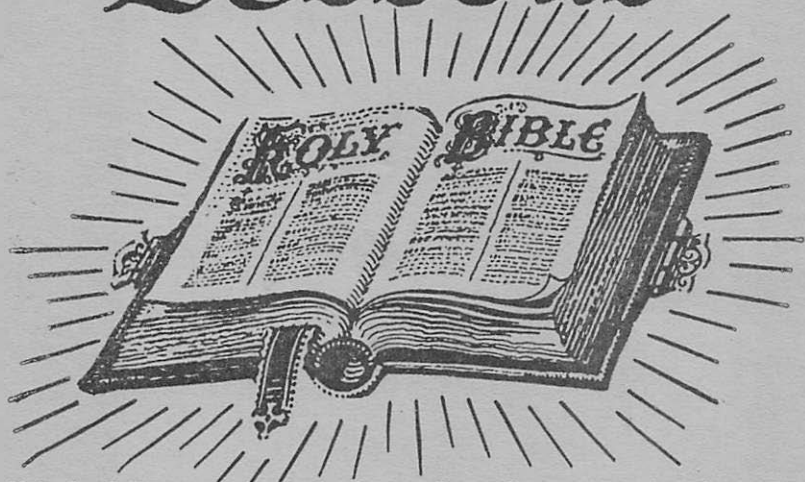


1983

Bible Lessons



**"Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED" II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 16, No. 2
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Maybelle Pruitt

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Volume 16

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No. 2

Table of Contents

	Page
Apr. 1 Christ Calls His Disciples to be Apostles	1
8 The Parable of the Sower	5
15 The Parable of the Tares Among the Wheat	8
22 Jesus Christ—the Bread of Life	15
29 Keeping Our Eyes On Jesus	19
May 6 Christ Shows What Really Defiles the Man	23
13 An Afflicted Woman Healed and a Dead Daughter Raised to Life	30
20 A Concerned Mother Who Would Not Take Offense	34
27 The Transgressor Finds Mercy	38
Jun. 3 The Antagonism of the Jews	44
10 Jesus Opens the Eyes of the Blind	48
17 Christ, the Good Shepherd	51
24 A Confession and a Warning	55

**Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church**

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Theme for Second Quarter, 1984

We will continue to explore in this series of studies more of the wonderful lessons found in the life and teachings of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ not only gave His life and shed His blood to save us, but He left us His teachings and four vivid witnesses of His triumphant life. From these recorded incidents and utterances from Him we can draw understanding of the path of life. Let us examine in this series of lessons more closely the things that Jesus did and taught. As in the previous studies, let us note His method of teaching and dealing with others. He is not only our Saviour, but He is our example, and we would do well to take lessons from the manner in which He moved among men. He truly was the light of the world, and surely did "clothe the truth with divinest power."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

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April 1, 1984

CHRIST CALLS HIS DISCIPLES TO BE APOSTLES

Mark 3:6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy them.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea,

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

Luke 6:12 And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.

Mark 3:14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils:

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter;

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

Memory Verse: And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. Mark 3:14, 15.

Central Thought: Jesus chose from among His followers twelve men who were to share in His labor and responsibility to send forth His truth and saving grace for the salvation of mankind.

Word Definitions: *Apostle:* A delegate, specifically an ambassador of the gospel; officially a commissioner of Christ with miraculous powers. The news of Christ's mission and accomplishment was to be broadcasted and heralded throughout all the world and for all time. To carry this great work out Christ must needs have the consecration and service of those whom He saves.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Christ's ministry had begun to increase and gain momentum. His miraculous healings and authoritative teaching had opened the door of the hearts of the multitudes. The first few verses of our lesson reveal how that the people were pressing Him. He even had to take to a small ship because of the multitude, lest they should throng and overwhelm Him. The time had come now for Christ to delegate His work into the hands of some trustworthy followers of His noble cause. This kind of situation works a similar demand in any field of labor. See the great corporations and businesses of today. There is much use of delegation, that is, entrusting responsibility and accomplishment into the hands of qualified and industrious men. President Grover Cleveland has left us a worthy saying: "A public office is a public trust." It is a fixed

law of life instituted from the dawn of creation that there will be no benefits without responsibility. Adam was given a beautiful garden home, but it was a trust to him to dress it and to keep it. The plan of salvation had to be carried out with such magnitude and profound greatness that it could not be successfully carried out to perfection without the faithfulness of Christ's followers. It was a heavy load that was on Christ as He spent that night in prayer! It took courage and strong faith in His Father to call forth His disciples and make the choice of those who were to go forth with His message after He was taken from them. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why were the people thronging Christ?
2. What heavy burden rested on Christ through that night of prayer on the mountain?
3. Why did Jesus surname Simon as "Peter"?
4. Why did He surname James and John as "the sons of thunder"?
5. Can you think of any reason why Jesus would choose Judas Iscariot?
6. Why did He distinguish these twelve from the rest?
7. What was the mission that He was giving these twelve?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Simon the Canaanite was called Zelotes. The word *Cana* in the Hebrew means zeal. It was doubtful that Simon was a non-Jew, but was rather called Zelotes because of his fervor and zeal in preaching the gospel. There is much strong speculation that Bartholomew was really Nathanael whose account is given in John 1. Adam Clarke, in commenting on the call of these apostles as recorded in Matthew 10, said that many were of the opinion that this was Nathanael, whose name was probably Nathanael Bar Talmi, that is, Nathan-anael, the son of Talmi. Here his own name is repressed, and he is called Bartholomew, from his father. These men were called on a great mission and work. They had left all to follow Jesus. There was strong persuasion in their hearts and minds that He was truly the Christ. They were to preach the gospel of Christ and build up His Kingdom. They were given power to heal sickness, cast out devils, and trample down Satan's kingdom. That is still the commission of the ministers of Christ today. The gospel must be preached clearly and with

anointing—the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Sickness and disease must be rebuked and Satan dethroned from the hearts and lives of people. This must be done, but the results will be according to the faith and response of the hearers, just as it was with Christ. Paul was an apostle also. He was called and commissioned of the Christ to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of grace. God still sends forth apostles. Apostles go forth and take the truth of salvation where it has not been preached. Apostles lay the foundation for souls to build upon.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a great honor to be singled out from among a group to hold an office. It is a vote of confidence to be chosen. Jesus, in His plan for the gospel to be promoted after His ascension, chose twelve apostles from among His disciples. It would be interesting to know why He chose the twelve which He did. Perhaps they were selected not for what they were, but for the potential that they had. To some they may have appeared as a rather motley group. Many of the apostles were from the lower class and were simple and uneducated. Some of them were related to Jesus. Some were previous apostles of John the Baptist.

