sympathy for the tempted and the erring! O for more of Christ’s spirit, and for less, far less, of self!

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(20) WHAT WAS CHRIST'S MISSION IN COMING TO EARTH AS REVEALED IN THIS PARABLE?

Ezekiel 34:16

The Pharisees understood Christ's parable as a rebuke to them. Instead of accepting their criticism of His work, He had reproved their neglect of the publicans and sinners. He had not done this openly, lest it should close their hearts against Him; but His illustration set before them the very work which God required of them, and which they had failed to do. Had they been true shepherds, these leaders in Israel would have done the work of a shepherd. They would have manifested the mercy and love of Christ, and would have united with Him in His mission. Their refusal to do this had proved their claims of piety to be false. Now many rejected Christ's reproof; yet to some His words brought conviction. Upon these, after Christ's ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit came, and they united with His disciples in the very work outlined in the parable of the lost sheep.

(21) WHAT WONDERFUL BLESSING ARE WE PROMISED WHEN WE LEAD OTHERS TO CHRIST?

Proverbs 11:25

The Lost Piece of Silver

(22) WHAT VALUABLE OBJECTS WERE THE FOCUS OF THIS PARABLE SHARED BY CHRIST?

Luke 15:8

After giving the parable of the lost sheep Christ spoke another, saying, "What woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?"

(23) WHAT WAS THE CRISIS IN THE LIFE OF THIS WOMAN AND THE MEASURE TAKEN TO RECTIFY THE PROBLEM?

Luke 15:8

In the East the houses of the poor usually consisted of but one room, often windowless and dark. The room was rarely swept, and a piece of money falling on the floor would be speedily covered by the dust and rubbish. In order that it might be found, even in the daytime, a candle must be lighted, and the house must be swept diligently.

(24) WHAT WAS THE WOMAN'S REACTION TO THE RECOVERY OF HER LOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

Luke 15:9

The wife's marriage portion usually consisted of pieces of money, which she carefully preserved as her most cherished possession, to be transmitted to her own daughters. The loss of one of these pieces would be regarded as a serious calamity, and its recovery would cause great rejoicing, in which the neighboring women would readily share.

"When she hath found it," Christ said, "she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.

(25) HOW DO THOSE IN HEAVEN REACT TO THE RECOVERY OF ONE LOST PRIZED POSSESSION?

Luke 15:10

(26) WHAT COMMISSION ARE WE GIVEN FOR THE RECOVERY OF LOST "SHEEP" AND "COINS"?

Isaiah 42:6, 7

This parable, like the preceding, sets forth the loss of something which with proper search may be recovered, and that with great joy. But the two parables represent different classes. The lost

sheep knows that it is lost. It has left the shepherd and the flock, and it cannot recover itself. It represents those who realize that they are separated from God and who are in a cloud of perplexity, in humiliation, and sorely tempted. The lost coin represents those who are lost in trespasses and sins, but who have no sense of their condition. They are estranged from God, but they know it not. Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and unconcerned. In this parable Christ teaches that even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for that they may be brought back to God.

The sheep wandered away from the fold; it was lost in the wilderness or upon the mountains. The piece of silver was lost in the house. It was close at hand, yet it could be recovered only by diligent search.

(27) WHAT IMPORTANT ADVICE IS GIVEN IN THIS VERSE TO PARENTS REGARDING THEIR CHILDREN – THE VALUABLE GIFTS GOD HAS ENTRUSTED TO THEM?

Isaiah 54:13

This parable has a lesson to families. In the household there is often great carelessness concerning the souls of its members. Among their number may be one who is estranged from God; but how little anxiety is felt lest in the family relationship there be lost one of God's entrusted gifts.

This Man Receiveth Sinners

(28) WHAT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR EVERY PRECIOUS SOUL?

2 Peter 3:9

The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God's sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness.

(29) WHAT IS THE DANGEROUS RESULT OF MISMANAGING THE PRIORITIES OF THE HOME?

Matthew 16:26

The woman in the parable searches diligently for her lost coin. She lights the candle and sweeps the house. She removes everything that might obstruct her search. Though only one piece is lost, she will not cease her efforts until that piece is found. So in the family if one member is lost to God every means should be used for his recovery. On the part of all the others let there be diligent, careful self-examination. Let the life-practice be investigated. See if there is not some mistake, some error in management, by which that soul is confirmed in impenitence.

If there is in the family one child who is unconscious of his sinful state, parents should not rest. Let the candle be lighted. Search the word of God, and by its light let everything in the home be diligently examined, to see why this child is lost. Let parents search their own hearts, examine their habits and practices.

(30) WHAT DOES THE BIBLE CALL THE PRECIOUS CHILDREN HE ENTRUSTS TO OUR CARE?

Psalms 127:3

Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we are answerable to Him for our management of His property.

(31) WHAT IS THE HIGHEST SERVICE A PARENT CAN GIVE TO GOD?

Proverbs 22:6

There are fathers and mothers who long to labor in some foreign mission field; there are many who are active in Christian work outside the home, while their own children are strangers to the Saviour and His love. The work of winning their children for Christ many parents trust to the minister or the Sabbath school teacher, but in doing this they are neglecting their own God-given responsibility. The education and training of their children to be Christians is the highest service that parents can render to God. It is a work that demands patient labor, a lifelong diligent and persevering effort. By a neglect of this trust we prove ourselves

unfaithful stewards. No excuse for such neglect will be accepted by God.

But those who have been guilty of neglect are not to despair. The woman whose coin was lost searched until she found it. So in love, faith, and prayer let parents work for their households, until with joy they can come to God saying, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." Isa. 8:18.

(32) WHAT BASIC MISSIONARY PRINCIPLE WILL MAKE US EFFECTIVE IN REACHING OUR FAMILY MEMBERS, FELLOW CHRISTIANS, AND THE WORLD?

1 John 4:7

This is true home missionary work, and it is as helpful to those who do it as to those for whom it is done. By our faithful interest for the home circle we are fitting ourselves to work for the members of the Lord's family, with whom, if loyal to Christ, we shall live through eternal ages. For our brethren and sisters in Christ we are to show the same interest that as members of one family we have for one another.

And God designs that all this shall fit us to labor for still others. As our sympathies shall broaden and our love increase, we shall find everywhere a work to do. God's great human household embraces the world, and none of its members are to be passed by with neglect.

(33) WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S COMMISSION AS HE ASSOCIATE WITH NONBELIEVERS?

1 Peter 4:10

Wherever we may be, there the lost piece of silver awaits our search. Are we seeking for it? Day by day we meet with those who take no interest in religious things; we talk with them, we visit among them; do we show an interest in their spiritual welfare? Do we present Christ to them as the sin-pardoning Saviour? With our own hearts warm with the love of Christ, do we tell them about that love? If we do not, how shall we meet these souls—lost, eternally lost—when with them we stand before the throne of God?

(34) HOW DID CHRIST DEMONSTRATE THE WORTH OF A SOUL?

Galatians 1:4

The value of a soul, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, go to Gethsemane, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross. Hear that despairing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul.

This Man Receiveth Sinners

(35) IF WE ARE IN COMMUNION WITH CHRIST, HOW WILL OUR LOVE BE DEMONSTRATED FOR THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING?

James 2:14-17

If you are in communion with Christ, you will place His estimate upon every human being. You will feel for others the same deep love that Christ has felt for you. Then you will be able to win, not drive, to attract, not repulse, those for whom He died. None would ever have been brought back to God if Christ had not made a personal effort for them; and it is by this personal work that we can rescue souls. When you see those who are going down to death, you will not rest in quiet indifference and ease. The greater their sin and the deeper their misery, the more earnest and tender will be your efforts for their recovery. You will discern the need of those who are suffering, who have been sinning against God, and who are oppressed with a burden of guilt. Your heart will go out in sympathy for them, and you will reach out to them a helping hand. In the arms of your faith and love you will bring them to Christ. You will watch over and encourage them, and your sympathy and confidence will make it hard for them to fall from their steadfastness.

(36) WHO HAS GOD COMMISSIONED TO AID US IN SAVING SOULS FOR HIS KINGDOM?

Hebrews 1:13, 14

In this work all the angels of heaven are ready to cooperate. All the resources of heaven are at the command of those who are seeking to save the lost. Angels will help you to reach the most careless and the most hardened. And when one is brought back to God, all heaven is made glad; seraphs and cherubs touch their golden harps, and sing praises to God and the Lamb for their mercy and loving-kindness to the children of men.

Dear Lord, I am so thankful that You do not cast me off as a hopeless sinner. Thank You for Your patient love and open arms of compassion that welcome me back when I stray.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Thank You for the promise of hope in John 12:32 that You will draw everyone unto you.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Like the Prodigal Son, I now choose to come home to You and serve You with my life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Lost, and is Found



Lesson 3

This lesson is based on Luke 15:11-32.

(1) WHAT DO THE PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP, THE LOST COIN, AND THE PRODIGAL SON REVEAL ABOUT GOD'S CHARACTER?

Psalms 86:15

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God's pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender

pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe.

In the parable of the prodigal son is presented the Lord's dealing with those who have once known the Father's love, but who have allowed the tempter to lead them captive at his will.

(2) WHAT DID THE SON DISRESPECTFULLY REQUEST FROM HIS FATHER?

Luke 15:12

This younger son had become weary of the restraint of his father's house. He thought that his liberty was restricted.

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His father's love and care for him were misinterpreted, and he determined to follow the dictates of his own inclinations.

The youth acknowledges no obligation to his father, and expresses no gratitude; yet he claims the privilege of a child in sharing his father's goods. The inheritance that would fall to him at his father's death he desires to receive now. He is bent on present enjoyment, and cares not for the future.

(3) HOW DOES THE BIBLE DESCRIBE THOSE WHO PROFESS THEMSELVES TO BE WISE IN PURSUING THE PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD?

Romans 1:22

Having obtained his patrimony, he goes into "a far country," away from his father's home. With money in plenty, and liberty to do as he likes, he flatters himself that the desire of his heart is reached. There is no one to say, Do not do this, for it will be an injury to yourself; or, Do this, because it is right. Evil companions help him to plunge ever deeper into sin, and he wastes his "substance with riotous living."

The Bible tells of men who "professing themselves to be wise" "became fools" and this is the history of the young man of the parable. The wealth which he has selfishly claimed from his father he squanders upon harlots. The treasure of his young manhood is wasted.

(4) WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE SELFISH PATH HE CHOOSE TO FOLLOW?

Luke 15:13

The precious years of life, the strength of intellect, the bright visions of youth, the spiritual aspirations—all are consumed in the fires of lust.

(5) AFTER SQUANDERING HIS INHERITANCE, WHAT WAS THE ONLY EMPLOYMENT THE YOUTH COULD FIND?

Luke 15:15

A great famine arises, he begins to be in want, and he joins himself to a citizen of the country, who sends him into the field to feed swine. To a Jew this was the most menial and degrading of employments.

(6) IN WHAT CONDITION DOES THE FOOLISH YOUTH FIND HIMSELF?

Proverbs 5:22

The youth who has boasted of his liberty, now finds himself a slave. He is in the worst of bondage—"holden with the cords of his sins." The glitter and tinsel that enticed him have disappeared, and he feels the burden of his chain. Sitting upon the ground in that desolate and famine-stricken land, with no companions but the swine, he is fain to fill himself with the husks on which the beasts are fed. Of the gay

companions who flocked about him in his prosperous days and ate and drank at his expense, there is not one left to befriend him. Where now is his riotous joy? Stilling his conscience, benumbing his sensibilities, he thought himself happy; but now, with money spent, with hunger unsatisfied, with pride humbled, with his moral nature dwarfed, with his will weak and untrustworthy, with his finer feelings seemingly dead, he is the most wretched of mortals.

(7) AS REBELLIOUS SINNERS SINK INTO THE DEPTHS OF SIN, WHAT IS THEIR DESIRE TO FORGET?

Romans 1:28

What a picture here of the sinner's state! Although surrounded with the blessings of His love, there is nothing that the sinner, bent on self-indulgence and sinful pleasure, desires so much as separation from God. Like the ungrateful son, he claims the good things of God as his by right. He takes them as a matter of course, and makes no return of gratitude, renders no service of love. As Cain went out from the presence of the Lord to seek his home; as the prodigal wandered into the "far country," so do sinners seek happiness in forgetfulness of God.

(8) WHAT WILL GOD EVENTUALLY DO FOR THE SINNER WHO IGNORES HIS SPIRIT AND DOES NOT TURN FROM REBELLION?

Romans 1:28

Whatever the appearance may be, every life centered in self squandered. Whoever attempts to live apart from God is wasting his substance. He is squandering the precious years, squandering the powers of mind and heart and soul, and working to make himself bankrupt for eternity. The man who separates from God that he may serve himself, is the slave of mammon. The mind that God created for the companionship of angels has become degraded to the service of that which is earthly and bestial. This is the end to which self-serving tends.

(9) HOW DOES THIS SCRIPTURE DESCRIBE THE ACT OF SELF-SERVING INDULGENCE?

Isaiah 55:2

If you have chosen such a life, you know that you are spending money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which satisfieth not. There come to you hours when you realize your degradation. Alone in the far country you feel your misery, and in despair you cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:24.

(10) WHAT IS THE DANGER OF ALLOWING OUR HEART TO DEPART FROM THE LORD?

Jeremiah 17:5,6

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God “maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (Matt. 5:45); but men have the power to shut themselves away from sunshine and shower. So while the Sun of Righteousness shines, and the showers of grace fall freely for all, we may by separating ourselves from God still “inhabit the parched places in the wilderness.”

(11) WHERE DOES GOD, IN HIS GOODNESS, LEAD EVERY WILLING SINNER?

Romans 2:4

The love of God still yearns over the one who has chosen to separate from Him, and He sets in operation influences to bring him back to the Father’s house. The prodigal son in his wretchedness “came to himself.” The deceptive power that Satan had exercised over him was broken. He saw that his suffering was the result of his own folly, and he said, “How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father.” Miserable as he was, the prodigal found hope in the conviction of his father’s love. It was that love which was drawing him toward home. So it is the assurance of God’s love that constrains the sinner to return to God. “The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.” A golden chain, the mercy and compassion of divine love, is passed around every imperiled soul. The Lord declares, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” Jer.31:3.

(12) WHAT STATEMENT FROM THE SON SHOWS THAT HE HAD CHOSEN TO FOLLOW GOD’S LEADING TO REPENTANCE?

Luke 15:18

The son determines to confess his guilt. He will go to his father, saying, “I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” But he adds, showing how stunted is his conception of his father’s love, “Make me as one of thy hired servants.”

The young man turns from the swine herds and the husks, and sets his face toward home. Trembling with weakness and faint from hunger, he presses eagerly on his way. He has no covering to conceal his rags; but his misery has conquered pride, and he hurries on to beg a servant’s place where he was once a child.

(13) WHAT ACTIONS BY THE FATHER IN THIS PARABLE REVEAL HOW OUR HEAVENLY FATHER LONGS FOR, AND REACTS TO, THE RETURN OF HIS WAYWARD CHILDREN?

Luke 15:20

Little did the gay, thoughtless youth, as he went out from his father’s gate,

dream of the ache and longing left in that father's heart. When he danced and feasted with his wild companions, little did he think of the shadow that had fallen on his home. And now as with weary and painful steps he pursues the homeward way, he knows not that one is watching for his return. But while he is yet "a great way off" the father discerns his form. Love is of quick sight. Not even the degradation of the years of sin can conceal the son from the father's eyes. He "had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck" in a long, clinging, tender embrace.

(14) JUST AS THIS FATHER REPLACED HIS SON'S TATTERED GARMENTS, WHAT GARMENT DOES GOD GIVE TO HIS REDEEMED CHILDREN?

Isaiah 61:10

The father will permit no contemptuous eye to mock at his son's misery and tatters. He takes from his own shoulders the broad, rich mantle, and wraps it around the son's wasted form, and the youth sobs out his repentance, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." The father holds him close to his side, and brings him home. No opportunity is given him to ask a servant's place. He is a son, who shall be honored with the best the house affords, and whom the waiting men and women shall respect and serve.

The father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf,

and kill it; and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

(15) WHAT IS THE REACTION OF THOSE DECEIVED BY SATAN TOWARDS GOD?

Micah 7:17

In his restless youth the prodigal looked upon his father as stern and severe. How different his conception of him now! So those who are deceived by Satan look upon God as hard and exacting. They regard Him as watching to denounce and condemn, as unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there is a legal excuse for not helping him. His law they regard as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they are glad to escape. But he whose eyes have been opened by the love of Christ will behold God as full of compassion. He does not appear as a tyrannical, relentless being, but as a father longing to embrace his repenting son.

(16) HOW DOES THE PSALMIST DESCRIBE GOD'S FEELINGS TOWARDS US?

Psalms 103:13

(17) IF, LIKE THE PRODIGAL SON, WE CHOOSE TO RETURN FROM OUR EVIL COURSE TO THE OPEN ARMS OF THE FATHER, WHAT WILL HE DO WITH OUR TRANSGRESSIONS?

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because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.” Micah 2:10. Return to your Father’s house. He invites you, saying, “Return unto Me; for I have redeemed thee.” Isa. 44:22.

Jeremiah 31:34

In the parable there is no taunting, no casting up to the prodigal of his evil course. The son feels that the past is forgiven and forgotten, blotted out forever. And so God says to the sinner, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins,” Isa. 44:22. . . . “In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.” Jer. 50:20.

(18) WHAT IS THE LORD’S DESIRE FOR EACH OF HIS WAYWARD CHILDREN?

(19) WHY IS ANY ATTEMPT TO CHANGE OURSELVES BOUND FOR FAILURE?

Jeremiah 17:9

2 Peter 3:9

What assurance is here, of God’s willingness to receive the repenting sinner! Have you, reader, chosen your own way? Have you wandered far from God? Have you sought to feast upon the fruits of transgression, only to find them turn to ashes upon your lips? And now, your substance spent, your life-plans thwarted, and your hopes dead, do you sit alone and desolate? Now that voice which has long been speaking to your heart but to which you would not listen comes to you distinct and clear, “Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest;

Do not listen to the enemy’s suggestion to stay away from Christ until you have made yourself better; until you are good enough to come to God. If you wait until then, you will never come. When Satan points to your filthy garments, repeat the promise of Jesus, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. Tell the enemy that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. Make the prayer of David your own, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” Ps. 51:7.

(20) IF WE ARISE AND GO TO OUR FATHER WITH A PRAYER OF REPENTANCE, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM?

Isaiah 55:7

Arise and go to your Father. He will meet you a great way off. If you take even one step toward Him in repentance, He will hasten to enfold you in His arms of infinite love. His ear is open to the cry of the contrite soul. The very first reaching out of the heart after God is known to Him. Never a prayer is offered, however faltering, never a tear is shed, however secret, never a sincere desire after God is cherished, however feeble, but the Spirit of God goes forth to meet it. Even before the prayer is uttered or the yearning of the heart made known, grace from Christ goes forth to meet the grace that is working upon the human soul.

(21) WHAT DOES GOD GLADLY GIVE THE REPENTANT SINNER IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS FILTHY GARMENTS?

Zechariah 3:3, 4

Your heavenly Father will take from you the garments defiled by sin. In the beautiful parabolic prophecy of Zechariah, the high priest Joshua, standing clothed in filthy garments before the angel of the Lord, represents the sinner. And the word is spoken by the Lord, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him He said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

... So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments." Even so God will clothe you with "the garments of salvation," and cover you with "the robe of righteousness." Isa. 61:10. "Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." Ps. 68:13.

He will bring you into His banqueting house, and His banner over you shall be love. (Cant. 2:4) "If thou wilt walk in My ways," He declares, "I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by"—even among the holy angels that surround His throne. (Zech. 3:7.)

(22) WHAT IS THE FATHER'S REACTION TO A SINNER REDEEMED?

Isaiah 62:5

Zephaniah 3:17

Heaven and earth shall unite in the Father's song of rejoicing: "For this My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

(23) WHAT WAS THE OLDER BROTHER'S RESPONSE TO HIS YOUNGER BROTHER'S RETURN?

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Luke 15:28

Thus far in the Saviour's parable there is no discordant note to jar the harmony of the scene of joy; but now Christ introduces another element. When the prodigal came home, the elder son "was in the field; and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in." This elder brother has not been sharing in his father's anxiety and watching for the one that was lost. He shares not, therefore, in the father's joy at the wanderer's return. The sounds of rejoicing kindle no gladness in his heart. He inquires of a servant the reason of the festivity, and the answer excites his jealousy. He will not go in to welcome his lost brother. The favor shown the prodigal he regards as an insult to himself.

(24) AS REVEALED BY THE CHARACTER OF HIS REACTION, WHAT LESSON ABOUT FORGIVENESS DID THE OLDER BROTHER FAIL TO UNDERSTAND?

Luke 7:42, 43

When the father comes out to remonstrate with him, the pride and malignity of his nature are revealed. He dwells upon his own life in his

father's house as a round of unrequited service, and then places in mean contrast the favor shown to the son just returned. He makes it plain that his own service has been that of a servant rather than a son. When he should have found an abiding joy in his father's presence, his mind has rested upon the profit to accrue from his circumspect life. His words show that it is for this he has foregone the pleasures of sin. Now if this brother is to share in the father's gifts, the elder son counts that he himself has been wronged. He grudges his brother the favor shown him. He plainly shows that had he been in the father's place, he would not have received the prodigal. He does not even acknowledge him as a brother, but coldly speaks of him as "thy son."

(25) WHAT GIFT DOES OUR HEAVENLY FATHER GRACIOUSLY OFFER TO FREELY BESTOW UPON ALL HIS CHILDREN WHO BELIEVE IN HIS LOVE?

Luke 15:31

Yet the father deals tenderly with him. "Son," he says, "thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Through all these years of your brother's outcast life, have you not had the privilege of companionship with me?

Everything that could minister to the happiness of his children was freely theirs. The son need have no question of gift or reward. "All that I have is thine." You have only to believe my love, and take the gift that is freely bestowed.

One son had for a time cut himself off from the household, not discerning the father's love. But now he has returned, and the tide of joy sweeps away every disturbing thought. "This thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

(26) WHAT COMMENT MADE BY THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES REVEALED THAT THEIR ATTITUDE WAS THE SAME AS THE OLDER BROTHER'S ATTITUDE IN THE PARABLE?

Luke 15:1-2

Was the elder brother brought to see his own mean, ungrateful spirit? Did he come to see that though his brother had done wickedly, he was his brother still? Did the elder brother repent of his jealousy and hardheartedness? Concerning this, Christ was silent. For the parable was still enacting, and it rested with His hearers to determine what the outcome should be.

By the elder son were represented the unrepenting Jews of Christ's day, and also the Pharisees in every age, who look with contempt upon those whom they regard as publicans and sinners. Because they themselves have not gone to great excesses in vice, they are filled with self-righteousness. Christ met these cavilers on their own ground. Like the elder son in the parable, they had enjoyed special privileges from God. They claimed to be sons in God's house, but they had the spirit of the hireling. They were working, not from love, but from

hope of reward. In their eyes, God was an exacting taskmaster. They saw Christ inviting publicans and sinners to receive freely the gift of His grace—the gift which the rabbis hoped to secure only by toil and penance—and they were offended. The prodigal's return, which filled the Father's heart with joy, only stirred them to jealousy.

In the parable the father's remonstrance with the elder son was Heaven's tender appeal to the Pharisees. "All that I have is thine"—not as wages, but as a gift. Like the prodigal, you can receive it only as the unmerited bestowal of the Father's love.

(27) AS DEMONSTRATED BY LUCIFER IN HEAVEN, AND THE ELDER SON IN THIS PARABLE, TO WHAT ACTION DOES A SELF-RIGHTEOUS ATTITUDE LEAD?

Revelation 12:10

Self-righteousness not only leads men to misrepresent God, but makes them coldhearted and critical toward their brethren. The elder son, in his selfishness and jealousy, stood ready to watch his brother, to criticize every action, and to accuse him for the least deficiency. He would detect every mistake, and make the most of every wrong act. Thus he would seek to justify his own unforgiving spirit. Many today are doing the same thing. While the soul is making its very first struggles against a flood of temptations, they stand by, stubborn, self-willed, complaining, accusing. They may claim to be children of God, but they are acting out the spirit of Satan. By their attitude toward

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their brethren, these accusers place themselves where God cannot give them the light of His countenance.

(28) AFTER WE REALIZE OUR SINFULNESS AND RETURN TO THE FATHER, IN WHAT SERVICE OF LOVE DOES HE ASK US TO JOIN?

Isaiah 58:6, 7

When you see yourselves as sinners saved only by the love of your heavenly Father, you will have tender pity for others who are suffering in sin. You will no longer meet misery and repentance with jealousy and censure. When the ice of selfishness is melted from your hearts, you will be in sympathy with

God, and will share His joy in the saving of the lost.

(29) WHAT IS THE TRUE DEMONSTRATION THAT WE KNOW GOD AND ARE HIS CHILD?

1 John 4:8

It is true that you claim to be a child of God; but if this claim be true, it is “thy brother” that was “dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.” He is bound to you by the closest ties; for God recognizes him as a son. Deny your relationship to him, and you show that you are but a hireling in the household, not a child in the family of God.

Though you will not join in the greeting to the lost, the joy will go on, the restored one will have his place by the Father’s side and in the Father’s work. He that is forgiven much, the same loves much. But you will be in the darkness without. For “he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

Father, in these stories I see myself as Your prodigal child who has squandered the blessing of Your love by pursuing the unfulfilling pleasures of this world.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Father, like the Prodigal Son, I now am realizing You have a better plan for my life. I am tired of the filth and mire of sin and ask for Your forgiveness.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Father, I am not worthy to be called Your child. I ask for Your forgiveness of my transgressions and, by the power of Your Spirit, mold me into Your image and make me Your humble servant.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Thank You for taking my filthy sin-stained garment and replacing it with Your perfect robe of righteousness.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Spare it this Year Also



Lesson 4

This lesson is based on the parable found in Luke 13:1-9.

(1) WHAT MESSAGE OF MERCY DID CHRIST LINK WITH THE WARNING OF JUDGMENT?

John 3:17

Christ in His teaching linked with the warning of judgment the invitation of mercy. "The Son of man is not come," He said, "to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:56. His mission of mercy in its relation to God's justice and judgment is illustrated in the parable of the barren fig tree.

Christ had been warning the people of the coming of the kingdom of God, and He had sharply rebuked their ignorance and indifference. The signs in the sky, which foretold the weather, they were quick to read; but the signs of the times, which so clearly pointed to His mission, were not discerned.

(2) WHAT FACT CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF SIN ON JUSTICE DID THE JEWS FAIL TO UNDERSTAND?

Ecclesiastes 9:11

But men were as ready then as men are now to conclude that they themselves are the favorites of heaven, and that the message of reproof is meant for another. The hearers told Jesus of an event which had just caused great excitement. Some of the measures of Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judea, had given offense to the people. There had been a popular tumult in Jerusalem, and Pilate had attempted to quell this by violence. On one occasion his soldiers had even invaded the precincts of the temple, and had cut down some Galilean pilgrims in the very act of slaying their sacrifices. The Jews regarded calamity as a judgment on account of the sufferer's sin, and those who told of this act of violence did so with secret satisfaction. In their view their own good fortune proved them to be much better, and therefore more favored by God, than were these Galileans. They expected to hear from Jesus words of condemnation for these men, who, they doubted not, richly deserved their punishment.

(3) TO THE ASTONISHMENT OF THE DISCIPLES, WHAT WAS CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO THEIR MISGUIDED CONCEPTION THAT THE UNFORTUNATE GALILEANS RECEIVED A JUST REWARD?

Luke 13:3

The disciples of Christ did not venture to express their ideas until they had heard the opinion of their Master. He had given them pointed lessons in reference to judging other men's characters, and measuring retribution according to their finite judgment. Yet

they looked for Christ to denounce these men as sinners above others. Great was their surprise at His answer.

Turning to the multitude, the Saviour said, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." These startling calamities were designed to lead them to humble their hearts, and to repent of their sins. The storm of vengeance was gathering, which was soon to burst upon all who had not found a refuge in Christ.

(4) TO WHAT CATASTROPHIC FUTURE EVENT WAS CHRIST REFERRING?

Luke 21:24

As Jesus talked with the disciples and the multitude, He looked forward with prophetic glance and saw Jerusalem besieged with armies. He heard the tramp of the aliens marching against the chosen city and saw the thousands upon thousands perishing in the siege. Many of the Jews were, like those Galileans, slain in the temple courts, in the very act of offering sacrifice. The calamities that had fallen upon individuals were warnings from God to a nation equally guilty. "Except ye repent," said Jesus, "ye shall all likewise perish." For a little time the day of probation lingered for them. There was

still time for them to know the things that belonged to their peace.

(5) WHAT ENTITY OF NATURE DID CHRIST USE TO ILLUSTRATE HIS POINT?

Luke 13:6

“A certain man,” He continued, “had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?”

(6) WHOM DID CHRIST IMPLY THE BARREN TREE TO BE?

Isaiah 5:7

Christ's hearers could not misunderstand the application of His words. David had sung of Israel as the vine brought out of Egypt. Isaiah had written, “The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant.” The generation to whom the Saviour had come were represented by the fig tree in the Lord's vineyard—within the circle of His special care and blessing.

(7) WHAT HAD BEEN GOD'S ASPIRATIONS FOR ISRAEL?

Isaiah 61:3

God's purpose toward His people, and the glorious possibilities before them, had been set forth in the beautiful words, “That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” The dying Jacob, under the Spirit of inspiration, had said of his best-loved son, “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall.” And he said, “The God of thy Father” “shall help thee,” the Almighty “shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under.” Gen. 49:22, 25. So God had planted Israel as a goodly vine by the wells of life. He had made His vineyard “in a very fruitful hill.” He had “fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine.” Isa. 5:1, 2.

(8) WHAT ARE THE FRUITS THAT GOD DESIRES HIS PEOPLE TO BEAR?

Galatians 5:22, 23

(9) WHAT TYPE OF WILD FRUIT DID ISRAEL OF CHRIST'S DAY PRODUCE?

Isaiah 5:2

The people of Christ's day made a greater show of piety than did the Jews of earlier ages, but they were even more destitute of the sweet graces of the Spirit of God. The precious fruits of character that made the life of Joseph so fragrant and beautiful, were not manifest in the Jewish nation.

God in His Son had been seeking fruit, and had found none. Israel was a cumberer of the ground. Its very existence was a curse; for it filled the place in the vineyard that a fruitful tree might fill. It robbed the world of the blessings that God designed to give. The Israelites had misrepresented God among the nations. They were not merely useless, but a decided hindrance. To a great degree their religion was misleading, and wrought ruin instead of salvation.

(10) LIKE THE GARDENER IN THE PARABLE, WHAT IS THE LONGING OF THE FATHER AND THE SON FOR THEIR PEOPLE?

John 15:8

In the parable the dresser of the vineyard does not question the sentence that the tree, if it remained fruitless, should be cut down; but he knows and shares the owner's interest in that barren tree. Nothing could give him greater joy than to see its growth and fruitfulness. He responds to the desire of the owner, saying, "Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well."

The gardener does not refuse to minister to so unpromising a plant. He stands ready to give it still greater care. He will

make its surroundings most favorable, and will lavish upon it every attention.

The owner and the dresser of the vineyard are one in their interest in the fig tree. So the Father and the Son were one in their love for the chosen people. Christ was saying to His hearers that increased opportunities would be given them. Every means that the love of God could devise would be put in operation that they might become trees of righteousness, bringing forth fruit for the blessing of the world.

(11) WHAT SOLEMN WARNING WAS GIVEN TO ISRAEL AND TO ALL SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS ABOUT THE RESULTS OF FRUITLESSNESS?

Luke 13:9

Jesus did not in the parable tell the result of the gardener's work. At that point His story was cut short. Its conclusion rested with the generation that heard His words. To them the solemn warning was given. "If not, then after that thou shalt cut it down." Upon them it depended whether the irrevocable words should be spoken. The day of wrath was near. In the calamities that had already befallen Israel, the owner of the vineyard was mercifully forewarning them of the destruction of the unfruitful tree.

The warning sounds down along the line to us in this generation. Are you, O careless heart, a fruitless tree in the Lord's vineyard? Shall the words of doom ere long be spoken of you? How long have you received His gifts? How long has He watched and waited for a return of love? Planted in His vineyard,

under the watchful care of the gardener, what privileges are yours! How often has the tender gospel message thrilled your heart! You have taken the name of Christ, you are outwardly a member of the church which is His body, and yet you are conscious of no living connection with the great heart of love. The tide of His life does not flow through you. The sweet graces of His character, "the fruits of the Spirit," are not seen in your life.

(12) WHAT AFFECT DID ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO BEAR FRUIT HAVE ON OTHERS?

Malachi 2:8

The barren tree receives the rain and the sunshine and the gardener's care. It draws nourishment from the soil. But its unproductive boughs only darken the ground, so that fruit-bearing plants cannot flourish in its shadow. So God's gifts, lavished on you, convey no blessing to the world. You are robbing others of privileges that, but for you, might be theirs.

(13) WHAT PROMISE OF MERCY AND LONG-SUFFERING FROM GOD CAN WE CLAIM WHEN WE BACKSLIDE AND FAIL TO BEAR FRUIT?

Hosea 11:7-9

You realize, though it may be but dimly, that you are a cumberer of the ground.

Yet in His great mercy God has not cut you down. He does not look coldly upon you. He does not turn away with indifference, or leave you to destruction. Looking upon you He cries, as He cried so many centuries ago concerning Israel, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger. I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man." The pitying Saviour is saying concerning you, Spare it this year also, till I shall dig about it and dress it.

(14) WHAT PLEA OF CHRIST DEMONSTRATED THAT, IN UNWEARIED LOVE, ALL THE MERCY AND LONG-SUFFERING HEAVEN COULD GIVE WAS BESTOWED UPON ISRAEL?

Luke 23:34

With what unwearied love did Christ minister to Israel during the period of added probation. Upon the cross He prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." After His ascension the gospel was preached first at Jerusalem. There the Holy Spirit was poured out. There the first gospel church revealed the power of the risen Saviour. There Stephen—"his face as it had been the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15)—bore his testimony and laid down his life. All that heaven itself could give was bestowed. "What could have been done more to My vineyard," Christ said, "that I have not done in it?" Isa. 5:4. So His care and labor for you are not lessened, but increased. Still He says, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Isa. 27:3.

Spare it This Year Also

(15) WHAT PREVENTS THE HEART FROM BEING SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT THUS RENDERING IT UNFRUITFUL?

Acts 7:51

“If it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that”—The heart that does not respond to divine agencies becomes hardened until it is no longer susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. Then it is that the word is spoken, “Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?”