Although we do not know the qualifications that Christ required in appointing the original twelve, we do have a record of some considerations used in the replacement of Judas. There were approximately 120 disciples gathered together from which to choose. Peter declared that the one appointed should be from those who had been personally acquainted with the whole ministry of Christ, from His baptism by John until the day He ascended into heaven. This was a responsible position that was to be filled by one who possessed a thorough knowledge of Christ's teachings.

The apostles fulfilled the place that Christ designed. After the day of Pentecost, a church was established at Jerusalem. Peter was the central figure. We then note a church organized at Antioch consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. About this time, Paul appeared on the scene. Paul did not know Christ personally, but undoubtedly learned much from the apostles. The apostles faded off the scene, but the torch was burning and was taken up by Paul, Silas, Timothy, Priscilla, Aquilla, and many more. The gospel of Christ went forth into many countries. What far-reaching effects were brought about by the appointment of the twelve apostles!

—Wayne Murphey

April 8, 1984

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

Luke 8:4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5 A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15 But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Memory Verse: For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Matt. 13:12.

Central Thought: There are four different kinds of people in the world relative to receiving and responding to the Word of the Gospel. Jesus likened these four kinds of people to four kinds of soil and what happens to the seed that falls upon it.

Word Definition: *Parable*: A parallel illustration to a spiritual or moral truth.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have this account of Christ giving the parable of the sower in Matthew and Mark, as well as in Luke. We chose to use Luke's account because of the overall comprehension of the occurrence and its setting. All three of the writers show that much people were gathering together to hear Jesus. Matthew and Mark stated that Jesus entered a boat and taught the people therefrom. Matthew goes at length in a discussion about the reason for Christ speaking in parables. To the multitudes who were not prepared in heart to comprehend and understand the mysteries of God, Jesus wisely chose to enclose the truth and hide it in a parallel story. He did not explain the meaning to the multitudes, but left them in the dark as to what He was referring. But to the disciples who came personally to inquire concerning the parables Jesus explained the meaning. Matthew told how Jesus stated that in the multitude was fulfilled the Scripture in Isaiah 6:9, 10, where it told how the people heard but did not understand, and how that they saw, but did not perceive. It is an unfolding of the stark reality of the blindness and ignorance of carnal man. The general run of humanity, the tide of public opinion, and the ordinary way of looking at things fail to comprehend real truth. The truth must be sought for ardently. Verse 18 and the Memory Verse in our lesson contain a statement that should not be counted lightly. The substance of these verses is this: To him that has a purpose to seek understanding and a willingness to walk in the light of the truth shall be given (granted, bestowed) more knowledge of truth, but from him who does not have this attitude of heart will be withheld spiritual blessings that come with truth. This is the way it really is. Let us be diligent to seek to understand and to follow the way of Christ. He has wonderful blessings in store for us if we do.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What two things happened to the seed sown by the wayside?
2. What could the wayside be likened unto with regard to the hearts and lives of men?
3. Why does the devil have a better chance to steal the Word out of people's hearts who are in this state?

4. The seed of the rocky ground lacked depth and moisture. Is this condition possible in the souls of men? How?
5. Why did not the good seed choke out the thorns? What do the thorns represent?
6. What kind of heart represents the good ground?
7. To whom is given, and why? To whom is not given, and why not?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Every one of the individual kind of hearts mentioned in our lesson hears the Word. It is God's will and purpose that everyone have a chance to know about His salvation. The Word must be proclaimed and preached. People need to hear it. If no communication is made with the hearts and lives of people, they will not be aware of their need and what is available. What happens and takes place after the Word is preached, however, is something else. It all depends upon the condition and attitude of the individual. Jesus mentions first the three different kinds of people who fail to reap the benefits of the precious Seed, or the Word of God. He brings out the three forces, or influences, that affect the tragic failure. The first one is Satan, the devil. Much could be said on this wayside condition. It strikes me forcibly that this may be where the majority of people are. On the wayside, in the current of the world, in the stream of human endeavor and pursuit—this is where the greater part of the souls of men are found. The tide of the world and the pressures and influences of those around us affect our lives greatly. It takes up our mind and absorbs our affections. When the Word of God is heard, it does not register in importance or value. And Satan is right there to cause what is heard to pass off unheeded. The rocky ground, shallow and vain, indicates a lack of moral perception and conviction. An unsteady, inconsistent constitution that grabs at the thing that looks attractive, but drops it when it does not suit one's fancy is the stony ground. And, oh! the thorns! How early in life are the thorns and thistles dominant over people. Thank God, there is the good ground. Let us take heed to the Saviour's warning. Let us have ears to hear. We can all be that good ground if we will hear the Word, keep it as the treasure of our hearts, and continue to bring forth fruit all the way.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Perhaps you wonder why Christ would relate a parable to the multitude and then not explain the meaning. I believe He deliberately intended to leave the parable unexplained to illustrate what had just been said. In presenting the parable, He was expounding vital truths. When Jesus finished, notice that He said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." This was an invitation. In essence He was saying, "If you hear, also understand!" Out of that entire multitude, how many actually perceived His message? Perhaps only the twelve disciples did who had enough interest to pursue it. It was just as Christ declared in His parable. The Word was sown, but the majority of it was ineffective.

According to the parable that was presented, we can perceive why the multitude failed to understand it. Perhaps some of them had appointments elsewhere and had no time to stay and investigate it more thoroughly. Maybe some thought it intriguing, but really weren't interested enough to press through the crowd and get close enough to Jesus to inquire into it.

Should we be surprised today that the majority of people manifest little interest in the things of God; that people can sit under the sound of the gospel and go away unconcerned; or that many turn away from serving God because they don't have the time or interest? The devil is still employing the same techniques that he used 2000 years ago to destroy the Word of God and make it of little effect. —Wayne Murphey

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April 15, 1984

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES AMONG THE WHEAT

Matt. 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Memory Verse: The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath. Prov. 15:24.

Central Thought: Although the righteous and wicked in their hearts and lives cannot intermix and co-mingle, yet they must share the same present world. God wills that people be holy, pure, righteous and true; while Satan's influence is to degrade men into the ways of sin. Many wicked people appear outwardly to be righteous and deceive unwary souls. In the judgment day, however, there will be a revealing as to who are the real children of God.