(16) WHAT IS THE ONLY WAY WE CAN EXPERIENCE CULTIVATION AND GROWTH OF THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT IN OUR LIVES?

John 15:5

(17) WHAT INVITATION AND PROMISE IS CHRIST STILL OFFERING TODAY THAT WE MAY BECOME MORE FRUITFUL FOR HIM?

Hosea 14:1-8

I am grateful to God for mingling the blessing of mercy with the need of justice. Thank you for not sending Your Son to condemn us but to save us.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Thank you for the blessing and privilege to be able to be a fruit bearer for You. Father, help me not to be as the barren tree in the parable. Please give me a stronger connection to the Vine that I might bear fruit.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that without that connection I can accomplish nothing fruitful. Please open my eyes that I may see my unfruitfulness and place a longing in my heart to be cultivated into Your image.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Please send Your Spirit into my life that I may bear the fruits of the Spirit to Your Glory. The fruit of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Go Into the Highways and Hedges



Lesson 5

This lesson is based on the parable found in Luke 14:1, 12-24.

(1) WITH WHAT THEME DID CHRIST DELIVER HIS LESSONS OF TRUTH, WARNING, AND INSTRUCTION?

Luke 14:16

The Saviour was a guest at the feast of a Pharisee. He accepted invitations from the rich as well as the poor, and according to His custom He linked the scene before Him with His lessons of truth. Among the Jews the sacred feast was connected with all their seasons of national and religious rejoicing. It was to them a type of the blessings of

eternal life. The great feast at which they were to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the Gentiles stood without, and looked on with longing eyes, was a theme on which they delighted to dwell. The lesson of warning and instruction which Christ desired to give, He now illustrated by the parable of a great supper. The blessings of God, both for the present and for the future life, the Jews thought to shut up to themselves. They denied God's mercy to the Gentiles.

(2) WHAT WAS THE MAIN POINT CHRIST WAS SEEKING TO ILLUSTRATE IN THIS PARABLE?

Luke 14:24

Go Into the Highways and Hedges

By the parable Christ showed that they were themselves at that very time rejecting the invitation of mercy, the call to God's kingdom. He showed that the invitation which they had slighted was to be sent to those whom they despised, those from whom they had drawn away their garments as if they were lepers to be shunned.

(3) WHO DID CHRIST COMMAND TO BE PUT ON THE GUEST LIST AND WHY?

Luke 14:13, 14

In choosing the guests for his feast, the Pharisee had consulted his own selfish interest. Christ said to him, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

(4) WHAT INSTRUCTION, PREVIOUSLY GIVEN BY MOSES, DID "THE GREAT SUPPER" REITERATE?

Deuteronomy 14:28, 29

Christ was here repeating the instruction He had given to Israel through Moses. At their sacred feasts the Lord had directed that "the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat, and be satisfied." These gatherings were to be as object lessons to Israel. Being thus taught the joy of true hospitality, the people were throughout the year to care for the bereaved and the poor.

(5) WHAT GREAT RESPONSIBILITY ACCOMPANIES THE GIFT OF SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS?

Luke 12:48

And these feasts had a wider lesson. The spiritual blessings given to Israel were not for themselves alone. God had given the bread of life to them, that they might break it to the world. This work they had not fulfilled. Christ's words were a rebuke to their selfishness.

(6) IN AN EFFORT TO IGNORE CHRIST'S REBUKE, WHAT WAS THE PHARISEE'S ARROGANT RESPONSE?

Luke 14:15

To the Pharisees His [Christ's] words were distasteful. Hoping to turn the conversation into another channel, one of them, with a sanctimonious air, exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This man spoke with great assurance, as if

he himself were certain of a place in the kingdom. His attitude was similar to the attitude of those who rejoice that they are saved by Christ, when they do not comply with the conditions upon which salvation is promised. His spirit was like that of Balaam when he prayed, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Num. 23:10. The Pharisee was not thinking of his own fitness for heaven but of what he hoped to enjoy in heaven. His remark was designed to turn away the minds of the guests at the feast from the subject of their practical duty. He thought to carry them past the present life to the remote time of the resurrection of the just.

Christ read the heart of the pretender, and fastening His eyes upon him He opened before the company the character and value of their present privileges. He showed them that they had a part to act at that very time, in order to share in the blessedness of the future.

(7) WHAT WAS THE RESPONSE OF THOSE FIRST INVITED TO THE GREAT SUPPER?

Luke 14:18

"A certain man," He said, "made a great supper, and bade many." When the time of the feast arrived, the host sent his servant to the expected guests with a second message, "Come; for all things are now ready." But a strange indifference was shown. "All with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go

and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

None of the excuses were founded on a real necessity. The man who "must needs go and see" his piece of ground, had already purchased it. His haste to go and see it was due to the fact that his interest was absorbed in his purchase. The oxen, too, had been bought. The proving of them was only to satisfy the interest of the buyer. The third excuse had no more semblance of reason. The fact that the intended guest had married a wife need not have prevented his presence at the feast. His wife also would have been made welcome. But he had his own plans for enjoyment, and these seemed to him more desirable than the feast he had promised to attend. He had learned to find pleasure in other society than that of the host. He did not ask to be excused, made not even a pretense of courtesy in his refusal. The "I cannot" was only a veil for the truth—"I do not care to come."

(8) WHAT THREE CLEVER DIVERSIONS FROM SATAN WILL LEAD TO SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENCE?

1 John 2:16

All the excuses betray a preoccupied mind. To these intended guests other interests had become all-absorbing.

Go Into the Highways and Hedges

The invitation they had pledged themselves to accept was put aside, and the generous friend was insulted by their indifference.

(9) WHAT IS THE GREAT PROVISION OFFERED BY HEAVEN AS THE MAIN COURSE FOR THIS COSTLY BANQUET?

John 6:51

By the great supper, Christ represents the blessings offered through the gospel. The provision is nothing less than Christ Himself. He is the bread that comes down from heaven; and from Him the streams of salvation flow. The Lord's messengers had proclaimed to the Jews the advent of the Saviour; they had pointed to Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. In the feast He had provided, God offered to them the greatest gift that Heaven can bestow—a gift that is beyond computation. The love of God had furnished the costly banquet, and had provided inexhaustible resources. "If any man eat of this bread," Christ said, "he shall live for ever." John 6:51.

(10) WHAT CONDITION MUST BE MET UPON ACCEPTANCE OF THIS AWESOME INVITATION?

Deuteronomy 11:13

But in order to accept the invitation to the gospel feast, they must make their worldly interests subordinate to

the one purpose of receiving Christ and His righteousness. God gave all for man, and He asks him to place His service above every earthly and selfish consideration. He cannot accept a divided heart. The heart that is absorbed in earthly affections cannot be given up to God.

The lesson is for all time. We are to follow the Lamb of God whithersoever He goeth. His guidance is to be chosen, His companionship valued above the companionship of earthly friends.

(11) HOW MANY WILL ULTIMATELY FOLLOW THE NARROW PATH THAT LEADS TO THE BANQUET TABLE?

Matthew 7:14

Around the family board, when breaking their daily bread, many in Christ's day repeated the words, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." But Christ showed how difficult it was to find guests for the table provided at infinite cost. Those who listened to His words knew that they had slighted the invitation of mercy. To them worldly possessions, riches, and pleasures were all-absorbing. With one consent they had made excuse.

(12) WHAT PRINCIPLE, IF FOLLOWED, WILL PREVENT OUR EARTHLY BLESSINGS FROM BECOMING A BARRIER THAT IMPERILS OUR SALVATION?

Matthew 6:33

So it is now. The excuses urged for refusing the invitation to the feast cover the whole ground of excuses for refusing the gospel invitation. Men declare that they cannot imperil their worldly prospects by giving attention to the claims of the gospel. They count their temporal interests as of more value than the things of eternity. The very blessings they have received from God become a barrier to separate their souls from their Creator and Redeemer. They will not be interrupted in their worldly pursuits, and they say to the messenger of mercy, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Acts 24:25.

(13) WHEN IS THE ACCEPTABLE TIME TO GET OUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER AND ACCEPT THE INVITATION?

2 Corinthians 6:2; Isaiah 55:6

(14) WHOM MUST OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST SURPASS?

Matthew 10:37

Others urge the difficulties that would arise in their social relations should they obey the call of God. They say they cannot afford to be out of harmony with their relatives and acquaintances. Thus they prove themselves to be the very actors described in the parable. The Master of the feast regards their flimsy excuses as showing contempt for His invitation.

The man who said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come," represents a large class. Many there are who allow their wives or their husbands to prevent them from heeding the call of God. The husband says, "I cannot obey my convictions of duty while my wife is opposed to it. Her influence would make it exceedingly hard for me to do so." The wife hears the gracious call, "Come; for all things are now ready," and she says, "'I pray thee have me excused.' My husband refuses the invitation of mercy. He says that his business stands in the way. I must go with my husband, and therefore I cannot come." The children's hearts are impressed. They desire to come. But they love their father and mother, and since these do not heed the gospel call, the children think that they cannot be expected to come. They too say, "Have me excused."

All these refuse the Saviour's call because they fear division in the family circle. They suppose that in refusing to obey God they are insuring the peace and prosperity of the home; but this is a delusion. Those who sow selfishness will reap selfishness. In rejecting the love of Christ they reject that which alone can impart purity and steadfastness to human love. They will not only lose heaven, but will fail of the true enjoyment of that for which heaven was sacrificed.

(15) WHAT WILL BE THE REWARD TO THOSE WHO CHOOSE CHRIST ABOVE FAMILY?

Matthew 19:29

Go Into the Highways and Hedges

(16) WHOM DOES THE LORD, THROUGH HIS HOLY SPIRIT, SEEK TO DRAW TO HIMSELF?

John 12:32; 2 Peter 3:9

In the parable, the giver of the feast learned how his invitation had been treated, and “being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.”

The host turned from those who despised his bounty, and invited a class who were not full, who were not in possession of houses and lands. He invited those who were poor and hungry, and who would appreciate the bounties provided. “The publicans and the harlots,” Christ said, “go into the kingdom of God before you.” Matt. 21:31. However wretched may be the specimens of humanity that men spurn and turn aside from, they are not too low, too wretched, for the notice and love of God. Christ longs to have care-worn, weary, oppressed human beings come to Him. He longs to give them the light and joy and peace that are to be found nowhere else. The veriest sinners are the objects of His deep, earnest pity and love. He sends His Holy Spirit to yearn over them with tenderness, seeking to draw them to Himself.

(17) WHAT DID THE LORD SAY THAT REVEALS THAT THE GOSPEL INVITATION WAS NOT MEANT FOR THE JEWS ONLY?

Luke 14:23

The servant who brought in the poor and the blind reported to his master, “It is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.” Here Christ pointed to the work of the gospel outside the pale of Judaism, in the highways and byways of the world.

In obedience to this command, Paul and Barnabas declared to the Jews, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” Acts 13:46-48.

(18) WHAT BASIC PREMISE IS INHERENT IN BOTH THE FIRST AND THE SECOND ADVENT MESSAGES OF CHRIST?

1 Peter 1:3-5

The gospel message proclaimed by Christ's disciples was the announcement of His first advent to the world. It bore to men the good tidings of salvation through faith in Him. It pointed forward to His second coming in glory to redeem His people, and it set before men the hope, through faith and obedience, of sharing the inheritance of the saints in light. This message is given to men today, and at this time there is coupled with it the announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. The signs which He Himself gave of His coming have been fulfilled, and by the teaching of God's word we may know that the Lord is at the door.

(19) WHAT ARE THE THREE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL MESSAGE THAT JOHN FORETOLD WOULD BE PROCLAIMED?

Revelation 14:6, 7

John in the Revelation foretells the proclamation of the gospel message just before Christ's second coming. He beholds an angel flying "in the midst of

heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people . . .

(20) WHAT CLIMACTIC EVENT FOLLOWS THE JUDGEMENT AND IS THE ESSENTIAL PART OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE?

Matthew 16:27

In the prophecy this warning of the judgment, with its connected messages, is followed by the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. The proclamation of the judgment is an announcement of Christ's second coming as at hand. And this proclamation is called the everlasting gospel. Thus the preaching of Christ's second coming, the announcement of its nearness, is shown to be an essential part of the gospel message.

(21) WHAT PROCLAMATION FROM GOD WILL MARK THE CLOSE OF THE PROBATION OF MANKIND?

Revelation 22:11

(22) WHAT WILL BE THE CONDITION OF MANKIND AT THE TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING?

Go Into the Highways and Hedges

Matthew 24:37-39

The Bible declares that in the last days men will be absorbed in worldly pursuits, in pleasure and money-getting. They will be blind to eternal realities.

So it is today. Men are rushing on in the chase for gain and selfish indulgence as if there were no God, no heaven, and no hereafter. In Noah's day the warning of the flood was sent to startle men in their wickedness and call them to repentance. So the message of Christ's soon coming is designed to arouse men from their absorption in worldly things. It is intended to awaken them to a sense of eternal realities, that they may give heed to the invitation to the Lord's table.

(23) TO WHOM WILL THE GOSPEL INVITATION BE GIVEN?

Revelation 14:6

The gospel invitation is to be given to all the world—"to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." The last message of warning and mercy is to lighten the whole earth with its glory. It is to reach all classes of men, rich and poor, high and low. "Go out into the highways and hedges," Christ says, "and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled."

The world is perishing for want of the gospel. There is a famine for the word of God. There are few who preach the

word unmixed with human tradition. Though men have the Bible in their hands, they do not receive the blessing that God has placed in it for them. The Lord calls upon His servants to carry His message to the people. The word of everlasting life must be given to those who are perishing in their sins.

(24) HOW DOES THIS TEXT DESCRIBE THE WORK OF ALL WHO GO FORTH INTO THE HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES OF THIS WORLD TO MINISTER IN CHRIST'S NAME?

2 Corinthians 5:18

In the command to go into the highways and hedges, Christ sets forth the work of all whom He calls to minister in His name. The whole world is the field for Christ's ministers. The whole human family is comprised in their congregation. The Lord desires that His word of grace shall be brought home to every soul.

(25) DURING HIS PERSONAL EVANGELISM, HOW MANY SOULS DID CHRIST OFTEN SEEK AT A TIME?

Luke 15:4; 15:7; 15:8

To a great degree this must be accomplished by personal labor. This was Christ's method. His work was largely made up of personal interviews. He had a faithful regard for the one-soul audience. Through that one soul the message was often extended to thousands.

(26) AS CHRIST'S SERVANTS, WHERE ARE WE SENT TO DELIVER THE GOSPEL MESSAGE?

Luke 14:23

We are not to wait for souls to come to us; we must seek them out where they are. When the word has been preached in the pulpit, the work has but just begun. There are multitudes who will never be reached by the gospel unless it is carried to them.

(27) WHAT GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE GIVEN THE FIRST INVITATION TO THE FEAST AND THE PRIVILEGE TO CARRY THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO THE WORLD?

Jeremiah 13:11

The invitation to the feast was first given to the Jewish people, the people who had been called to stand as teachers and leaders among men, the people in whose hands were the prophetic scrolls foretelling Christ's advent, and to whom was committed the symbolic service foreshadowing His mission. Had priests and people heeded the call, they would have united with Christ's messengers in giving the gospel invitation to the world. The truth was sent to them that they might impart it. When they refused the call, it was sent to the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Publicans and sinners received the invitation. When the gospel call is sent to the Gentiles,

there is the same plan of working. The message is first to be given "in the highways"—to men who have an active part in the world's work, to the teachers and leaders of the people.

(28) WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO SHARE THE INVITATION OF THE GOSPEL WITH THE TEACHERS AND OTHER LEADERS OF SOCIETY?

Isaiah 9:16

Let the Lord's messengers bear this in mind. To the shepherds of the flock, the teachers divinely appointed, it should come as a word to be heeded. Those who belong to the higher ranks of society are to be sought out with tender affection and brotherly regard. Men in business life, in high positions of trust, men with large inventive faculties and scientific insight, men of genius, teachers of the gospel whose minds have not been called to the special truths for this time—these should be the first to hear the call. To them the invitation must be given.

(29) WHAT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY GIVEN TO THOSE BLESSED WITH THE WEALTH OF THIS WORLD?

Luke 12:48

There is a work to be done for the wealthy. They need to be awakened to their responsibility as those entrusted with the gifts of heaven. They need to be reminded that they must give an account to Him who shall judge the

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living and the dead. The wealthy man needs your labor in the love and fear of God. Too often he trusts in his riches, and feels not his danger. The eyes of his mind need to be attracted to things of enduring value. He needs to recognize the authority of true goodness, which says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Matt. 11:28-30.

(30) WHERE SHOULD WE, AS WORKERS FOR CHRIST, SHARE THE GOSPEL?

2 Corinthians 2:14

Those who stand high in the world for their education, wealth, or calling, are seldom addressed personally in regard to the interests of the soul. Many Christian workers hesitate to approach these classes. But this should not be. If a man were drowning, we would not stand by and see him perish because he was a lawyer, a merchant, or a judge. If we saw persons rushing over a precipice, we would not hesitate to urge them back, whatever might be their position or calling. Neither should we hesitate to warn men of the peril of the soul.

None should be neglected because of their apparent devotion to worldly things. Many in high social positions are heartsore, and sick of vanity. They are longing for a peace which they have not. In the very highest ranks of society are those who are hungering

and thirsting for salvation. Many would receive help if the Lord's workers would approach them personally, with a kind manner, a heart made tender by the love of Christ.

(31) UPON WHAT DOES THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE DEPEND AND ALSO NOT DEPEND?

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

The success of the gospel message does not depend upon learned speeches, eloquent testimonies, or deep arguments. It depends upon the simplicity of the message and its adaptation to the souls that are hungering for the bread of life. "What shall I do to be saved?"—This is the want of the soul.

Thousands can be reached in the most simple and humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words of one who loves God, and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things that interest him most deeply.

Often the words well prepared and studied have but little influence. But the true, honest expression of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, has power to unbolt the door to hearts that have long been closed against Christ and His love.

(32) IF WE AS WORKERS FOR CHRIST PRAY IN FAITH, WHAT PROMISE CAN WE CLAIM AS WE SHARE THE GOSPEL?

Matthew 28:18

Let the worker for Christ remember that he is not to labor in his own strength. Let him lay hold of the throne of God with faith in His power to save. Let him wrestle with God in prayer, and then work with all the facilities God has given him. The Holy Spirit is provided as his efficiency. Ministering angels will be by his side to impress hearts.

(33) HOW DOES CHRIST DISTRIBUTE TALENTS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL?

Matthew 25:28-30

If the leaders and teachers at Jerusalem had received the truth Christ brought, what a missionary center their city would have been! Backslidden Israel would have been converted. A vast army would have been gathered for the Lord. And how rapidly they could have carried the gospel to all parts of the world. So now, if men of influence and large capacity for usefulness could be won for Christ, then through them what a work could be accomplished in lifting up the fallen, gathering in the outcasts, and spreading far and wide the tidings of salvation. Rapidly the invitation might be given, and the guests be gathered for the Lord's table.

(34) WHAT INVITATION OF HOPE ARE WE TO OFFER TO THE POOR AND LONELY WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM DISTRESS, UNBELIEF, AND DESPONDENCY?

Isaiah 55:1-3

But we are not to think only of great and gifted men, to the neglect of the poorer classes. Christ instructs His messengers to go also to those in the byways and hedges, to the poor and lowly of the earth. In the courts and lanes of the great cities, in the lonely byways of the country, are families and individuals—perhaps strangers in a strange land—who are without church relations, and who, in their loneliness, come to feel that God has forgotten them. They do not understand what they must do to be saved. Many are sunken in sin. Many are in distress. They are pressed with suffering, want, unbelief, despondency. Disease of every type afflicts them, both in body and in soul. They long to find a solace for their troubles, and Satan tempts them to seek it in lusts and pleasures that lead to ruin and death. He is offering them the apples of Sodom, that will turn to ashes upon their lips. They are spending their money for that which is not bread and their labor for that which satisfieth not. In these suffering ones we are to see those whom Christ came to save.

(35) WHAT METHOD DID CHRIST USE ON THE STRANGER, THE OUTCAST, AND THE SICK AS AN

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AVENUE TO MINISTER TO THE
WANT OF THEIR SOUL?

Luke 7:22; 1 John 3:17, 18

God has given a special command that we should regard the stranger, the outcast, and the poor souls who are weak in moral power. Many who appear wholly indifferent to religious things are in heart longing for rest and peace. Although they may have sunken to the very depths of sin, there is a possibility of saving them.

Christ's servants are to follow His example. As He went from place to place, He comforted the suffering and healed the sick. Then He placed before them the great truths in regard to His kingdom. This is the work of His followers. As you relieve the sufferings of the body, you will find ways for ministering to the wants of the soul. You can point to the uplifted Saviour, and tell of the love of the great Physician, who alone has power to restore.

(36) WHAT MESSAGE OF HOPE
CAN WE SHARE WITH DES-
PONDENT SOULS WHO MOURN
THEIR WRONG PATH?

Isaiah 61:3

Tell the poor desponding ones who have gone astray that they need not

despair. Though they have erred, and have not been building a right character, God has joy to restore them, even the joy of His salvation. He delights to take apparently hopeless material, those through whom Satan has worked, and make them the subjects of His grace. He rejoices to deliver them from the wrath which is to fall upon the disobedient. Tell them there is healing, cleansing for every soul. There is a place for them at the Lord's table. He is waiting to bid them welcome.

(37) IF WE ARE WILLING TO FOL-
LOW THE LIGHT, WHAT DOES GOD
PROMISE?

Isaiah 42:16

Those who go into the byways and hedges will find others of a widely different character, who need their ministry. There are those who are living up to all the light they have, and are serving God the best they know how. But they realize that there is a great work to be done for themselves and for those about them. They are longing for an increased knowledge of God, but they have only begun to see the glimmering of greater light. They are praying with tears that God will send them the blessing which by faith they discern afar off. In the midst of the wickedness of the great cities many of these souls are to be found. Many of them are in very humble circumstances, and because of this they are unnoticed by the world. There are many of whom ministers and churches know nothing.

But in lowly, miserable places they are the Lord's witnesses. They may have had little light and few opportunities for Christian training, but in the midst of nakedness, hunger, and cold they are seeking to minister to others. Let the stewards of the manifold grace of God seek out these souls, visit their homes, and through the power of the Holy Spirit minister to their needs. Study the Bible with them and pray with them with that simplicity which the Holy Spirit inspires. Christ will give His servants a message that will be as the bread of heaven to the soul. The precious blessing will be carried from heart to heart, from family to family.

(38) AS CHRIST'S SERVANTS, WHAT DOES GOD ASK US TO DO FOR THE SAKE OF HIS LOST CHILDREN?

Luke 14:23

The command given in the parable, to "compel them to come in," has often been misinterpreted. It has been regarded as teaching that we should force men to receive the gospel. But it denotes rather the urgency of the invitation, and the effectiveness of the inducements presented. The gospel never employs force in bringing men to Christ. Its message is "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." Isa. 55:1. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. . . . And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. 22:17. The power of God's love and grace constrains us to come.

The Saviour says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear

My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." Rev. 3:20. He is not repulsed by scorn or turned aside by threatening, but continually seeks the lost ones, saying, "How shall I give thee up?" Hosea 11:8. Although His love is driven back by the stubborn heart, He returns to plead with greater force, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." The winning power of His love compels souls to come in. And to Christ they say, "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Ps. 18:35.

(39) WHAT EFFORTS DOES GOD ASK US TO USE AS CHRIST'S MESSENGERS TO SAVE THE DISCOURAGED AND HELPLESS?

Jude 22, 23

Christ will impart to His messengers the same yearning love that He Himself has in seeking for the lost. We are not merely to say, "Come." There are those who hear the call, but their ears are too dull to take in its meaning. Their eyes are too blind to see anything good in store for them. Many realize their great degradation. They say, I am not fit to be helped; leave me alone. But the workers must not desist. In tender, pitying love, lay hold of the discouraged and helpless ones. Give them your courage, your hope, your strength. By kindness compel them to come. "Of some have compassion, making a difference; and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."

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(40) IF WE WALK WITH GOD IN FAITH AND DO OUR GOD-GIVEN PART IN SEEKING LOST SOULS, WHAT WILL BE THE RESULT?

John 4:36

If the servants of God will walk with Him in faith, He will give power to their message. They will be enabled so to present His love and the danger of rejecting the grace of God that men will be constrained to accept the gospel. Christ will perform wonderful miracles if men will but do their God-given part. In human hearts today as great a transformation may be wrought as has ever been wrought in generations past. John Bunyan was redeemed from profanity and reveling, John Newton from slave dealing, to proclaim an uplifted Saviour. A Bunyan and a Newton may be redeemed from among men today. Through human agents who cooperate with the divine, many a poor outcast will be reclaimed, and in his turn will seek to restore the image of God in man. There are those who have had very meager opportunities, who have walked in ways of error because they knew no better way, to whom beams of light will come. As the word of Christ came to Zacchaeus, "Today I must abide at thy house" (Luke 19:5), so the word will come to them; and those who were supposed to be hardened sinners will be found to have hearts as tender as a child's because Christ has deigned to notice them. Many will come from the grossest error and sin, and will take the place of others who have had opportunities and privileges but have not prized them. They will be accounted the chosen of God, elect,

precious; and when Christ shall come into His kingdom, they will stand next His throne.

(41) WHEN THE MESSAGE OF THE LOVE OF JESUS IS HEARD WHAT ARE WE CAUTIONED NOT TO DO?

Hebrews 3:7, 8

But "see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh." Heb. 12:25. Jesus said, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of My supper." They had rejected the invitation, and none of them were to be invited again. In rejecting Christ, the Jews were hardening their hearts, and giving themselves into the power of Satan so that it would be impossible for them to accept His grace. So it is now. If the love of God is not appreciated and does not become an abiding principle to soften and subdue the soul, we are utterly lost. The Lord can give no greater manifestation of His love than He has given. If the love of Jesus does not subdue the heart, there are no means by which we can be reached.

Every time you refuse to listen to the message of mercy, you strengthen yourself in unbelief. Every time you fail to open the door of your heart to Christ, you become more and more unwilling to listen to the voice of Him that speaketh. You diminish your chance of responding to the last appeal of mercy. Let it not be written of you, as of ancient Israel, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Hosea 4:17. Let not Christ weep over you as He wept over Jerusalem, saying, "How often would I have gathered thy children

together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Luke 13:34, 35.

(42) HOW DOES HEAVEN RESPOND TO THE REDEMPTION OF EVEN ONE REPENTANT SOUL?

Luke 15:7

We are living in a time when the last message of mercy, the last invitation, is sounding to the children of men. The command, "Go out into the highways

and hedges," is reaching its final fulfillment. To every soul Christ's invitation will be given. The messengers are saying, "Come; for all things are now ready." Heavenly angels are still working in cooperation with human agencies. The Holy Spirit is presenting every inducement to constrain you to come. Christ is watching for some sign that will betoken the removing of the bolts and the opening of the door of your heart for His entrance. Angels are waiting to bear the tidings to heaven that another lost sinner has been found. The hosts of heaven are waiting, ready to strike their harps and to sing a song of rejoicing that another soul has accepted the invitation to the angelic feast

I am thankful that my merciful and loving heavenly Father provided an invitation to the Great Banquet for sinners like me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I accept His invitation and pray for a pure heart so that I may one joyful day attend that great feast.

Circle: Yes Undecided

My prayer is to stay fully connected to You and, by the power Your Spirit, to not be deceived into spiritual indifference by lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or by the pride of life.

Circle: Yes Undecided

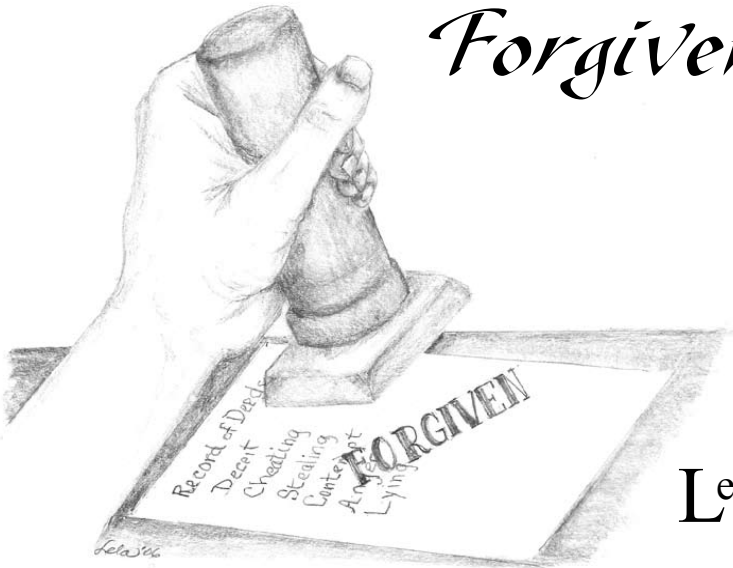
Father, I thank You for the desire and privilege You have given me to go into the highways and hedges of this world in search of lost and hurting souls. Give me the love and compassion for them that was demonstrated by Your Son Jesus as He ministered while on this earth.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Please work through me and impart to me heaven's wisdom, and the power of Your Spirit to effectively share the good news with those who are suffering. Please use me, Lord, as an effective tool to "compel them to come in" to the Great Banquet.

Circle: Yes Undecided

The Measure of Forgiveness



Lesson 6

This lesson is based on the parable found in Matthew 18:21-35.

(1) WHEN PETER ASKED, “HOW OFTEN SHOULD I FORGIVE SOMEONE,” WHAT WAS JESUS’ RESPONSE?

Matthew 18:22

Peter had come to Christ with the question, “How often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?” The rabbis limited the exercise of forgiveness to three offenses. Peter, carrying out, as he supposed, the teaching of Christ, thought to extend it to seven, the number signifying perfection. But Christ taught that we are never to become weary of forgiving. Not

“Until seven times,” He said, “but, Until seventy times seven.”

Then He showed the true ground upon which forgiveness is to be granted and the danger of cherishing an unforgiving spirit.

(2) IN THIS PARABLE ABOUT FORGIVENESS, WHO WERE THE TWO MAIN CHARACTERS?

Matthew 18:23

In a parable He told of a king’s dealing with the officers who administered the affairs of his government. Some of these officers were in receipt of vast sums of money belonging to the state. As the king investigated their administration of this trust, there was

brought before him one man whose account showed a debt to his lord for the immense sum of ten thousand talents. He had nothing to pay, and according to the custom, the king ordered him to be sold, with all that he had, that payment might be made.

(3) WHAT WAS THE INDEBTED SERVANT'S RESPONSE TO THE JUST ORDERS OF THE KING?

Matthew 18:26

(4) WHAT WAS THE KING'S RESPONSE TO HIS SERVANTS PLEA?

Matthew 18:27

(5) HOW DID THE FORGIVEN SERVANT IN TURN TREAT THE MAN WHO WAS LIKEWISE IN DEBTED TO HIM?

Matthew 18:30

(6) WHAT WAS THE KING'S RESPONSE WHEN HE FOUND OUT ABOUT THE WICKED SERVANT'S ACTIONS?

Matthew 18:32-34

“But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.”

(7) WHAT GREAT TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST WAS ILLUSTRATED IN THIS PARABLE BY THE KING PARDONING THE SERVANT'S DEBT?

Psalms 130:7

This parable presents details which are needed for the filling out of the picture but which have no counterpart in its spiritual significance. The attention should not be diverted to them. Certain great truths are illustrated, and to these our thought should be given.

The pardon granted by this king represents a divine forgiveness of all sin. Christ is represented by the king, who, moved with compassion, forgave

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the debt of his servant. Man was under the condemnation of the broken law. He could not save himself, and for this reason Christ came to this world, clothed His divinity with humanity, and gave His life, the just for the unjust. He gave Himself for our sins, and to every soul He freely offers the blood-bought pardon.”

(8) HOW DO THESE TEXTS DESCRIBE THE PRINCIPLE OF COMPASSION THAT WE SHOULD EXERCISE TOWARDS OUR FELLOW SINNERS?

1 John 4:11

Matthew 10:8

Here is the ground upon which we should exercise compassion toward our fellow sinners.

In the parable, when the debtor pleaded for delay, with the promise, “Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all,” the sentence was revoked. The whole debt was canceled. And he was soon given an opportunity to follow the example of the master who had forgiven him. Going out, he met a fellow servant who owed him a small sum. He had been forgiven ten thousand talents; the debtor owed him a hundred pence. But he who had been so mercifully treated, dealt with his fellow laborer in an altogether different manner. His debtor made an appeal similar to that which he himself had

made to the king, but without a similar result. He who had so recently been forgiven was not tenderhearted and pitiful. The mercy shown him he did not exercise in dealing with his fellow servant. He heeded not the request to be patient. The small sum owed to him was all that the ungrateful servant would keep in mind. He demanded all that he thought his due, and carried into effect a sentence similar to that which had been so graciously revoked for him.

(9) WHAT IS NEVER THE BASIS OF GOD’S FAVOR?

Ephesians 2:9

How many are today manifesting the same spirit. When the debtor pleaded with his lord for mercy, he had no true sense of the greatness of his debt. He did not realize his helplessness. He hoped to deliver himself. “Have patience with me,” he said, “and I will pay thee all.” So there are many who hope by their own works to merit God’s favor. They do not realize their helplessness. They do not accept the grace of God as a free gift, but are trying to build themselves up in self-righteousness. Their own hearts are not broken and humbled on account of sin, and they are exacting and unforgiving toward others. Their own sins against God, compared with their brother’s sins against them, are as ten thousand talents to one hundred pence—nearly one million to one; yet they dare to be unforgiving.

(10) WHAT IS THE RESULT IF WE ACT AS THE UNMERCIFUL DEBTOR AND REFUSE TO FORGIVE EVERY BROTHER THEIR TRESPASSES?

Matthew 6:15

In the parable the lord summoned the unmerciful debtor, and “said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me; shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.” “So likewise,” said Jesus, “shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.” He who refuses to forgive is thereby casting away his own hope of pardon.

(11) WHAT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE SHOULD WE APPLY IN THE WAY WE TREAT OF OTHERS?