Word Definitions: *Tares:* Adam Clarke has determined that the word "zizania" which is translated "tares" in our lesson is from a Chaldee word which means degenerate or bastard wheat. It is wheat that was wholly a right seed at the beginning, but afterwards became degenerate, or low grade, or bad. God, in the beginning, made man upright and holy, but the devil worked his work and degraded man into sin. It was that way in God's institution of Israel, and it was also that way in the founding of the Christian Church and the plan of salvation by Christ. God wants it to be right and true, but Satan is set to undermine and corrupt things.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The parable in our lesson was given in addition to the parable about the sower and the seed. It is related to that parable. This parable is giving an insight to things from a different angle. From the human heart the emphasis shifts to the world and the society of men. There are three things basically employed: the field, the seed, and who sowed the seed. Jesus puts it into large perspective when He says that the field is the world. It is not the Church, but it is the world, the earth, humanity. In the world are found two kinds of people. The main problem arises as to what to do about this situation. We must realize that this world is a probationary place where the righteous and wicked live side by side. In a society of believers, i.e. the Christian Church, there is merit and wisdom in keeping out offensive material, but this process must be controlled by love and the balance of the fear of God. There are some people whose lives are degenerate and under-grade who but need patience and prayer and wise instruction. The servants were forbidden to take up the tares. The danger was the uprooting of the good wheat. We would do well to consume our energies in making sure that we are the true up-graded wheat rather than seeking to put out someone who is not up to our specifications. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of seed did God and Jesus sow?
2. What does this good seed represent?
3. Who sowed the bad seed? What does this represent?
4. Why does God allow sinners and righteous people to tarry together in this world?
5. What should be our attitude toward people who need spiritual help?
6. When will the harvest be, and who are the reapers?
7. What will the angels do?
8. How would you interpret the personal message and warning of this parable?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In our previous lesson the grain was the Word of God. In this lesson the grain is likened unto people. There are two different kinds of grain, and two different kinds of people. The thing we want to decide in life is: which grain am I going to be? To be under the influence and domination of the devil is to

make one a tare. Satan works under cover. He does not work out in the open where everyone can see. "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Probably at night the stealthy foe crept through the shadows quietly, and threw the degraded seed upon the field. So Satan works in the realm of humanity. This makes it very treacherous and dangerous. Satan is a very crafty and wily foe. He has his schemes and crafty plans to put in our way. He seeks to degenerate our lives. He is not satisfied to see holiness and purity and peace prevailing. He wants to drag everyone down that he possibly can. And, sad to say, he is succeeding in doing it. We must watch and pray. We must, by the grace of God, overcome the devices of the devil. We must not be ignorant of his devices. Oh, to be the precious wheat! God will surely gather into His garner, or His store barn of heaven that choice wheat of His. What a glorious day that will be when all the agitation and pressures of evil no longer trouble the true people of God! Sometimes in a good meeting we may feel that we are almost to that place where the righteous are shining as the sun, but in reality we are still down here with the tares. The devil is still at his business. Let us make it our utmost goal and aim to go all the way with the Lord, and prove ourselves to be His choice wheat! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

As we ponder this parable that Christ presented, it helps us as servants of God to understand what our place in the field of labor is. God is of great mercy and we should pattern ourselves after Him. Just as the servants had no authority to pluck up the tares, we have no power to pass judgment and cut people off. No doubt, as the grain grew, the tares profited from the attention the wheat received. This is the attitude we should take. Instead of cutting souls off that are not what the Word of God demands, we should dig about and cultivate in them a right spirit. It is interesting to note the reason given by the householder for refusing to destroy the tares: "Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." If we were given a license to condemn people to destruction, what an awful tragedy, if through our human error, we judged wrongly.

We read an account in the Bible of a time when Jesus and His disciples were rejected in a Samaritan village. The disciples, James and John, inquired of Christ if they should command fire to come down from heaven and destroy them.

Jesus rebuked them and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke 9:55, 56. It is without question that Christ had the power to call fire from heaven if He so desired, but here we see a prime example of the mercy of God. He allowed the tares to survive right along with the wheat. Perhaps some of these very Samaritans received the gospel message as it spread abroad in the early morning Church.

—Wayne Murphey

ONLY A HUSK

Tom Darcy, yet a young man, had grown to be a very hard one. Although naturally kind-hearted, active, and intelligent, he lacked strength of will to resist temptation, and had therefore fallen victim to intemperance. He had lost his place as foreman of the great machine-shop, and what money he now earned came from odd jobs of tinkering which he was able to do here and there at private houses; for Tom was a genius as well as a mechanic, and when his hand was steady enough, he could mend a clock or clean a watch as well as he could set up and regulate a steam-engine, and this latter he could do better than any other man ever employed by the Scott Falls Manufacturing Company.

One day Tom was engaged to mend a broken mowing-machine and reaper, for which he received five dollars; and on the following morning he started for his old haunt, the village tavern. He knew that his wife sadly needed the money, and that his two little children were absolutely suffering for want of clothing, and that morning he held a debate with the better part of himself, but the better part had become weak, and the demon of appetite carried the day.

So away to the tavern Tom went, where, for two or three hours, he felt the exhilarating effects of the alcoholic draught, and fancied himself happy, as he could sing and laugh; but, as usual, stupefaction followed, and the man died out. He drank while he could stand, and then lay down in a corner, where his companions left him.

It was almost midnight, when the landlord's wife came to the barroom to see what kept her husband up, and she quickly saw Tom.

"Peter," said she, not in a pleasant mood, "why don't you send that miserable Tom Darcy home? He's been hanging around here long enough."

Tom's stupefaction was not sound asleep. The dead coma had left his brain, and the calling of his name stung his senses to keen attention. He had an insane love for rum, but he did not love the landlord. In other years, Peter Tindar and he had wooed the same maiden,—Ellen Goss,—and he had won her, leaving Peter to take up with the sharp-tempered damsel who had brought him the tavern, and Tom knew that lately the tapster had gloated over the misery of the woman who had once discarded him.

"Why don't you send him home?" demanded Mrs. Tindar, with an impatient stamp of her foot.

"Hush, Betsey, he's got money. Let him be, and he'll be sure to spend it before he goes home. I'll have the kernel of that nut, and his wife may have the husk."

Betsey turned away, and shortly afterward Tom Darcy lifted himself up on his elbow.

"Ah, Tom, are you awake?"

"Yes."

"Then rouse up and have a warm glass."

Tom got upon his feet and steadied himself.

"No; I won't drink anymore tonight."

"It won't hurt you, Tom—just one glass."

"I know it won't!" said Tom, buttoning up his coat by the solitary button left. "I know it won't!"

And with this he went out into the chill air of midnight. When he got away from the shadow of the tavern, he stopped and looked up at the stars, and then he looked down upon the earth.

"Aye," he muttered, grinding his heel in the gravel, "Peter Tindar is taking the kernel, and leaving poor Ellen the worthless husk,—a husk more than worthless! and I am helping him to do it. I am robbing my wife of joy, robbing my dear children of honor and comfort, and robbing myself of love and life—just that Peter Tindar may have the kernel, and Ellen the husk! We'll see!"