Mark 12:31

But the teaching of this parable should not be misapplied. God’s forgiveness toward us lessens in no wise our duty to obey Him. So the spirit of forgiveness toward our fellow men does not lessen the claim of just obligation. In the prayer which Christ taught His disciples He said, “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Matt. 6:12. By this He did not mean that in order to be forgiven our sins we must not require our just dues from our debtors. If they cannot pay, even though this may be the result of unwise management, they are not to

be cast into prison, oppressed, or even treated harshly; but the parable does not teach us to encourage indolence. The word of God declares that if a man will not work, neither shall he eat. (2 Thess. 3:10.) The Lord does not require the hard-working man to support others in idleness. With many there is a waste of time, a lack of effort, which brings to poverty and want. If these faults are not corrected by those who indulge them, all that might be done in their behalf would be like putting treasure into a bag with holes. Yet there is an unavoidable poverty, and we are to manifest tenderness and compassion toward those who are unfortunate. We should treat others just as we ourselves, in like circumstances, would wish to be treated.

(12) HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT THROUGH PAUL TELL US TO ESTEEM OTHERS?

Philippians 2:3

The Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul charges us: “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 2:1-5.

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(13) WITH A SPIRIT OF LOVE IN OUR HEART, WHAT ARE WE TO DO WHEN A BROTHER TRESPASSES AGAINST US?

Luke 17:3

Sin is not to be lightly regarded. The Lord has commanded us not to suffer wrong upon our brother. He says, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him." Sin is to be called by its right name, and is to be plainly laid out before the wrongdoer.

In his charge to Timothy, Paul, writing by the Holy Spirit, says, "Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." 2 Tim. 4:2. And to Titus he writes, "There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers. . . . Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith." Titus 1:10-13.

(14) WHAT METHOD DOES THE LORD TEACH US TO USE TO SETTLE DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN CHRISTIANS?

Matthew 18:15-17

Our Lord teaches that matters of difficulty between Christians are to be settled within the church. They should

not be opened before those who do not fear God. If a Christian is wronged by his brother, let him not appeal to unbelievers in a court of justice. Let him follow out the instruction Christ has given. Instead of trying to avenge himself, let him seek to save his brother. God will guard the interests of those who love and fear Him, and with confidence we may commit our case to Him who judges righteously.

(15) THOUGH A BROTHER WRONGS US AGAIN AND AGAIN, IF HE IS SORRY AND REPENTS OF HIS FAULT, WHAT ARE WE TO DO ON OUR PART?

Luke 17:3

Too often when wrongs are committed again and again, and the wrongdoer confesses his fault, the injured one becomes weary, and thinks he has forgiven quite enough. But the Saviour has plainly told us how to deal with the erring: "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." Do not hold him off as unworthy of your confidence. Consider "thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6:1.

If your brethren err, you are to forgive them. When they come to you with confession, you should not say, I do not think they are humble enough. I do not think they feel their confession. What right have you to judge them, as if you could read the heart? The word of God says, "If he repent, forgive him. And if he trespasses against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou

shalt forgive him.” And not only seven times, but seventy times seven—just as often as God forgives you.

(16) WHAT GIFT HAS COME BY JESUS AND SHOULD BE REVEALED THROUGH US IN OUR FORGIVENESS TO OTHERS?

John 1:17: Romans 3:24

We ourselves owe everything to God's free grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our exaltation to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others.

(17) WHAT TWO STEP PROCESS REUNITES US WITH ONE ANOTHER AND GOD AND TURNS ASIDE THE ATTACKS OF SATAN?

James 5:16

Give the erring one no occasion for discouragement. Suffer not a Pharisaical hardness to come in and hurt your brother. Let no bitter sneer rise in mind or heart. Let no tinge of scorn be manifest in the voice. If you speak a word of your own, if you take an attitude of indifference, or show suspicion or distrust, it may prove the ruin of a soul. He needs a brother with the Elder Brother's heart of sympathy to touch his heart of humanity. Let him feel the strong clasp of a sympathizing hand, and hear the whisper, Let us pray. God

will give a rich experience to you both. Prayer unites us with one another and with God. Prayer brings Jesus to our side, and gives to the fainting, perplexed soul new strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan.

(18) WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN WE ALLOW THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST TO WORK ON OUR HEART AND WE FORGIVE THE IMPERFECTIONS OF OTHERS?

James 5:20

When one turns away from human imperfections to behold Jesus, a divine transformation takes place in the character. The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image. Then let it be your effort to lift up Jesus. Let the mind's eye be directed to “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. And as you engage in this work, remember that “he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.” James 5:20

(19) HOW DOES GOD RESPOND TO AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT?

Matthew 6:15

Nothing can justify an unforgiving spirit. He who is unmerciful toward others shows that he himself is not

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a partaker of God's pardoning grace. In God's forgiveness the heart of the erring one is drawn close to the great heart of Infinite Love. The tide of divine compassion flows into the sinner's soul, and from him to the souls of others. The tenderness and mercy that Christ has revealed in His own precious life will be seen in those who become sharers of His grace. But "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Rom. 8:9. He is alienated from God, fitted only for eternal separation from Him.

(20) WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SOUL WHO TURNS AWAY FROM GOD'S PARDONING LOVE TO LIVE IN SIN?

Ezekiel 18:24

It is true that he may once have received forgiveness; but his unmerciful spirit shows that he now rejects God's pardoning love. He has separated himself from God, and is in the same condition as before he was forgiven. He

has denied his repentance, and his sins are upon him as if he had not repented.

(21) WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE STANDARD THAT DETERMINES FORGIVENESS?

Matthew 18:33

But the great lesson of the parable lies in the contrast between God's compassion and man's hardheartedness; in the fact that God's forgiving mercy is to be the measure of our own. "Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?"

We are not forgiven *because* we forgive, but *as* we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own. Wherefore Christ says, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Matt 7:2

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for demonstrating Your love in the provision for my forgiveness made available through the shed blood of Your Son Jesus Christ.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I realize that the ground of all forgiveness is founded in this unmerited love You give us.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Thank You, Jesus for giving us the parables to reveal Your mercy which help us to overcome our spiritual blindness.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray that You will fill me with this same pardoning love so I may show the same spirit of forgiveness to those who have wronged me.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Gain that is Loss



Lesson 7

This lesson is based on the parable found in Luke 12:13-21.

(1) AS WE GO FORTH TO PUBLISH GOD'S TRUTHS, WHAT PROMISE CAN THOSE BROUGHT BEFORE MAGISTRATES AND KINGS FOR THE CAUSE OF CHRIST CLAIM?

Luke 12:11, 12; Matthew 10:19, 20

Christ was teaching, and, as usual, others besides His disciples had gathered about Him. He had been speaking to the disciples of the scenes in which they were soon to act a part. They were to publish abroad the truths He had committed to them, and they would be brought in conflict with the rulers of this world. For His sake

they would be called into courts, and before magistrates and kings. He had assured them of wisdom which none could gainsay. His own words, that moved the hearts of the multitude, and brought to confusion His wily adversaries, witnessed to the power of that indwelling Spirit which He had promised to His followers.

(2) WHAT BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE GOES AGAINST THE USE OF THE GRACES OF HEAVEN FOR WORLDLY BENEFIT?

Luke 12:31; Matthew 6:33

But there were many who desired the grace of heaven only to serve their selfish purposes. They recognized the marvelous power of Christ in setting

forth the truth in a clear light. They heard the promise to His followers of wisdom to speak before rulers and magistrates. Would He not lend His power for their worldly benefit?

“And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.” Through Moses, God had given directions concerning the transmission of property. The eldest son received a double portion of the father’s estate (Deut. 21:17), while the younger brothers were to share alike. This man thinks that his brother has defrauded him of his inheritance. His own efforts have failed to secure what he regards as his due, but if Christ will interpose the end will surely be gained. He has heard Christ’s stirring appeals, and His solemn denunciations of the scribes and Pharisees. If words of such command could be spoken to this brother, he would not dare to refuse the aggrieved man his portion.

(3) WHAT WARNING DID CHRIST GIVE THE SELF-SEEKING PETITIONER WHICH ALSO APPLIES TO US?

Luke 12:15

In the midst of the solemn instruction that Christ had given, this man had revealed his selfish disposition. He could appreciate that ability of the Lord which might work for the advancement of his own temporal affairs; but spiritual truths had taken no hold on his mind and heart. The gaining of the inheritance

was his absorbing theme. Jesus, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor, was opening to him the treasures of divine love.

(4) WHAT IS THE TRUE TREASURE THAT THE INQUIRER SHOULD HAVE SOUGHT AND SHOULD BE THE UPPERMOST DESIRE IN OUR HEARTS?

1 Peter 1:4

The Holy Spirit was pleading with him to become an heir of the inheritance that is “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” He had seen evidence of the power of Christ. Now the opportunity was his to speak to the great Teacher, to express the desire uppermost in his heart. But like the man with the muck rake in Bunyan’s allegory, his eyes were fixed on the earth. He saw not the crown above his head. Like Simon Magus, he valued the gift of God as a means of worldly gain.

The Saviour’s mission on earth was fast drawing to a close. Only a few months remained for Him to complete what He had come to do, in establishing the kingdom of His grace. Yet human greed would have turned Him from His work to take up the dispute over a piece of land. But Jesus was not to be diverted from His mission. His answer was, “Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?”

(5) WHAT WAS CHRIST’S WORK WHILE ON THIS EARTH AND THE WORK OF ALL WHO MINISTER IN HIS NAME?

Matthew 10:7, 8; Isaiah 61:1-2

Jesus could have told this man just what was right. He knew the right in the case; but the brothers were in a quarrel because both were covetous. Christ virtually said, It is not My work to settle controversies of this kind. He came for another purpose, to preach the gospel, and thus to arouse men to a sense of eternal realities.

In Christ's treatment of this case is a lesson for all who minister in His name. When He sent forth the twelve, He said, "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give." They were not to settle the temporal affairs of the people. Their work was to persuade men to be reconciled to God. In this work lay their power to bless humanity. The only remedy for the sins and sorrows of men is Christ. The gospel of His grace alone can cure the evils that curse society. The injustice of the rich toward the poor, the hatred of the poor toward the rich, alike have their root in selfishness, and this can be eradicated only through submission to Christ. He alone, for the selfish heart of sin, gives the new heart of love. Let the servants of Christ preach the gospel with the Spirit sent down from heaven, and work as He did for the benefit of men. Then such results will be manifest in the blessing and uplifting

of mankind as are wholly impossible of accomplishment by human power.

(6) WHAT IS THE RESULT WHEN THE PROBLEM OF COVETOUSNESS IS ROOTED IN OUR HEARTS?

Mark 7:22, 23

Our Lord struck at the root of the affair that troubled this questioner, and of all similar disputes, saying, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

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

(7) WHEN SPEAKING TO HIS DISCIPLES ON THIS SUBJECT, WHAT QUESTION DID CHRIST ASK AS A WARNING TO ALL WHO MAKE THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD THEIR PRIORITY AND SEEK THEIR OWN COMFORT?

Gain That Is Loss

Matthew 16:26

By the parable of the foolish rich man, Christ showed the folly of those who make the world their all. This man had received everything from God. The sun had been permitted to shine upon his land; for its rays fall on the just and on the unjust. The showers of heaven descend on the evil and on the good. The Lord had caused vegetation to flourish, and the fields to bring forth abundantly. The rich man was in perplexity as to what he should do with his produce. His barns were full to overflowing, and he had no place to put the surplus of his harvest. He did not think of God, from whom all his mercies had come. He did not realize that God had made him a steward of His goods that he might help the needy. He had a blessed opportunity of being God's almoner, but he thought only of ministering to his own comfort.

(8) WHAT DID THE FOOLISH RICH MAN DO WITH HIS ABUNDANT PROVISIONS THAT HAD BEEN BESTOWED UPON HIM?

Luke 12:18

The situation of the poor, the orphan, the widow, the suffering, the afflicted, was brought to this rich man's attention; there were many places in which to bestow his goods. He could easily have relieved himself of a portion of his abundance, and many homes would have been freed from want, many

who were hungry would have been fed, many naked clothed, many hearts made glad, many prayers for bread and clothing answered, and a melody of praise would have ascended to heaven. The Lord had heard the prayers of the needy, and of His goodness He had prepared for the poor. (Ps. 68:10.) Abundant provision for the wants of many had been made in the blessings bestowed upon the rich man. But he closed his heart to the cry of the needy, and said to his servants, "This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

This man's aims were no higher than those of the beasts that perish. He lived as if there were no God, no heaven, no future life; as if everything he possessed were his own, and he owed nothing to God or man. The psalmist described this rich man when he wrote, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Ps. 14:1.

(9) HOW DOES THE WORLD REGARD THOSE DRIVEN BY GREED?

Psalms 49:18

This man has lived and planned for self. He sees that the future is abundantly provided for; there is nothing for him now but to treasure and enjoy the fruits of his labors. He regards himself as favored above other men, and takes credit to himself for his wise management. He is honored by his fellow townsmen as a man of good judgment and a prosperous citizen. For

“men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.”

(10) HOW DOES GOD REGARD THE WISDOM OF THIS WORLD?

1 Corinthians 3:19; Luke 12:20

While the rich man is looking forward to years of enjoyment, the Lord is making far different plans. The message comes to this unfaithful steward, “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Here is a demand that money cannot supply. The wealth he has treasured can purchase no reprieve. In one moment that which he has toiled through his whole life to secure becomes worthless to him. “Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” His broad fields and well-filled granaries pass from under his control. “He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.” Ps. 39:6.

(11) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF REJECTING GOD’S DIVINE LOVE TO LIVE FOR SELF AND HOW DOES THIS AFFECT OUR RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS GOD?

Luke 12:20, 21

The only thing that would be of value to him now he has not secured. In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. For God is love, and love is life.

This man has chosen the earthly rather than the spiritual, and with the earthly he must pass away. “Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.” Ps. 49:20.

(12) WHAT IS THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE LOCATION OF YOUR HEART AND THE THINGS YOU TREASURE?

Luke 12:34

(13) WHAT IS THE RESULT OF HOARDING THE TREASURES OF THIS WORLD FOR THE PURPOSE OF SELFISH GAIN?

James 5:1-3

This picture is true for all time. You may plan for merely selfish good, you may gather together treasure, you may build mansions great and high, as did the builders of ancient Babylon; but you cannot build wall so high or gate so strong as to shut out the messengers of doom. Belshazzar the king “feasted in his palace,” and “praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.” But the hand of One invisible wrote upon his walls the words of doom, and the tread of hostile armies was heard at his palace gates. “In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain,” and an alien monarch sat upon the throne. (Dan. 5:30)

Gain That Is Loss

(14) WHERE DOES SCRIPTURE COUNSEL IS THE BEST LOCATION FOR OUR INVESTMENTS AND WHY?

Matthew 25:40

To live for self is to perish. Covetousness, the desire of benefit for self's sake, cuts the soul off from life. It is the spirit of Satan to get, to draw to self. It is the spirit of Christ to give, to sacrifice self for the good of others. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:11, 12.

Matthew 6:19-21

(15) WHEN, IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST, WE SACRIFICIALLY GIVE FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS, TO WHOM ARE WE DEMONSTRATING OUR LOVE?

Wherefore He says, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

Dear Father, thank You for the promise that You will send the Holy Spirit in our behalf when we are persecuted for Your name's sake.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray that my heart will not grow the deadly roots of covetousness but will always long for the treasures of God's divine love.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for my heart to long for God's wisdom and direction in every avenue of my life. With a pure heart I want to seek

first God's kingdom and then according to His will receive the things He provides that are in harmony with His will.

Circle: Yes Undecided

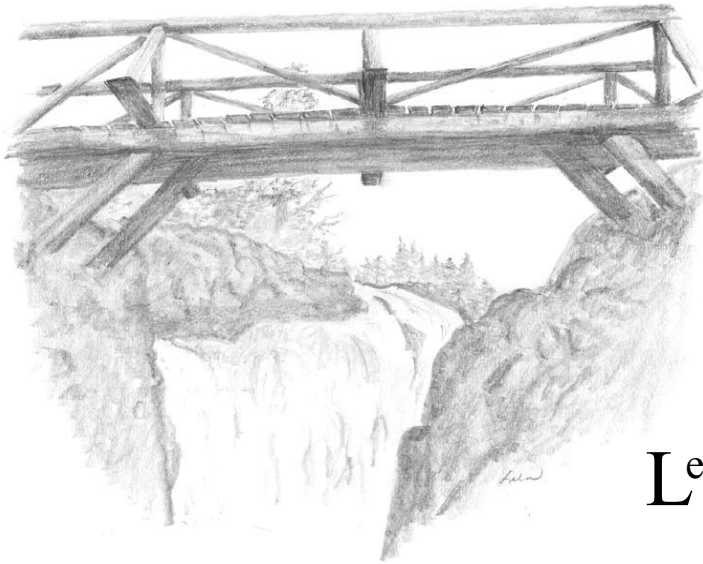
I am grateful for the spiritual gifts Christ imparts to use in the furthering of His kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, I will never fall to the temptation of using the spiritual gifts that Christ has given me for worldly gain.

Circle: Yes Undecided

A Great Gulf Fixed



Lesson 8

This lesson is based on the parable found in Luke 16:19-31.

(1) WHAT OPPORTUNITY DOES GOD OFFER WHICH ULTIMATELY DECIDES OUR SOULS ETERNAL DESTINY?

Joshua 24:15

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Christ shows that in this life men decide their eternal destiny. During probationary time the grace of God is offered to every soul. But if men waste their opportunities in self-pleasing, they cut themselves off from everlasting life. No after probation will be granted them. By their own choice they have fixed an impassable gulf between them and their God.

(2) WHAT IS HEAVEN'S ORDER OF HIERARCHY?