It was a revelation to the man. The tavern-keeper's speech, not meant for his ears, had come on his senses as fell the voice of the Risen One upon Saul of Tarsus.

"We'll see!" he said, setting his foot firmly on the ground; and then he wended his way homeward.

On the following morning he said to his wife, "Ellen, have you anything hot to drink in the house?"

"Yes, Tom." She was glad to hear him ask for something other than the old, old cider.

"I wish you would give me a cup."

There was really music in Tom's voice, and the wife set about her work with a strange flutter at her heart.

Tom drank two cups and then went out, with a resolute step, and walked straight to the great manufactory, where he found Mr. Scott in his office.

"Mr. Scott, I want to learn my trade over again."

"Eh, Tom, what do you mean?"

"I mean that it's Tom Darcy come back to the old place, asking forgiveness for the past, and hoping to do better in the future."

"Tom," cried the manufacturer, starting forward and grasping his hand, "are you in earnest? Is it really the old Tom?"

"It's what's left of him, sir, and we'll have him whole and strong very soon, if you'll only set him at work."

"Work! Aye, Tom, and bless you, too. There is an engine to be set up and tested today. Come with me."

Tom's hands were weak and unsteady, but his brain was clear, and under his skillful supervision the engine was set up and tested; but it was not perfect. There were mistakes which he had to correct, and it was late in the evening when the work was complete.

"How is it now, Tom?" asked Mr. Scott, as he came into the testing-house and found the workmen ready to depart.

"She's all right, sir. You may give your warrant without fear."

"God bless you, Tom! You don't know how like music the old voice sounds. Will you take your old place again?"

"Wait till Monday morning, sir. If you will offer it to me then, I will take it."

At the little cottage Ellen Darcy's fluttering heart was sinking. That morning, after Tom had gone, she found a dollar bill in the cup. She knew that he left it for her. She had been out and bought sugar, flour, butter, and a bit of tender steak; and all day long a ray of light had been dancing and glimmering before her,—a ray from the blessed light of other days. With prayer and hope she had set out the tea-table, and waited; but the sun went down and no Tom came. Eight o'clock—and almost nine.

Hark! The old step! quick, strong, eager for home. Yes, it was Tom, with the old grime upon his hands, and the odor of oil upon his garments.

"I have kept you waiting, Nellie!"

"Tom!"

"I did not mean to, but the work hung on."

"Tom! Tom! You have been to the old shop!"

"Yes, and I'm bound to have the old place, and—"

"Oh, Tom!"

And she threw her arms around his neck, and pressed a kiss upon his lips.

"Nellie, darling, wait a little, and you shall have the old Tom back again."

"Oh, I have him now! God bless you, my husband!"

It was a banquet, that supper—with the bright angels of peace, and love, and joy, spreading their wings over the board.

On the following Monday morning, Tom resumed his place at the head of the great machine-shop, and those who thoroughly knew him had no fear of his going back into the slough of joylessness.

A few days later, Tom met Peter Tindar on the street.

"Eh, Tom, old boy, what's up?"

"I am up, right side up."

"Yes, I see; but I hope you haven't forsaken us, Tom."

"I have forsaken only the evil you have in store, Peter. The fact is, I concluded that my wife and little ones had fed on husks long enough, and if there was a good kernel left in my heart, or in my manhood, they should have it."

"Ah, you heard what I said to my wife that night."

"Yes, Peter; and I shall be grateful to you for it as long as I live. My remembrance of you will always be relieved by that tinge of warmth and brightness."

—Selected

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April 22, 1984

JESUS CHRIST THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.

33 For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Memory Verse: And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. John 6:35.

Central Thought: The only means by which a man can have hope of eternal life is to be a true partaker of the Christ-life by obeying His Word and being led by His Spirit.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Since it would be impossible to put all the 71 verse chapter of John 6 into the lesson, we have included only the spiritual highlights. Upon one of the hillsides near the sea of Galilee Jesus had fed a great multitude of people—about five thousand men, besides the women and children. He had fed them on a lad's lunch of five loaves and two small fishes. This miracle had borne upon the people's minds. They were carried away with adulation for Christ and were going to come and try to take Him by force to be king. To prevent this, Jesus left them and departed away into the mountain alone. After revealing Himself to His disciples by walking to them on the water, the next day the multitudes found Him on the opposite shore of the sea, and gathered around Him again. It may seem

that Jesus' judgment upon them as seeking Him only for the loaves and fishes could be an unmerited accusation, but as we look closely and observe the spirit and attitude of the people, we are persuaded to believe likewise. It was not just another meal that they had in mind. Their desire to make Him king (this One who had so miraculously provided food for them) afforded them some carnal hope of security. We have here a parallel of two previous accounts of John, namely that of Nicodemus and the woman at the well. Why, if Jesus would be their king, and would continue to do what He had just done, their troubles would be over, they thought. Once again, Jesus is found far above their carnal minds. He is pointing them to something greater. He seeks to turn their minds away from the earthly vanities to that which will enable them to live forever. Regardless of their rank and station in life, whether rich or poor, Jesus is offering to them spiritual life in Himself. It was not to better their station nor to lift their rank that He had come. It was to dispense to their reach the Bread of Life, to enable them to triumph over sin and death, and to share the bliss of eternity with Him in the world to come.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say that the people's reason for seeking Him was?
2. What did He tell them rather to seek for?
3. What did Jesus say was the work of God?
4. Can you tell why the people brought up the thought about God feeding Israel out in the desert with manna?
5. What did Jesus say about that bread that came by Moses?
6. What kind of bread does He introduce, and who does He say this bread is?
7. In what way is Jesus termed "Bread"?
8. What is the manner in which we are to really partake of Jesus?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

If we are to have hope and assurance of living forever, we must eat Jesus Christ. Now this is a parallel thought with that which Jesus spoke to Nicodemus concerning being born again. These people reacted exactly as did Nicodemus. In the part of the chapter not included in our Scripture text, Jesus told the people that they must needs eat His flesh and drink His blood. The people remonstrated at that saying, and

severely turned against Jesus. One reason was because it conflicted with their carnal minds and thoughts, just as it had done with Nicodemus and the woman at the well. The other reason was because they were not really persuaded to the point of accepting Jesus on His terms. They would have Him on their terms; to make him a king, etc., but to receive Christ on His terms they were not persuaded to do. Thus it seems that all but the twelve left Him on this occasion. It is the same today. The gospel is preached to us, and we may not be striving to make Christ a literal king, but if we fail to partake of Christ as the Bread of Life to our souls, we will be in the same boat with these people. There are people today who nourish and cherish hope of Christ coming as a literal king some day. These very people are in a very slippery place because as they are carried away with dreams of an age to come, they are neglecting the real partaking of Christ as the spiritual Monarch today. This thought of Christ being the Bread of Life for our souls is an important and sobering thought. To neglect feeding on Christ through the avenue of His Word and Spirit is to forfeit all hope of eternal life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There were a number of things that Christ likened Himself to and many applicable thoughts can be drawn from each comparison. There is an abundance of material that will support His conclusion that He is the Bread of Life.