Matthew 19:30

This parable draws a contrast between the rich who have not made God their dependence, and the poor who have made God their dependence. Christ shows that the time is coming when the position of the two classes will be reversed. Those who are poor in this world's goods, yet who trust in God and are patient in suffering, will one day be exalted above those who now hold the highest positions the world can give but who have not surrendered their life to God.

(3) WHO ARE THE TWO LEADING CHARACTERS IN THIS PARABLE?

Luke 16:19, 20

“There was a certain rich man,” Christ said, “which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table.”

(4) FROM WHOSE LINEAGE DID THE RICH MAN AND HIS BROTHERS BELONG?

Luke 16:24

(5) WHAT WAS THEIR ATTITUDE TOWARD THE WILL OF GOD AS REVEALED THROUGH THE PROPHETS?

Luke 16:31

(6) WHAT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF MOSES DID THE RICH MAN DISREGARD?

Leviticus 19:18

The rich man did not belong to the class represented by the unjust judge, who openly declared his disregard for God and man. He claimed to be a son of Abraham. He did not treat the beggar

with violence or require him to go away because the sight of him was disagreeable. If the poor, loathsome specimen of humanity could be comforted by beholding him as he entered his gates, the rich man was willing that he should remain. But he was selfishly indifferent to the needs of his suffering brother.

There were then no hospitals in which the sick might be cared for. The suffering and needy were brought to the notice of those to whom the Lord had entrusted wealth, that they might receive help and sympathy. Thus it was with the beggar and the rich man. Lazarus was in great need of help; for he was without friends, home, money, or food. Yet he was allowed to remain in this condition day after day, while the wealthy nobleman had every want supplied. The one who was abundantly able to relieve the sufferings of his fellow creature, lived to himself, as many live today.

(7) WHAT IS THE DUTY OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF THIS WORLD’S GOODS?

Deuteronomy 15:11

There are today close beside us many who are hungry, naked, and homeless. A neglect to impart of our means to these needy, suffering ones places upon us a burden of guilt which we shall one day fear to meet. All covetousness is condemned as idolatry. All selfish indulgence is an offense in God’s sight.

(8) WHEN GOD HAS ENTRUSTED US AS STEWARDS OF AN ABUNDANCE OF MEANS AND CAPABILITIES, IN WHAT WAY DOES HE EXPECT US TO USE THESE GIFTS?

Luke 12:48

God had made the rich man a steward of His means, and it was his duty to attend to just such cases as that of the beggar. The command had been given, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6:5); and "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19:18). The rich man was a Jew, and he was acquainted with the command of God. But he forgot that he was accountable for the use of his entrusted means and capabilities. The Lord's blessings rested upon him abundantly, but he employed them selfishly, to honor himself, not his Maker. In proportion to his abundance was his obligation to use his gifts for the uplifting of humanity. This was the Lord's command, but the rich man had no thought of his obligation to God. He lent money, and took interest for what he loaned; but he returned no interest for what God had lent him. He had knowledge and talents, but did not improve them. Forgetful of his accountability to God, he devoted all his powers to pleasure. Everything with which he was surrounded, his round of amusements, the praise and flattery of his friends, ministered to his selfish enjoyment. So engrossed was he in the society of his friends that he lost all sense of his responsibility to cooperate with God in His ministry of mercy. He had opportunity to understand the word

of God, and to practice its teachings; but the pleasure-loving society he chose so occupied his time that he forgot the God of eternity.

(9) WHAT IS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN CHRIST, ARE PATIENT IN SUFFERING, AND ENDURE THE TEST OF FAITH?

Matthew 16:27

The time came when a change took place in the condition of the two men. The poor man had suffered day by day, but he had patiently and quietly endured. In the course of time he died and was buried. There was no one to mourn for him; but by his patience in suffering he had witnessed for Christ, he had endured the test of his faith, and at his death he is represented as being carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

Lazarus represents the suffering poor who believe in Christ. When the trumpet sounds and all that are in the graves hear Christ's voice and come forth, they will receive their reward; for their faith in God was not a mere theory, but a reality.

(10) BY INCORPORATING THE PREVAILING OPINION OF THE DAY ABOUT LIFE AFTER DEATH INTO HIS PARABLE, WHAT IDEA WAS CHRIST SEEKING TO CONVEY?

Mark 10:31

“The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.”

In this parable Christ was meeting the people on their own ground. The doctrine of a conscious state of existence between death and the resurrection was held by many of those who were listening to Christ’s words. The Saviour knew of their ideas, and He framed His parable so as to inculcate important truths through these preconceived opinions. He held up before His hearers a mirror wherein they might see themselves in their true relation to God. He used the prevailing opinion to convey the idea He wished to make prominent to all—that no man is valued for his possessions; for all he has belongs to him only as lent by the Lord. A misuse of these gifts will place him below the poorest and most afflicted man who loves God and trusts in Him.

(11) WHAT IMPORTANT POINT REGARDING THE ACCEPTANCE OF SALVATION WAS CHRIST SEEKING TO MAKE?

Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:15

Christ desires His hearers to understand that it is impossible for men to secure the salvation of the soul after death. “Son,” Abraham is represented as

answering, “remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you can not; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.” Thus Christ represented the hopelessness of looking for a second probation. This life is the only time given to man in which to prepare for eternity.

(12) WHO ALONE HAS GOD EXALTED TO BE OUR PRINCE AND SAVIOUR?

Acts 5:30, 31

The rich man had not abandoned the idea that he was a child of Abraham, and in his distress he is represented as calling upon him for aid. “Father Abraham,” he prayed, “have mercy on me.” He did not pray to God, but to Abraham. Thus he showed that he placed Abraham above God, and that he relied on his relationship to Abraham for salvation. The thief on the cross offered his prayer to Christ. “Remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom,” he said. (Luke 23:42.) And at once the response came, Verily I say unto thee today (as I hang on the cross in humiliation and suffering), thou shalt be with Me in Paradise. But the rich man prayed to Abraham, and his petition was not granted. Christ alone is exalted to be “a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:31. “Neither is there salvation in any other.” Acts 4:12.

(13) AFTER REALIZING HIS PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE WAS TOO LATE, WHAT WAS THE RICH MAN'S REQUEST?

Luke 16:27, 28

(14) WHO DID GOD ALREADY SEND TO GIVE A TESTIMONY TO THE JEWS OF THE PROVISION FOR ETERNITY THAT THEY CHOSE NOT TO HEAR?

Luke 16:29

The rich man had spent his life in self-pleasing, and too late he saw that he had made no provision for eternity. He realized his folly, and thought of his brothers, who would go on as he had gone, living to please themselves.

When the rich man solicited additional evidence for his brothers, he was plainly told that should this evidence be given, they would not be persuaded. His request cast a reflection on God. It was as if the rich man had said, If you had more thoroughly warned me, I should not now be here. Abraham in his answer to this request is represented as saying, Your brothers have been sufficiently warned. Light has been given them, but they would not see; truth has been presented to them, but they would not hear.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

(15) BY WHAT ACT, CARRIED OUT BY THE JEWS, WAS ABRAHAM'S RESPONSE CONFIRMED?

John 12:10

These [Abraham's] words were proved true in the history of the Jewish nation. Christ's last and crowning miracle was the raising of Lazarus of Bethany, after he had been dead four days. The Jews were given this wonderful evidence of the Saviour's divinity, but they rejected it. Lazarus rose from the dead and bore his testimony before them, but they hardened their hearts against all evidence, and even sought to take his life (John 12:9-11.)

(16) WHAT ARE THE APPOINTED AGENCIES WHICH GIVE EVIDENCES FOR THE SALVATION OF MEN?

Luke 24:44; 2 Kings 17:13

The law and the prophets are God's appointed agencies for the salvation of men. Christ said, Let them give heed to these evidences. If they do not listen to the voice of God in His word, the testimony of a witness raised from the dead would not be heeded.

Those who heed Moses and the prophets will require no greater light than God has given; but if men reject the light, and fail to appreciate the opportunities granted them, they would not hear if one from the dead should come to them with a message. They would not

be convinced even by this evidence; for those who reject the law and the prophets so harden their hearts that they will reject all light.

(17) HOW IS OUR APTITUDE FOR GREATER GOD-GIVEN ABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITY MEASURED?

Luke 16:10

The conversation between Abraham and the once-rich man is figurative. The lesson to be gathered from it is that every man is given sufficient light for the discharge of the duties required of him. Man's responsibilities are proportionate to his opportunities and privileges. God gives to every one sufficient light and grace to do the work He has given him to do. If man fails to do that which a little light shows to be his duty, greater light would only reveal unfaithfulness, neglect to improve the blessings given. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Those who refuse to be enlightened by Moses and the prophets and ask for some wonderful miracle to be performed would not be convinced if their wish were granted.

(18) IF WE USE THE MEANS ENTRUSTED TO US TO FURTHER GOD'S KINGDOM, WHAT PROMISE MAY WE CLAIM REGARDING OUR NEEDS?

Matthew 6:33

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows how the two classes represented by these men are estimated in the unseen world. There is no sin in being rich if riches are not acquired by injustice. A rich man is not condemned for having riches, but condemnation rests upon him if the means entrusted to him is spent in selfishness. Far better might he lay up his money beside the throne of God, by using it to do good. Death cannot make any man poor who thus devotes himself to seeking eternal riches. But the man who hoards his treasure for self can not take any of it to heaven. He has proved himself to be an unfaithful steward. During his lifetime he had his good things, but he was forgetful of his obligation to God. He failed of securing the heavenly treasure.

The rich man who had so many privileges is represented to us as one who should have cultivated his gifts, so that his works should reach to the great beyond, carrying with them improved spiritual advantages. It is the purpose of redemption, not only to blot out sin, but to give back to man those spiritual gifts lost because of sin's dwarfing power.

(19) WHERE DOES THE BIBLE RECOMMEND AS A SAFE PLACE TO INVESTMENT OUR EARTHLY WEALTH?

Matthew 6:20

Money cannot be carried into the next life; it is not needed there; but the good deeds done in winning souls to Christ are carried to the heavenly courts. But those who selfishly spend the Lord's

gifts on themselves, leaving their needy fellow creatures without aid and doing nothing to advance God's work in the world, dishonor their Maker. Robbery of God is written opposite their names in the books of heaven.

(20) WHO GIVES US THE ABILITY TO ACQUIRE WEALTH?

Deuteronomy 8:18

(21) LIST FOUR FACTS THAT HOLD TRUE FOR THOSE WHO PROCURE WORLDLY WEALTH AND LIVE AS IF ALL THEY POSSESS IS THEIR OWN?

Ecclesiastes 5:12

Ecclesiastes 5:13

Ecclesiastes 5:14

Ecclesiastes 5:15

The rich man had all that money could procure, but he did not possess the riches that would have kept his account right with God. He had lived as if all that he possessed were his own. He had neglected the call of God and the claims of the suffering poor. But at length there comes a call which he cannot neglect. By a power which he cannot question or resist he is commanded to quit the premises of

which he is no longer steward. The once-rich man is reduced to hopeless poverty. The robe of Christ's righteousness, woven in the loom of heaven, can never cover him. He who once wore the richest purple, the finest linen, is reduced to nakedness. His probation is ended. He brought nothing into the world, and he can take nothing out of it.

Christ lifted the curtain and presented this picture before priests and rulers, scribes and Pharisees. Look at it, you who are rich in this world's goods and are not rich toward God. Will you not contemplate this scene? That which is highly esteemed among men is abhorrent in the sight of God. Christ asks, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36, 37.

(22) WHAT DOES CHRIST PROMISE TO THOSE WHO SACRIFICE THEIR TIME, MONEY, AND TALENTS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE GOSPEL?

Mark 8:35

(23) WHAT JUDGMENT AWAITS THOSE WHO SQUANDER THEIR TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS ON SELFISH GRATIFICATION?

Daniel 5:27

When Christ gave the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, there were many in the Jewish nation in the pitiable condition of the rich man, using the Lord's goods for selfish gratification, preparing themselves to hear the sentence, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." The rich man was favored with every temporal and spiritual blessing, but he refused to cooperate with God in the use of these blessings. Thus it was with the Jewish nation. The Lord had made the Jews the depositaries of sacred truth. He had appointed them stewards of His grace. He had given them every spiritual and temporal advantage, and He called upon them to impart these blessings. Special instruction had been given them in regard to their treatment of their brethren who had fallen into decay, of the stranger within their gates, and of the poor among them. They were not to seek to gain everything for their own advantage, but were to remember those in need and share with them. And God promised to bless them in accordance with their deeds of love and mercy. But like the rich man, they put forth no helping hand to relieve the temporal or spiritual necessities of suffering humanity. Filled with pride, they regarded themselves as the chosen and favored people of God; yet they did not serve or worship God.

(24) IN WHOM DID THE JEWS UNWISELY PLACE THEIR TRUST AS IF HE WERE GOD?

Luke 16:24; John 8

They put their dependence in the fact that they were children of Abraham. "We be Abraham's seed," they said proudly. (John 8:33.) When the crisis

came, it was revealed that they had divorced themselves from God, and had placed their trust in Abraham, as if he were God.

(25) IF THEY WERE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM, WHAT DID CHRIST SAY THAT THE JEWISH PEOPLE WOULD HAVE BEEN DOING?

John 8:39, 40

John 8:56

Christ longed to let light shine into the darkened minds of the Jewish people. He said to them, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham."

Christ recognized no virtue in lineage. He taught that spiritual connection supersedes all natural connection. The Jews claimed to have descended from Abraham; but by failing to do the works of Abraham, they proved that they were not his true children. Only those who prove themselves to be spiritually in harmony with Abraham by obeying the voice of God, are reckoned as of true descent. Although the beggar belonged to the class looked upon by men as inferior, Christ recognized him as one whom Abraham would take into the very closest friendship.

(26) WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE JEW'S REJECTION TO RESPOND TO THE DIVINE CALL AND

FAILURE TO BE GOOD STEWARDS
OF GOD'S GIFTS?

NORE THE NEEDS OF SUFFERING
HUMANITY?

John 8:24

The rich man though surrounded with all the luxuries of life was so ignorant that he put Abraham where God should have been. If he had appreciated his exalted privileges and had allowed God's Spirit to mold his mind and heart, he would have had an altogether different position. So with the nation he represented. If they had responded to the divine call, their future would have been wholly different. They would have shown true spiritual discernment. They had means which God would have increased, making it sufficient to bless and enlighten the whole world. But they had so far separated from the Lord's arrangement that their whole life was perverted. They failed to use their gifts as God's stewards in accordance with truth and righteousness. Eternity was not brought into their reckoning, and the result of their unfaithfulness was ruin to the whole nation.

Christ knew that at the destruction of Jerusalem the Jews would remember His warning. And it was so. When calamity came upon Jerusalem, when starvation and suffering of every kind came upon the people, they remembered these words of Christ and understood the parable. They had brought their suffering upon themselves by their neglect to let their God-given light shine forth to the world.

(27) HOW WILL JUDGMENT BE DETERMINED UPON THOSE WHO POSSESS A CHARACTER WRONGLY DEVELOPED AND IG-

Matthew 7:2

The closing scenes of this earth's history are portrayed in the closing of the rich man's history. The rich man claimed to be a son of Abraham, but he was separated from Abraham by an impassable gulf—a character wrongly developed. Abraham served God, following His word in faith and obedience. But the rich man was unmindful of God and of the needs of suffering humanity. The great gulf fixed between him and Abraham was the gulf of disobedience. There are many today who are following the same course. Though church members, they are unconverted. They may take part in the church service, they may chant the psalm, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (Ps. 42:1); but they testify to a falsehood. They are no more righteous in God's sight than is the veriest sinner. The soul that longs after the excitement of worldly pleasure, the mind that is full of love for display, cannot serve God. Like the rich man in the parable, such a one has no inclination to war against the lust of the flesh. He longs to indulge appetite. He chooses the atmosphere of sin. He is suddenly snatched away by death, and he goes down to the grave with the character formed during his lifetime in copartnership with Satanic agencies. In the grave he has no power to choose anything, be it good or evil; for in the day when a man dies, his thoughts perish. (Ps. 146:4; Eccl. 9:5, 6.)

A Great Gulf Fixed

(28) WHAT PRIVILEGE HAS GOD MADE AVAILABLE TO US NOW?

2 Peter 1:4

When the voice of God awakes the dead, he will come from the grave with the same appetites and passions, the same likes and dislikes, that he cherished when living. God works no miracle to re-create a man who would not be re-created when he was granted every opportunity and provided with every facility. During his lifetime he took no delight in God, nor found pleasure in His service. His character is not in harmony with God, and he could not be happy in the heavenly family.

(29) HOW ARE WE INSTRUCTED TO APPROACH THE DETAILS OF OUR DAILY LIVES?

Ephesians 6:7

Dear Father, thank You for Your mercy and grace. I pray for a pure heart. Open my eyes that I may see the devastating results of neglect of response to You and the needs of my fellow man.