In Bible times, bread was made from different varieties of grain. Barley was used by the poor or in times of scarcity. Ground wheat was more desirable meal for bread. The wealthy generally preferred bread that was prepared from sifted wheat flour. This was also the type of flour used to produce the best bread for sacred offerings. Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice. He was the best that heaven had to offer.

In Egypt there was a bread made from spelt. Spelt is a species of wheat with grains that do not thresh free from the chaff. Just as Egypt is typified by the carnal world, we find many people who are feeding their souls on that which is tainted and impure. How much more pleasant to feast upon something that is pure, holy, and of the highest quality! There is a saying that declares, "You are what you eat." If you consume the things of the world then you will become just like it. It will make the spiritual man inside of you sick. If we indulge or eat unwisely, we may become ill and extremely

unhealthy. The things of the world should not be partaken of by the spiritual man. Too much carnal intake will bring about death or a separation from God. Just as bread is considered a staple food, our spiritual diet should be centered around Christ.

—Wayne Murphey

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April 29, 1984

KEEPING OUR EYES ON JESUS

Matt. 14:22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Memory Verse: Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until that he have mercy upon us. *Psa. 123:2.*

Central Thought: We will sink beneath the waves of sorrow, adversity, and strife unless we keep our eyes fixed on

Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master. By looking to Him we can walk on the waters around us and overcome all the power of the enemy.

Word Definitions: *Fourth watch of the night:* There were four watches of the night with each watch being three hours. The fourth watch was from 3:00 until 6:00 in the morning. *Boisterous:* Forceful.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The incident in our lesson probably took place at the time mentioned in our previous lesson just after Jesus had fed the five thousand. Mark 6:45, tells us that He constrained the disciples to get into the ship and go to the other side while He sent away the people. So it was evidently in the mind of Jesus to show unto His disciples another great aspect of His power and authority over the elements and the forces of nature. Mark also tells us that while He was alone on the land and the disciples in the ship were in the midst of the sea, He saw them toiling in rowing. Christ beheld them in their distress from afar. They must have been having an awful time of it, for it seems that they had started out at the evening. Mark also tells us that Jesus went unto the disciples at the fourth watch of the night, walking on the sea, and would have passed by them. Think of the reality of this story. After rowing and toiling all through the night, the disciples were no doubt weary and worn, but they had to keep on at the peril of their lives. Jesus came walking on the sea, and would have passed them by, had they not caught sight of Him. We may wonder at these men thinking that they had seen a spirit, but, according to Adam Clarke, it was a doctrine held by the greatest and holiest men that ever existed that the spirits of the dead might and did appear. Think of the terror and trouble that filled the minds of these men! But, oh! what words of comfort to us today: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." There are so many good lessons in this for us today. Mark tells us also that after He had entered into the ship, and the wind ceased, the disciples were sore amazed, and wondered. They considered not (had forgotten) the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened. This is a warning to us, also.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Does God permit contrary winds to come against us today?
2. How can we liken this scene of Jesus walking on the sea to our times of distress?

3. What would be of more value to us: to be able to walk above the storms and trials of our lives, or to go out and walk on literal water?
4. What inspired Peter to go to Jesus on the water?
5. What caused him to begin to sink?
6. What will happen to a person who loses sight of and takes his eyes off Jesus today?
7. What would the rolling sea and the contrary winds be likened unto?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Sometimes we seem to be separated from our Lord. He sent these disciples on ahead while He tarried on the land. They probably did not like this. It might seem that the faith of these disciples should have been built up to a pitch that nothing could daunt their courage, but we see them fearful and wondering. They went ahead and obeyed the Master in getting into the ship and starting out across the sea. The sea of Galilee seems to be about 10 miles long and 6 miles wide. That is a pretty good distance on the water, and storms can whip up quite a problem for sailors. The Lord permits us to have times like this, too. Many times Christ will let sickness, sorrow, adversity, or trouble go on and on. We wonder sometimes just how long He will let things go on. This is the time of the trial of our faith, which Peter says is much more precious than gold. Christ let these brethren flounder until the latter part of the night. Jesus wants to find out if we can truly wait on Him. Then let us think of Peter. He got all inspired when he was told that that lone figure out there was Jesus. "If it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Think of these words. What do they contain? Is it an expression of faith or a question of doubt? He knew that if it WAS Jesus, He could help him do that. But that little word "if" makes me wonder if there was some doubt in his mind about it. At any rate when Jesus told him to come, Peter made his way out of that boat and, with his eyes fixed on that loving Saviour of his, he started out. He actually walked on the water. I think of the waters of human turmoil around us. If the waters under Peter's feet were like some of the troubled waters that I have seen pictures of, it is a wonder that he could keep his balance as well as keep aloft. Christ had power over the elements. What stronger force in nature is there than that of gravity? We all live in great respect to it, but Jesus had it in His own power. Let us keep our eyes on Jesus, and walk upon the waters of this troubled world.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Note that which proved a hindrance to the disciples in this account, and what also caused Peter to look away from Christ. It was fear. Fear can be a dreadful thing. There are cases where individuals have become physically ill because of fear. We must keep our eyes on Christ and continually commit our lives unto Him lest we also fall prey to this torment.

We read of another instance when Peter turned away from Christ because of fear. This was at the trial of Jesus. Because of a fear of man, he denied Christ. Later, on the day of Pentecost, he received such a spiritual vision that he spoke boldly. This was a result of replacing fear with faith.

When Stephen was facing death, he exhibited no fear. This was because of his great faith and he was privileged to see Jesus standing at the right hand of God. How prone man is to lose sight of God and what He can do.

There is a natural fear that brings about caution. This is an instinct that God equipped us with in order to protect us from harm. Whenever this God-given fear gets out of control and erodes our faith and confidence, we need a renewed vision of Him.

In the following poem, note the places where we should not look.

—Wayne Murphey

LOOK TO JESUS



I look not back; God knows the fruitless efforts,
The wasted hours, the sinning, the regrets,
I leave them all with Him who blots the record
And graciously forgives and then forgets.

I look not round me; then would fears assail me
So wild the tumult of earth's restless seas,
So dark the world, so filled with woe and evil,
So vain the hope of comfort and of ease.

I look not forward; God sees all the future,
The road that short or long will lead me home
And He will face with me its every trial
And bear for me the burden that may come.

I look not inward; that would make me wretched.
For I have naught on which to stay my trust.
Nothing I see save failures and shortcomings
And weak endeavors crumbling into dust.

But I look up into the face of Jesus,
For there my heart can rest, my fears are stilled.
And there is joy and love and light for darkness,
And perfect peace and every hope fulfilled.

—Author Unknown

May 6, 1984

CHRIST SHOWS WHAT REALLY DEFILES THE MAN

Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Memory Verse: Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Prov. 4:23.

Central Thought: Although it may be good and proper for a man to wash his hands before eating, yet Jesus declares that what is really defiling to a man is not what comes from without. It is rather that which comes from within a man's heart—the evil issues of sin and ungodliness.

Word Definitions: *Tradition:* A precept or law handed down by mouth. *Hypocrite:* One who disguises or feigns himself as something other than what he really is with a purpose to deceive. *Corban:* A consecrated offering to the temple fund. *Lasciviousness:* Moral looseness, without proper control, lusts and desires unrestrained and undisciplined. *Blasphemy:* Expressions that degrade, make vile, slander, and abuse the name and whatever has to do with God. It is irreverent and derogatory defaming of God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus and His disciples had just come into the country of Gennesaret, after the miracle of appearing to His disciples walking on the sea. The people had met Him with open arms for Him to heal their sick. It was while He was here in this area that some of the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came together to observe Him. They were watching Him and His disciples so closely that they observed that His disciples did not wash their hands before eating. We have here a little insight as to how dark and vain the Jews' religion had become. The washing of hands before eating was a very big item while at the same time, they were excusing people from failing to honor and care for their parents as they should. It had somehow become a tradition for the priests to accept money from anyone even if they knew that the money was needed for the care of the donor's parents. It was a covetous sort of trick: putting money into the treasury while neglecting father and mother. The priests were excusing and justifying the people in so doing, relieving the consciences of the people toward their God-given responsibility. Jesus strongly rebukes them for this, quoting from Isaiah 29:13. There is a danger here in matters of religion that we would all do well to beware of. These people were truly "straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel." Matthew 23:24. And then Jesus spoke the parable in verse 15. Matthew tells us in 15:12, that the Pharisees were offended at this discourse that Jesus had with them. But Jesus explained the meaning of the parable to His disciples and said concerning the Pharisees: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind." —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the Pharisees see about the disciples that offended them?
2. What law were the disciples breaking?
3. What law were the Pharisees making of none effect by their tradition?
4. How was their tradition making the law of none effect?
5. What did Jesus say that the real defilement of a man was? Where does it come from?
6. What were some of the things that Jesus said defiled the man?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What happens when a person is defiled? This means that he is rendered unclean and unfit for God's holy presence and power. It is more than just a little dirt on your hands. To allow these things that Jesus mentioned to be in our hearts, springing out in our words and deeds, is spiritual death and contamination. Evil thoughts—this is terrible pollution! The thoughts of a man are what guide him. If his thoughts are evil, they will spring out of his heart into action. The Christian's occupation is a warfare against evil thoughts that Satan would like to plant in the heart. We are to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. 2 Cor. 10:5. Think of how our land today is defiled with adultery and fornication. Murders, thefts, and covetousness all go together. A person can be covetous to the extent that they will hate and murder. The love of money is the root of all evil. The love of money is the absence of the love of Christ and faith in His goodness. Think of an evil eye. How sad for a person to have an eye that looks at everything in the wrong way. This eye is not the literal eye. It is the eye of the attitude and the understanding. Jesus said that if a man's eye is single (clear, pure, true, and with God's glory in mind) his whole body would be full of light. If a man's eye be evil (dark and murky with sin and evil desires) his whole body would be full of darkness. These are the defiling principles of sin and transgression against God. But, thank God, there is a cleansing from these things. The precious blood of Jesus can cleanse a man's heart from all these evil defilements. Oh, to be a pure and holy saint! This should be the aspiration and desire of everyone. Turning away from these things, we must plead the grace of God and the blood of Jesus, that our hearts might be washed whiter than the snow.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems very wrong for the Pharisees and scribes to place so much significance on the washing of one's hands while at the same time neglecting the weightier matters.

By taking note, you will probably discover equal misconceptions and misplaced values today by a number of professing Christians.

Many people place great emphasis on giving of their financial means or other things, but come up woefully short in other areas of their lives. To please God, we must be careful in every aspect of our lives.

There is a story of a man who, in speaking of his Christian life, often said, "I am doing pretty well on the whole." He took great pride in his morality. He admitted that there were areas where he was weak, but on an average, he was pretty good. One day he hired a workman to build a fence on his property. The workman appeared after the day's work and the employer asked him, "Well, is the fence built, and is it tight and strong?" The workman replied, "I cannot say that it is all tight and strong, but it is a good average fence. If some parts are a little weak, others are extra strong. I don't know but what I may have left a gap here and there, a yard wide or so; but then, I made up for it by doubling the number of rails on each side of the gap." The employer, greatly upset, informed the workman that the fence must be perfect or it was worthless. At that the workman replied, "I used to think so, but I hear you talk so much about averaging matters with the Lord it seems to me we might try it with the cattle. If an average fence won't do for them, I am afraid an average character won't do for you in the day of judgment."

Let us take care lest we overlook some fault in our lives because of the pride we have in another region of our experience.

—Wayne Murphey

A GOOD LESSON SPOILED

It was a darkened room, spacious and handsomely furnished—being, in fact, the chamber of Mrs. Wilcox, the mother of the little fellow who occupied the wide bed. He lay there in lugubrious state, the rosy face stained with much crying, just showing above the edge of the counterpane; his tangle of yellow curls crushed upon the bolster. Below these was a white mound, stretched along the middle of the bed, just the length of Robby, aged seven and a half, the youngling of the Wilcox

family. Two big blue eyes, glazed with tears, wandered from one to another of the two faces gazing at him from opposite sides of the horizontal pillory. Both were kindly, both loving, both sad. They belonged to the parents of Robby, and he had been convicted, sentenced, and punished for telling a lie.

His mother had sent him to the fruit-store with twenty-five cents and an order for two lemons. The tempter, in the form of a "street-boy," waylaid him at the corner with a challenge to a competitive show for tops. The silver "quarter" was in the same pocket with Robby's new air top and card, the pride of his soul. He may have drawn it out with his handkerchief when he wiped his face after the game. The tempter may have known more about it than the tempted suspected. At any rate, the money was not to be found, and he was close by and ready with his proposition when Robby discovered the loss.

"Mamma will certainly scold me this time," he subjoined, turning every pocket inside out, and staring distractedly up and down the street. "I lost ten cents last week, and she told me to be more careful."