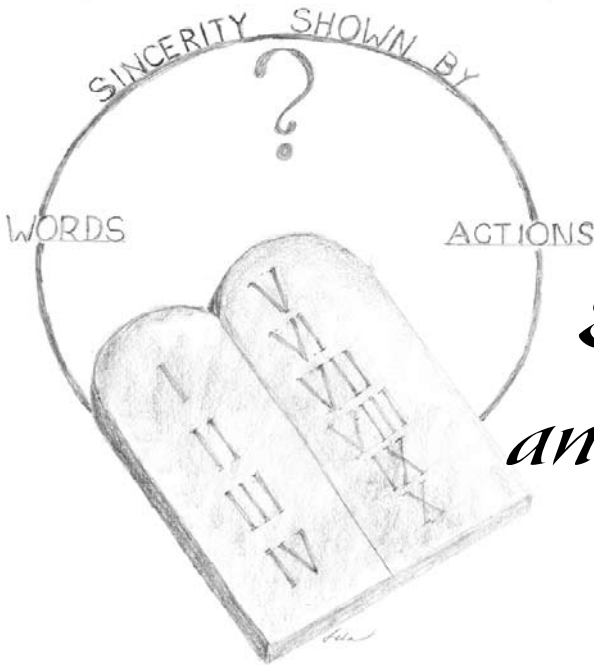
Circle: Yes Undecided

Today there is a class in our world who are self-righteous. They are not gluttons, they are not drunkards, they are not infidels; but they desire to live for themselves, not for God. He is not in their thoughts; therefore they are classed with unbelievers. Were it possible for them to enter the gates of the city of God, they could have no right to the tree of life, for when God's commandments were laid before them with all their binding claims they said, No. They have not served God here; therefore they would not serve Him hereafter. They could not live in His presence, and they would feel that any place was preferable to heaven.

To learn of Christ means to receive His grace, which is His character. But those who do not appreciate and utilize the precious opportunities and sacred influences granted them on earth, are not fitted to take part in the pure devotion of heaven. Their characters are not molded according to the divine similitude. By their own neglect they have formed a chasm which nothing can bridge. Between them and the righteous there is a great gulf fixed

Help me to be a good steward of the temporal and spiritual gifts that You have given me. Help me to demonstrate my love for You by selfless, compassionate service to my fellow man.

Circle: Yes Undecided



Saying and Doing

Lesson 9

This lesson is based on the parables found in Matthew. 21:12-16; 21:23-32.

“A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first.”

(1) WHAT CRITERIA DETERMINES WHO WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

Matthew 7:21

In the sermon on the mount Christ said, “Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of

heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.” The test of sincerity is not in words, but in deeds. Christ does not say to any man, What say ye more than others? but, “What do ye more than others?” Matt. 5:47. Full of meaning are His words, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” John 13:17. Words are of no value unless they are accompanied with appropriate deeds. This is the lesson taught in the parable of the two sons.

(2) WITH GODLY AUTHORITY, WHAT DID CHRIST DO TO THOSE VIOLATING THE SANCTITY OF HIS FATHER’S HOUSE?

Matthew 21:12

This parable was spoken at Christ’s last visit to Jerusalem before His death.

Saying and Doing

He had driven out the buyers and sellers from the temple. His voice had spoken to their hearts with the power of God. Amazed and terrified, they had obeyed His command without excuse or resistance.

(3) FILLED WITH PREJUDICE AND JEALOUSY, WHAT QUESTION DID THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS ASK JESUS IN AN EFFORT TO DESTROY HIS INFLUENCE AND PUT HIM TO DEATH?

Matthew 21:23

When their terror was abated, the priests and elders, returning to the temple, had found Christ healing the sick and the dying. They had heard the voice of rejoicing and the song of praise. In the temple itself the children who had been restored to health were waving palm branches and singing hosannas to the Son of David. Baby voices were lisping the praises of the mighty Healer. Yet with the priests and elders all this did not suffice to overcome their prejudice and jealousy.

The next day, as Christ was teaching in the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to Him and said, "By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?"

The priests and elders had had unmistakable evidence of Christ's power. In His cleansing of the temple they had seen Heaven's authority flashing from His face. They could not resist the power by which He spoke. Again in His wonderful deeds of healing He had answered their

question. He had given evidence of His authority which could not be controverted. But it was not evidence that was wanted. The priests and elders were anxious for Jesus to proclaim Himself the Messiah that they might misapply His words and stir up the people against Him. They wished to destroy His influence and to put Him to death.

(4) WHAT MIRACLE HAD JESUS JUST PERFORMED BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES THAT MADE THE ANSWER TO THEIR QUESTION OBVIOUS?

Matthew 21:14

Jesus knew that if they could not recognize God in Him or see in His works the evidence of His divine character, they would not believe His own testimony that He was the Christ.

(5) WHAT WISE RESPONSE DID JESUS GIVE TO CAUSE THE PRIEST AND ELDERS TO BE CAUGHT INTO THEIR OWN TRAP?

Matthew 21:24, 25

In His answer He evades the issue they hope to bring about and turns the condemnation upon themselves. "I also will ask you one thing," He said, "which if ye tell Me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?"

(6) WHAT FALSIFIED ANSWER DID THEY GIVE IN AN ATTEMPT TO COVER THEIR EVIL SCHEMES?

Matthew 21:27

The priests and rulers were perplexed. "They reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men, we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We can not tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." "We can not tell." This answer was a falsehood. But the priests saw the position they were in, and falsified in order to screen themselves.

(7) WHAT PHRASE SPOKEN BY JOHN BORE WITNESS OF CHRIST'S TRUE IDENTITY?

John 1:29

John the Baptist had come bearing witness of the One whose authority they were now questioning. He had pointed Him out, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

(8) WHAT PHRASE SPOKEN BY GOD THE FATHER FOLLOWING CHRIST'S BAPTISM CONFIRMED JOHN'S STATEMENT?

Matthew 3:17

He [John] had baptized Him, and after the baptism, as Christ was praying, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God like a dove rested upon Him, while a voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Remembering how John had repeated the prophecies concerning the Messiah, remembering the scene at the baptism of Jesus, the priests and rulers dared not say that John's baptism was from heaven. If they acknowledged John to be a prophet, as they believed him to be, how could they deny his testimony that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God? And they could not say that John's baptism was of men, because of the people, who believed John to be a prophet. So they said, "We can not tell."

(9) WHAT WAS CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO THEIR LIE?

Matthew 21:27

Then Christ gave the parable of the father and the two sons. When the father went to the first son, saying, "Go work today in my vineyard," the son promptly answered, "I will not." He refused to obey, and gave himself up to wicked ways and associations. But afterward he repented, and obeyed the call.

The father went to the second son with the same command, "Go work today in my vineyard." This son made reply, "I go, sir," but he went not.

Saying and Doing

In this parable the father represents God, the vineyard the church. By the two sons are represented two classes of people. The son who refused to obey the command, saying, "I will not," represented those who were living in open transgression, who made no profession of piety, who openly refused to come under the yoke of restraint and obedience which the law of God imposes.

(10) WHAT PLEA HAD JOHN THE BAPTIST MADE TO THOSE REPRESENTING BOTH GROUPS IN ISRAEL?

Matthew 3:2

Many of these afterward repented and obeyed the call of God. When the gospel came to them in the message of John the Baptist, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," they repented, and confessed their sins.

In the son who said, "I will go, sir," and went not, the character of the Pharisees was revealed. Like this son, the Jewish leaders were impenitent and self-sufficient. The religious life of the Jewish nation had become a pretense.

(11) MANY YEARS PREVIOUS TO THIS CONFRONTATION, THE VOICE OF GOD HAD PROCLAIMED THE COMMANDMENTS AT SINAI TO ISRAEL. THEY GAVE A RESPONSE THAT EPITOMIZED THE IMPENITENT, SELF-SUFFICIENT ATTITUDE DEMONSTRATED BY THE DISOBEDIENT SON IN THE PARABLE AND ALSO THE PRIEST AND RULERS. WHAT WAS THIS RESPONSE?

Exodus 19:8

When the law was proclaimed on Mount Sinai by the voice of God, all the people pledged themselves to obey. They said, "I will go, sir," but they went not.

(12) HOW DID THE SPIRIT OF DISOBEDIENCE AFFECT THEIR TREATMENT OF GOD'S LAWS?

Matthew 15:6, 9

When Christ came in person to set before them the principles of the law, they rejected Him. Christ had given the Jewish leaders of His day abundant evidence of His authority and divine power, but although they were convinced, they would not accept the evidence. Christ had shown them that they continued to disbelieve because they had not the spirit which leads to obedience. He had declared to them, "Ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. . . . In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

(13) WHAT WAS THE SELF-CONDEMNING RESPONSE OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO JESUS' QUESTION CONCERNING THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS?

Matthew 21:31

In the company before Christ there were scribes and Pharisees, priests and rulers, and after giving the parable of the two sons, Christ addressed to His hearers the question, "Whether of them twain did the will of his father?" Forgetting themselves, the Pharisees answered, "The first." This they said without realizing that they were pronouncing sentence against themselves.

(14) WHAT SAD TRUTH DID JESUS PREDICT CONCERNING THESE SELF-RIGHTEOUS LEADERS WHO WERE RESISTING HIS SOLEMN WARNING?

Matthew 21:31

Then there fell from Christ's lips the denunciation, "Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

John the Baptist came preaching truth, and by his preaching sinners were convicted and converted. These would go into the kingdom of heaven before the ones who in self-righteousness resisted the solemn warning. The publicans and harlots were ignorant, but these learned men knew the way of truth. Yet they refused to walk in the path which leads to the Paradise of God. The truth that should have been to them a savor of life unto life became a savor of death unto death. Open sinners

who loathed themselves had received baptism at the hands of John; but these teachers were hypocrites. Their own stubborn hearts were the obstacle to their receiving the truth. They resisted the conviction of the Spirit of God. They refused obedience to God's commandments.

(15) WHAT TRUTH HAD CHRIST MANY TIMES REVEALED TO THE JEWISH LEADERS WHO CONTINUED TO REFUSE IT?

John 14:6

Christ did not say to them, Ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven; but He showed that the obstacle which prevented them from entering was of their own creating. The door was still open to these Jewish leaders; the invitation was still held out. Christ longed to see them convicted and converted.

(16) WHAT GODLY PRINCIPLE OF TRUTH DID THE PRIESTS AND ELDERS REFUSE TO FOLLOW?

1 Samuel 15:22

The priests and elders of Israel spent their lives in religious ceremonies, which they regarded as too sacred to be connected with secular business. Therefore their lives were supposed to be wholly religious. But they performed

Saying and Doing

their ceremonies to be seen by men that they might be thought by the world to be pious and devoted. While professing to obey they refused to render obedience to God. They were not doers of the truth which they professed to teach.

(17) WHAT MESSAGE OF REBUKE DID GOD'S PROPHET, JOHN THE BAPTIST, UNFLINCHINGLY DELIVER TO THE PRIESTS AND RULERS?

Matthew 3:8, 9

Christ declared John the Baptist to be one of the greatest of the prophets, and He showed His hearers that they had had sufficient evidence that John was a messenger from God. The words of the preacher in the wilderness were with power. He bore his message unflinchingly, rebuking the sins of priests and rulers, and enjoining upon them the works of the kingdom of heaven. He pointed out to them their sinful disregard of their Father's authority in refusing to do the work appointed them. He made no compromise with sin, and many were turned from their unrighteousness.

Had the profession of the Jewish leaders been genuine, they would have received John's testimony and accepted Jesus as the Messiah. But they did not show the fruits of repentance and righteousness. The very ones whom

they despised were pressing into the kingdom of God before them.

(18) WHAT WAS THE CRY OF THE FATHER TO THESE UNFAITHFUL LEADERS AND IS STILL PROCLAIMED TO US TODAY?

John 14:15

In the parable the son who said, "I go, sir," represented himself as faithful and obedient; but time proved that his profession was not real. He had no true love for his father. So the Pharisees prided themselves on their holiness, but when tested, it was found wanting. When it was for their interest to do so, they made the requirements of the law very exacting; but when obedience was required from themselves, by cunning sophistries they reasoned away the force of God's precepts. Of them Christ declared, "Do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not." Matt. 23:3. They had no true love for God or man. God called them to be co-workers with Him in blessing the world; but while in profession they accepted the call, in action they refused obedience. They trusted to self, and prided themselves on their goodness; but they set the commands of God at defiance. They refused to do the work which God had appointed them, and because of their transgression the Lord was about to divorce Himself from the disobedient nation.

(19) WHEN THE WILL IS TRULY SURRENDERED TO GOD, WHAT WILL BE THE ATTITUDE OF OUR HEART IN FULFILLING THE GREAT COMMISSION?

Isaiah 6:8

Self-righteousness is not true righteousness, and those who cling to it will be left to take the consequences of holding a fatal deception. Many today claim to obey the commandments of God, but they have not the love of God in their hearts to flow forth to others. Christ calls them to unite with Him in His work for the saving of the world, but they content themselves with saying, "I will go, sir." They do not go. They do not cooperate with those who are doing God's service. They are idlers. Like the unfaithful son, they make false promises to God. In taking upon themselves the solemn covenant of the church they have pledged themselves to receive and obey the word of God, to give themselves to God's service, but they do not do this. In profession they claim to be sons of God, but in life and character they deny the relationship. They do not surrender the will to God. They are living a lie.

The promise of obedience they appear to fulfill when this involves no sacrifice; but when self-denial and self-sacrifice are required, when they see the cross to be lifted, they draw back. Thus the conviction of duty wears away, and known transgression of God's commandments becomes habit. The ear may hear God's word, but the spiritual perceptive powers have departed. The heart is hardened, the conscience seared.

(20) WHAT IS THE LORD'S PLAN CONCERNING STEWARDSHIP OF OUR TEMPORAL MEANS OR ANY OTHER OF HIS ENTRUSTED GIFTS?

Luke 12:48

Do not think that because you do not manifest decided hostility to Christ you are doing Him service. We thus deceive our own souls. By withholding that which God has given us to use in His service, be it time or means or any other of His entrusted gifts, we work against Him.

(21) WHAT IS THE SIGN OF A TRUE WITNESS FOR CHRIST?

Proverbs 14:25

Satan uses the listless, sleepy indolence of professed Christians to strengthen his forces and win souls to his side. Many, who think that though they are doing no actual work for Christ, they are yet on His side, are enabling the enemy to preoccupy ground and gain advantages. By their failure to be diligent workers for the Master, by leaving duties undone and words unspoken, they have allowed Satan to gain control of souls who might have been won for Christ.

(22) WHAT IS BOTH OUR JOY AND OBLIGATION AFTER ACCEPTING GOD'S SAVING GRACE?

Matthew 5:16

Saying and Doing

We can never be saved in indolence and inactivity. There is no such thing as a truly converted person living a helpless, useless life. It is not possible for us to drift into heaven. No sluggard can enter there. If we do not strive to gain an entrance into the kingdom, if we do not seek earnestly to learn what constitutes its laws, we are not fitted for a part in it. Those who refuse to cooperate with God on earth would not cooperate with Him in heaven. It would not be safe to take them to heaven.

(23) WHAT IMPORTANT FACTOR WILL ACCOMPANY OUR FAITH FOR US TO GAIN ENTRANCE INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN?

James 2:20

There is more hope for publicans and sinners than for those who know the word of God but refuse to obey it.

(24) WHAT PROMISE CAN EVERY REPENTANT SINNER CLAIM?

John 6:37

He who sees himself a sinner with no cloak for his sin, who knows that he is corrupting soul, body, and spirit before God, becomes alarmed lest he be eternally separated from the kingdom of heaven. He realizes his diseased condition, and seeks healing from the great Physician who has said, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." These souls the Lord can use as workers in His vineyard.

(25) WHEN THE CALL COMES FOR US TO SERVE IN GOD'S VINEYARD, WHEN SHOULD WE RESPOND?

Hebrews 4:7

The son who for a time refused obedience to his father's command was not condemned by Christ; and neither was he commended. The class who act the part of the first son in refusing obedience deserve no credit for holding this position. Their frankness is not to be regarded as a virtue. Sanctified by truth and holiness, it would make men bold witnesses for Christ; but used as it is by the sinner, it is insulting and defiant, and approaches to blasphemy. The fact that a man is not a hypocrite does not make him any the less really a sinner. When the appeals of the Holy Spirit come to the heart, our only safety lies in responding to them without delay. When the call comes, "Go work today in My vineyard," do not refuse the invitation. "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." It is unsafe to delay obedience. You may never hear the invitation again.

(26) WHAT IS THE DANGER IN CHERISHED SINS?

Proverbs 5:22

And let none flatter themselves that sins cherished for a time can easily be given up by and by. This is not so. Every sin cherished weakens the character and strengthens habit; and physical, mental,

and moral depravity is the result. You may repent of the wrong you have done, and set your feet in right paths; but the mold of your mind and your familiarity with evil will make it difficult for you to distinguish between right and wrong. Through the wrong habits formed, Satan will assail you again and again.

(27) WHAT IS PROMISED TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT FORGETFUL HEARERS BUT FAITHFUL DOERS OF THE WORD?

2 Peter 1:2-7

James 1:25

In the command, "Go work today in My vineyard," the test of sincerity is brought to every soul. Will there be deeds as well as words? Will the one called put to use all the knowledge he has, working faithfully, disinterestedly, for the Owner of the vineyard?

If you cultivate faithfully the vineyard of your soul, God is making you a laborer together with Himself. And you will have a work to do not only for yourself, but for others. In representing the church as the vineyard, Christ does not teach that we are to restrict our sympathies and labors to our own numbers. The Lord's vineyard is to be enlarged. In all parts of the earth He desires it to be extended. As we receive the instruction and grace of God, we should impart to others a knowledge of how to care for the precious plants. Thus we may extend the vineyard of the Lord. God is watching for evidence of our faith, love, and patience. He looks to see if we are using every spiritual advantage to become skillful workers in His vineyard on earth, that we may enter the Paradise of God, that Eden home from which Adam and Eve were excluded by transgression.