"Don't tell her! And don't pay for the lemons. When the bill comes in, your mamma will have forgotten all about sending you for them, or she will think the lemon-feller made a mistake. I know lots of real gamey fellers who get out of scrapes that way. It's only milk-sops who run to mammy with every little bother."

The experiment thus suggested and urged, was a success until mamma demanded the change.

"He said there wasn't any!" faltered the errand-boy.

"No change! Out of twenty-five cents!" Then with a searching look at the scarlet face painfully averted—"Robby!"

The "milk-sop" bethought himself of the "gamey fellers."

"Honest-true, mamma!" he plucked up courage to say.

"Put on your hat, my son, and go with me to the store where you bought the lemons. There is something wrong when my boy cannot look me in the eyes!"

Thus came about the tragedy that darkened the June day for the whole Wilcox household. It was at nine o'clock on Saturday morning that the falsehood was detected. At two p. m., Mrs. Wilcox brought up the prisoner's dinner. Only bread and water! He had smelled the savory soup and roast lamb. That was almost five hours ago, and he was to lie here until suppertime *alone*! When he had eaten the bread of affliction, seasoned with tears of self-pity and remorse, mamma reappeared with papa.

"My son!" said the latter, "I would rather have you die in your innocent boyhood than grow up a *liar*! Tell the straight, simple truth always and everywhere. No brave man will lie. Papa does not want his boy to be a coward. No honest man will deceive or tell a falsehood. Papa does not want his boy to be a cheat!"

Mrs. Wilcox sat down on the bed when her husband had gone. All the mother-heart in her was crying out and tearing itself with longing and pity ineffable. Arms and heart ached to enfold the precious little sinner so grievously worsted in the battle with temptation. "Mamma is very sorry that her darling has been so naughty!" she said, bowing her head upon the pillow beside the mat of curls dampened by the rain from the culprit's eyes.

"Mamma! Indeed I will *never* tell another lie—not the least fib!" he sobbed.

"God help you to keep your word, my son. Every falsehood is like a drop of ink upon snow to your soul!"

She stroked back his hair and comforted herself by giving him, one after another, the passionate kisses withheld through all these miserable hours. Holding the chubby fingers in hers, she talked to him a few minutes longer of his sin, and to whom he should look for forgiveness; then bending over him, she prayed in simple words and few for the little one who had stumbled to his own hurt. "Lie still and think it all over, dear!" was her parting injunction.

At the dinner table, Robby was not disposed to talk. He noted and understood the grave gentleness of his father's countenance and demeanor; the chastened loveliness of his mother's look; the quiet tone caught by the other children from the grown-up sister who sat next to him. His transgression had affected the spirits of the whole party. The very avoidance of all direct reference to it was significant and impressive. It was something too disgraceful for table-talk. A blackened soul! Soiled lips! These were the figures most distinct to his imagination as he crept after supper into the library, and sat down at the alcoved window looking upon a side street. The boys were playing noisily in the warm twilight. Robby watched them, curled up on the window bench, one foot tucked under him, his face more sober each minute. He was sure his mother would shake her head sadly were he to request permission to join the joyous group of his fellows. Nor did he care—very much—to go out. The recollection of sin and consequent suffering was too fresh.

Nettie, the grown-up sister, had a visitor, and mamma had joined the girls, and was chatting cheerfully with them—but not talking at all as she looked at the cowering little liar under the counterpane upstairs.

"Mamma," suddenly exclaimed the daughter, "there are old Mr. and Mrs. Bartol! I do believe you are to be honored by a call from them."

"I sincerely hope not," was the answer. "Papa and I had planned a walk on this lovely evening, and our friends the Bartols are given to long sittings."

"Besides being insufferably prosy," interpolated plain-spoken Nettie. "They *are* coming in. Millie, you and I can run away!" and they fluttered through the back-parlor door.

Mamma's face was overcast with genuine vexation. Her sigh, "How provoking!" reached the alcoved auditor. Then she advanced to meet a fat old lady, and a fatter, bald old gentleman.

"Is this really you, Mr. Bartol? It is an age since I have met you. I am happy to see you both. Pray be seated."

"Oh, dear!" said Robby, under his breath, sinking back into his corner, actually sick and trembling.

When he could listen and think again, papa had been sent for, and Mr. Bartol was apologizing for mingling business with a friendly visit. He wanted to buy a house owned by Mr. Wilcox, situated near his—Mr. Bartol's—home. The play of negotiation, of parry and thrust, was courteous, as befitted actors and scene, but Mr. Bartol's intention to buy cheap, and his host's desire to sell dear, were palpable to the unworldly eavesdropper.

"I am sorry you hold the property at so high a figure!" finally remarked Mr. Bartol, rising to take leave. "I must consult the friend who commissioned me to make inquiries, before I can say anything definite."

Mr. Wilcox was the impersonation of smiling indifference. "The truth is, my dear sir, I do not care to sell at all. The property is rising in value, and I may remove to that part of the city myself next year. I should lose on it were I to take less than the price I have named."

When the guests had gone, Mr. Wilcox turned laughingly to his wife:

"Well, my love, you have lost your walk, but your husband has made quite a bit of money—clear!"

"You think he will buy the place then?"

"I know he will! He wants to settle his daughter there. She

is to be married next month. I had a hint to that effect some days since. I had the game in my hands from the first. I bought the property, three years ago, at a low figure. The rent has covered interest, taxes, etc. I shall never live there myself. I have been anxious this great while to sell. I am already carrying more real estate than I ought to hold."

"I am afraid Robby is less impressed by the lesson of today than we could desire," observed Mrs. Wilcox sorrowfully to her husband at bedtime. "He strode off to bed without saying, 'Good night,' to anyone, and pretended to be asleep when I looked into his room just now, answering gruffly after I told him I knew he was awake. What shall I do if my child becomes a habitual deceiver?"

"We must watch his associations narrowly," replied the judicious father. "Everything depends upon the examples and impressions of early life." —Selected

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May 13, 1984

AN AFFLICTED WOMAN HEALED AND A DEAD DAUGHTER RAISED TO LIFE

Luke 8:41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42 For he had only one daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue has gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

49 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54 And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55 And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

Memory Verse: It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. *Psa. 118:8.*

Central Thought: Blessed is the person who, finding no help from man or self, turns to God and experiences the working of His mighty power to save and heal.