The apostle Peter instructs us as to the plan on which we must work. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you," he says, "through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

(29) WHEN CHRIST CAME TO EARTH STANDING AT THE HEAD OF HUMANITY, WHAT EXAMPLE OF SERVICE DID HE SET FOR US?

(28) LIST THE 7 CHARACTER BUILDING TRAITS LISTED IN THESE VERSES THAT WILL HELP TO CULTIVATE FAITHFULNESS IN THE VINEYARD OF YOUR SOUL?

John 4:34

Saying and Doing

God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," He declared; "yea, Thy law is within My heart." Ps. 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49. He had heard the call, and had taken up the work.

(30) WHAT WORDS WILL THE LORD SAY ABOUT THE ONES WHO, OUT OF LOVE, PROVE THEMSELVES FAITHFUL CO-WORKERS IN HIS VINEYARD?

Malachi 3:17

Thus we are to serve God. He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves co-workers with God and Christ and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul.

(31) WHAT IS THE ULTIMATE REVELATION OF OUR LOVE FOR GOD?

John 14:15

God's great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God's love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments.

There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment—those who violate God's law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and I will manifest Myself to him. . . . He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 14:15-24; 15:10

Lord, thank You for the love based warnings you have given in these parables. I see the danger of self-righteousness and self-indulgence as demonstrated in the lives and reactions of the priest and rulers of Israel.

Circle: Yes Undecided

I pray for the power of the Holy Spirit in my life that I may stay connected with You and not fall into the same dangerous traps.

Circle: Yes Undecided

In these parables taught from the lips of Jesus, I see the importance of obedience based on a love relationship with the Him.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Thank You Father for the awesome privilege of working in Your vineyard. Please, by Your Spirit, use my humble talents for the glory of Your kingdom.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Help me to be a good servant and, with a joyful heart, demonstrate my love for You by selfless, compassionate service to my fellow man.

Circle: Yes Undecided

Help my priority and my prayer to be, "My food is to do the will of my Father who sent me, and to finish His work."

Circle: Yes Undecided

Study Notes - Prayer Requests - Answered Prayers: _____

The wording of your answers will vary according to the translation of the Bible you use, but the meaning should remain constant.

Lesson 1

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|---|--|
| <p>(1) Because she continually troubled him with her request.</p> <p>(2) He will avenge them speedily!</p> <p>(3) Sin.</p> <p>(4) Jesus who tasted death for every man.</p> <p>(5) They are the apple of His eye.</p> <p>(6) He accuses us before God day and night.</p> <p>(7) Jesus Christ the Righteous.</p> <p>(8) When we keep His commandments out of love.</p> <p>(9) When God intervenes to perfect, stablish, and strengthen us.</p> <p>(10) That Christ is just and the justifier of those who believe in Him.</p> <p>(11) The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan!</p> <p>(12) He removes the filthy garment and gives us a new one.</p> <p>(13) Principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world.</p> <p>(14) The love of money.</p> <p>(15) We will be afflicted and hated for Christ's sake.</p> <p>(16) Rulers and kings.</p> <p>(17) The Lord God.</p> <p>(18) The peace of God which passes all understanding.</p> <p>(19) Call upon the Lord and He will deliver us.</p> <p>(20) He will never leave us or forsake us.</p> <p>(21) Boldly before the throne of grace.</p> <p>(22) Call upon Him in the day of our trouble and He will deliver us and it will glorify His name.</p> <p>(23) All!</p> <p>(24) With Him (His Son) will give us freely all things.</p> <p>(25) So that when we are tried we may come forth as gold.</p> <p>(26) Pray without ceasing with thanks-</p> | <p>giving for this is God's will for you.</p> <p>(27) It avails much!</p> <p>(28) God.</p> <p>(29) Books kept in heaven.</p> <p>(30) They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for all who are heirs of salvation.</p> <p>(31) When He comes with the clouds and every eye sees Him.</p> <p>(32) He is waiting for the precious fruit of the earth.</p> <p>(33) Righteousness and judgment.</p> <p>(34) He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.</p> <p>(35) Every imagination and thought of his heart was only evil continually.</p> <p>(36) Lovers of self, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, and having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:</p> <p>(37) He shall have judgment without mercy, who has shown no mercy.</p> <p>(38) Fire.</p> <p>(39) A time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.</p> <p>(40) (a) The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from off all faces and the rebuke of his people shall He take away.</p> <p style="padding-left: 2em;">(b) White robes were given unto every one of them.</p> <p>(41) They shall see His face and His name shall be in their foreheads.</p> |
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Lesson 2

- (1) This man receives sinners and eats with them.
- (2) The same reason, because Christ received sinners and ate with them.
- (3) When we are still a great way off He sees us and welcomes us with compassion.
- (4) There is no other God like Him. He forgives iniquities and delights in mercy.
- (5) Lost sheep.
- (6) As a shepherd seeketh out his flock when they are scattered so He seeks out His sheep who are scattered.
- (7) He will draw ALL men unto Him.
- (8) Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no one comes to the Father but through Him.
- (9) Christ came to save that which was lost. He will leave the ninety and nine and seek the one who has gone astray.
- (10) He found His lost sheep!
- (11) Come unto me all who are weary and I will give you rest.
- (12) There is joy in the presence of angels and God over one who repents!
- (13) He came to save sinners.
- (14) A strange act or strange work.
- (15) If we confess He is faithful and just to forgive.
- (16) He gave His Son that they may have eternal life.
- (17) He has chosen and ordained us to bring forth fruit.
- (18) As many as we can find.
- (19) Others.
- (20) To seek that which was lost, bring back those driven away, bind that which was broken, and strengthen that which was sick.
- (21) He that watereth will himself be watered.
- (22) Ten pieces of silver.
- (23) The crisis was the loss of one of her precious coins. The measure taken was to light a candle and diligently seek until she found it.
- (24) She called her friends and neighbors to rejoice with her.
- (25) Likewise there is joy in the presence of angels over one repentant sinner.
- (26) We are to be a light to those who don't know God, to open the eyes of the (spiritually) blind and lead them out of darkness.
- (27) If children are taught of the Lord great will be their peace.
- (28) Not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- (29) Lose of our own soul.
- (30) A heritage of the Lord and His reward.
- (31) Train our children in the way they should go.
- (32) Love to one another.
- (33) As we have received the gift we should share with one another as good stewards of the grace of God.
- (34) He gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from this evil world.
- (35) We will combine works with our faith and reach out to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters who are destitute of daily needs.
- (36) Angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.

Lesson 3

- (1) God is full of compassion, gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy.
- (2) Asked for his inheritance before his father's death.
- (3) In professing themselves to be wise, they become fools.
- (4) His substance was wasted on riotous living.

- (5) He was hired by a farmer to feed his pigs.
- (6) Held by the cords of his own sin.
- (7) Their knowledge of God and His presence.
- (8) God will allow them to continue in their choice to think and do evil things.
- (9) Spending money for that which is not bread and laboring for that which does not satisfy.
- (10) In his curse, he may not see when the good comes and continue to dwell in the parched places of the wilderness.
- (11) To repentance.
- (12) He earnestly confessed, "I have sinned."
- (13) He is watching and welcomes His returning children from "a great way off" and comes with open arms and received them with compassion.
- (14) A garment of salvation—a robe of righteousness!
- (15) They are filled with fear.
- (16) Like a father pities his child, that is how he feels toward us.
- (17) He will forgive our iniquities and remember our sins no more!
- (18) For none to perish and all to come to repentance.
- (19) (a) The human heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.
- (b) Just as the Ethiopian can not change the color of his skin and the leopard can not change his spots we who are accustomed to doing evil can not change ourselves.
- (20) If the wicked forsake their ways the Lord will have mercy upon him and abundantly pardon!
- (21) Give us a change of raiment (clothing.)
- (22) (a) As the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will God rejoice over you.
- (b) The LORD will save, he will rejoice with joy; He will quiet you with His love, he will rejoice over thee with singing.
- (23) He was angry and would not go into the party.
- (24) He who is forgiven the most loves the most.
- (25) To be always with Him and share in all that is His.
- (26) Their self-righteous comment, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
- (27) Self-righteousness leads to becoming an accuser (critical) of our brethren.
- (28) To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke, give bread to the hungry, minister to the poor, and clothe the naked.
- (29) Our love for others.
- Lesson 4**
- (1) God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.
- (2) The race is not to the fastest or the victory to the strong, neither food to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to the skilful; but time and chance happens to them all.
- (3) Except you repent, you will all likewise perish.
- (4) They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down.
- (5) A barren fig tree in a vineyard.
- (6) The house of Israel and the men of Judah.
- (7) That they might be called trees of

- righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.
- (8) Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.
- (9) God desired it to bring forth fruit but it brought forth poisonous fruit.
- (10) That we glorify them by bearing much fruit.
- (11) A fruitless tree will be cut down.
- (12) Caused others to stumble.
- (13) I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger on my backsliding people.
- (14) Father forgive them for they know not what they do.
- (15) When we become stubborn, harden our hearts, and resisting the Holy Spirit.
- (16) By abiding in the Vine—Christ.
- (17) O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God. . . . I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. . . . I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. . . . They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. . . . From Me is thy fruit found.
- in the kingdom of God.
- (7) A list of excuses.
- (8) (a) Lust of the flesh.
(b) Lust of the eyes.
(c) The pride of life.
- (9) Jesus, the living bread from heaven.
- (10) That we seek and serve Him with our whole heart and soul.
- (11) Only a few.
- (12) Seeking first the kingdom of heaven.
- (13) Now is the accepted time, today is the day of salvation!
- (14) Family—Father, mother, son, and daughter.
- (15) They shall receive 100 fold blessings and eternal life.
- (16) All people.
- (17) He told the servant to go out into the highways and the hedges of the world.
- (18) By the resurrection of Jesus we are promised an inheritance kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.
- (19) (a) Fear (respect) God and give Him glory.
(b) The hour of His judgement has come.
(c) Worship Him who made heaven and earth.
- (20) Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his works.
- (21) He that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still.
- (22) As it was in the days of Noah so it will be in the day of Christ's coming. They will be eating, drinking and seeking marriage and not realize their destruction is near.
- (23) To every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.

Lesson 5

- (1) A parable of a great supper.
- (2) None of the ones who were invited first will taste His supper.
- (3) The poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind because they cannot pay you back and you will be blessed in the resurrection for it.
- (4) Give of your means so that those who are less fortunate can be satisfied and blessed.
- (5) To whom much is given much is expected.
- (6) Blessed is he who shall eat bread

- (24) The ministry of reconciliation.
- (25) Often with only one person at a time.
- (26) Into the highways and the hedges.
- (27) The house of Israel and Judah.
- (28) The leaders who have not accepted truth, with their influence, can cause the destruction of the people.
- (29) To whom much is given, much is required.
- (30) Wherever we go we should reveal Christ to others like a sweet perfume.
- (31) Not on excellence of speech, just the simple message of Christ crucified and the demonstration of the Spirit and His power.
- (32) All power is given in heaven and earth.
- (33) More talents will be given to those who use them and talents will be taken from those who are unprofitable servants.
- (34) Every one that is thirsty, come ye to the water, and those without money come, buy, and eat. You can buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come unto the Lord and live.
- (35) First He met their physical need by healing the blind, lame, sick, deaf, and dead. Then He met their spiritual need by preaching the gospel.
- (36) The Lord will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for their mourning, a garment of praise for their spirit of heaviness, so that they may be called trees of righteousness for God's glory.
- (37) I will bring the blind in a way that they knew not and will lead them in paths that they have not know. I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight.
- (38) Go out into the highway and hedges and compel them to come in.
- (39) Keep yourselves in the love of God and for some having compassion will make the difference. For others save them with fear pulling them out of the fire.
- (40) He that reaps receives wages and gathers fruit unto eternal life that both who sow and he that reaps may rejoice together.
- (41) Today if you hear His voice, harden not your heart.
- (42) There is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents then over ninety-nine who need no repentance.

Lesson 6

- (1) Seventy times seven.
- (2) A king and his servants.
- (3) Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you all of it.
- (4) Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and set him free, and forgave him the debt.
- (5) He was angry with him and had him cast into prison until he paid the debt.
- (6) He rebuked him for not showing compassion on the one that owed him like the mercy he had been shown.
- (7) With the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.
- (8) (a) If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
(b) Freely ye have received," Christ says, "freely give."
- (9) Our works lest any man boast.
- (10) If you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
- (11) Love thy neighbour as thyself.
- (12) In humbleness esteem others above ourselves.
- (13) If a brother trespasses against us we are to rebuke him.
- (14) If your brother trespasses against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if that

fails go with witnesses, if that fails take the matter before the church, if that fails treat him as a heathen and a publican.

- (15) If he repents we are to forgive.
- (16) Grace and truth.
- (17) Confession of our faults to each other and prayer.
- (18) A soul is saved from death, and a multitude of sins are hidden.
- (19) If we do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will our Father forgive our trespasses.
- (20) In his sin that he hath sinned he shall die.
- (21) Showing the same compassion and forgiveness that God shows to us.

Lesson 7

- (1) In that hour the Holy Spirit will teach you what to say.
- (2) Seek first God's kingdom and these things will be added unto you.
- (3) Take heed and beware of covetousness for a man's life consists not in the abundance of possessions.
- (4) An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that never fades and is reserved in heaven for us.
- (5) Preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.
- (6) It defiles us.
- (7) For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?
- (8) He tore down his barns and built larger ones and hoarded his goods.
- (9) Men will praise thee, when you do well for yourself.
- (10) The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.
- (11) Your soul is lost. He that lays up treasure for himself is not rich

toward God.

- (12) Where your treasure is there your heart will be also.
- (13) Your miseries shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire.
- (14) Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
- (15) Christ.

Lesson 8

- (1) Choose you this day whom you will serve.
- (2) The first shall be last and the last shall be first.
- (3) A rich man and a poor beggar named Lazarus.
- (4) He was of the lineage of Abraham.
- (5) They rejected the messages given through the prophets.
- (6) To love his neighbor as himself.
- (7) Open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.
- (8) For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.
- (9) For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.
- (10) That in the kingdom of God many that are first shall be last; and the last first.
- (11) Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.

- (12) The God of our fathers raised up Jesus to be a Prince and a Saviour.
- (13) Then he said, I pray father, that thou would send him [Lazarus] to my father's house to testify to my brothers so they don't also come into this place of torment.
- (14) Moses and the prophets.
- (15) Consulting to put Lazarus to death to stifle the rising belief in Christ.
- (16) All given in the Law of Moses and by the Prophets.
- (17) He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.
- (18) All these things shall be added unto you.
- (19) Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.
- (20) The LORD thy God, it is he that gives you the power to get wealth.
- (21) (a) The abundance of the rich will keep him from sound sleep.
 (b) Riches kept by the owners for self brings painful results.
 (c) Money hoarded will be lost in a bad deal and the fathers end up with nothing left to pass to their children.
 (c) As the rich come naked into this world, they will leave the same way.
- (22) For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.
- (23) You have been weighed in the balances, and are found wanting.
- (24) Abraham.
- (25) (a) The works of Abraham not seeking to kill Him.
 (b) Rejoice to see Christ.
- (26) They would die in their sins.
- (27) For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.
- (28) We can be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- (29) With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.

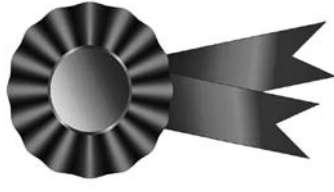
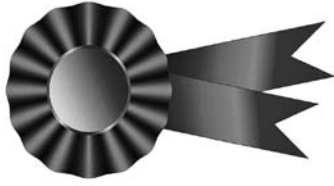
Lesson 9

- (1) Those that do the will of the Father.
- (2) He cast out all who were buying and selling.
- (3) By what authority do you do these things and who gave you this authority?
- (4) He healed the blind and the lame.
- (5) "The baptism of John, where was it from heaven, or of men?"
- (6) "We cannot tell."
- (7) "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."
- (8) "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."
- (9) "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things" and then proceeded to make His point by telling the parable of the vineyard.
- (10) "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- (11) "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do."
- (12) They replaced the commandments of God with the traditions of man.
- (13) They said unto him, the first son.
- (14) That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.
- (15) I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life and no man can come unto the Father, but by Me.
- (16) To obey is better than sacrifice.
- (17) Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance and don't think to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father," I warn you that God

is able of to raise up children for Abraham from these stones.

- (18) If you love Me keep My commandments.
- (19) Here am I send me.
- (20) To whom much is given of him shall much be required.
- (21) A true witness delivers souls.
- (22) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.
- (23) Works.
- (24) Anyone who comes to Me I will no way cast out.
- (25) Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.
- (26) The wicked shall be bound by the cords of his sins.
- (27) This person shall be blessed in his deed.
- (28) Faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity (love.)
- (29) He said, "My food is to do the will of my Father who sent me, and to finish His work."
- (30) "They shall be Mine. . . in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."
- (31) Obedience to Him because He says if you love Me keep My commandments.

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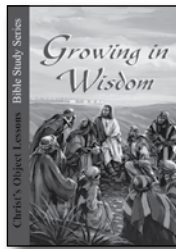
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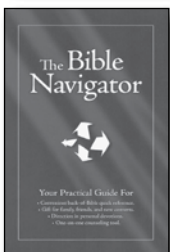
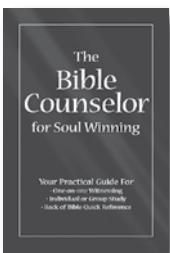
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