Word Definition: *Ruler of the synagogue:* Director of the synagogue services.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The incident of our lesson took place in Capernaum right after Jesus had cast out the legion of devils from the man of the Gadarenes. Jesus had just returned to His own city, and while He was addressing a large crowd that had been waiting for Him, this man Jairus approached Jesus with his great need. This lesson is also related in Matthew 9:22-26, and in Mark 5:22-43. We will notice a few extra points that these other writers gave us in addition to our text. Mark tells us that the father said, "My little daughter lieth at the point of death." The Greek expression is very tender and touching: "That little daughter of mine lies in the last extremity, the last gasp." Think about the feeling that this father had for his only child! Matthew vividly tells us that the woman who had the issue of blood had said within herself: "If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole." This resolution of faith was

formed within. This is where faith must work. What gave her this confidence? It was doubtless from hearing of the report of what Jesus was doing for others. Adam Clarke makes a beautiful comment: "She formed her resolution in faith, she executed it, notwithstanding her weaknesses, with courage; and now she finds it crowned with success." Clarke also states that, according to Leviticus 15:25, the woman was considered unclean all this time that she was afflicted. So this was a very serious need. Not only had she spent all her living on physicians, Mark tells us that she had suffered many things of many physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. Mark also describes her approach to Jesus: "She came in the press behind." I think of a verse from Whittier's poems: "The healing of His seamless dress is by our beds of pain; We touch Him in life's throng and press, and we are whole again." Then, the little girl, twelve years old, in the sleep of death, was brought back to the joy of her parents. Oh, think of the joy that they felt! Think of the loving Master, the same now as back then, and what a wonderful privilege it is to trust in Him yet today!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus' reaction when He heard of Jairus' need?
2. What were the two things that slowed Jesus' progress to this man's house?
3. How soon was the woman healed after she touched the clothes of Jesus?
4. How can we touch Jesus today? Was Jesus pleased with that woman's faith and the manner in which she carried it out?
5. Do you think that this miracle took Jesus by surprise?
6. Who did Jesus have with Him when He raised the daughter? Why did He put the others out?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This woman in our lesson had heard of Jesus. No doubt, after suffering for twelve years, she was probably desperately looking for deliverance. All her efforts towards the physicians of the world had been in vain. Now we know that medical science and physicians in our day can do much more than what they could back then. Perhaps it is too bad for the spiritual good of people that they have sought out so much because God has not nearly the opportunity to show Himself

in the behalf of mankind. What a wonderful experience it was for this poor woman. You can imagine how pitiful and poor in condition her body was. No telling what she had gone through with the physicians trying to get help. They were probably tired of trying to help her. Then she had access to get to Jesus, even if it was only to creep up behind Him in the thronging people—press and touch His garments. She probably wanted to touch him in that manner (the hem or border of His garment), and then slip back into the crowd away from the public eye. But, no! Jesus knew that His power had been tapped by a loving, faithful, and believing heart. This scene has inspired our faith many times. We still can touch Jesus through prayer and faith. Touch and contact with Him affords the greatest and highest blessings one can ever receive. While this woman had suffered these twelve years, a little girl had come from infancy to childhood. But something had taken hold on this child. There are so many childhood diseases, and now on this very day that Jesus drove away the twelve-year-old plague, the little girl slipped away. What a terrible blow to this family! These words of Jesus to them are still good for us: "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." The way of the flesh is to doubt and scorn, but the way of faith is to obey with confidence of the Lord's power to restore.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In this lesson the power of Christ is shown. We see that He was a great storehouse of help. All that was necessary to tap this reserve was to put in for it in the right attitude of mind. The woman with an issue of blood pushed through the crowd with great effort in order to obtain the healing. She realized that though physicians had failed her, here was One who could solve her problem.

It was no great effort for Christ to work these miracles. He wanted to help the people. He told the ruler of the synagogue, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." Jesus told them, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." In all reality, she was dead, but to Jesus, it was no harder to bring her back to life than it was to awaken her from sleep. The crowd was there to mourn the death and when Jesus stated that the young girl was only asleep, they laughed him to scorn. No wonder He allowed only Peter, James, John, and the parents to be present at the healing. After the damsel arose, Jesus instructed that they should tell no man what was done. Don't

you know that those who had laughed and scorned were surprised people when the girl appeared perfectly well? They probably besieged the parents with curious questions as to what Jesus had done to raise her up, but they could not be told. If we manifest a right attitude, there is help for us. If we do not, the good things of God may not be so available to us.

—Wayne Murphey

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May 20, 1984

A CONCERNED MOTHER WHO WOULD NOT TAKE OFFENSE

Mark 7:24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

Matt. 15:22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

Matt. 15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

Mark 7:27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

Matt. 15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

Mark 7:29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

Memory Verse: And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Luke 7:23.

Central Thought: In seeking God for help we must take heed that we become not offended at any of His dealings in response to us and in how He chooses to work and answer our prayers.

Word Definitions: *Greek:* Gentile, or that which is not Jewish. *Syrophenician:* A native of Phoenicia in Syria. *Vexed:* Exorcised or tormentd with (a devil).

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus had just had His run-in with the Pharisees concerning the washing of hands, etc., in the land of Gennesaret, which was on the west of the sea of Galilee. Turning westward, Jesus journeyed into the coasts, or border area, of Tyre and Sidon. From the sea of Galilee it was a distance of between 30 and 40 miles. It is apparent that Jeus is seeking to hide Himself somewhat from the public eye and from the persecuting Jews, but we all know a little about humanity and how talk gets around. A woman was in that area who had a real burden. She had a daughter possessed by a devil. This was a terrible drag upon that woman. It weighed her down night and day. Here is another instance of healing in Christ's ministry that was done from a distance. We have no record that Jesus saw this girl. He was dealing specifically with the mother. Whether the girl was delivered depended entirely on this woman's faith AND her disposition not to be offended. We do not know all the background of this scene. Just how long this girl was in this condition we do not know. The main lesson here is the attitude that this woman takes in seeking for help for her child. Can you see the four occasions that this woman was given to take offense at Jesus? Can you see the four ways that she could easily have taken in giving up her pursuit of the help of Christ? Being ignored, repulsed, denied, and humiliated, she pressed over all of these things. This is a great lesson. Look at the woman's response to the occasions to be hurt. See her humility and determination to let nothing turn her aside from gaining help for her daughter. What about our daughters and sons? Look at the joy that was doubtless in this woman's heart when she returned and found her daughter normal. Humility and being defenseless has its own special reward.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the pressing need of this Syrophenician woman?

2. What did she say that gives evidence that she knew something about God and Israel and the Christ that should come?
3. What were the four occasions given to this woman to take offense?
4. What was the last one, and how did she meet it?
5. Is it possible for us to be offended at the way God deals with us today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

God raised up the Jewish nation through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to shew forth His power to all the earth. It is evident that Christ came first to the Jewish nation and to minister to them for the truth of God. It was not God's purpose to exclude other nations always. In His time the plan of salvation and healing was to be offered to all the world. In our lesson today we find an humble, contrite, heavily laden woman who had heard of Jesus and had come seeking His help. She was not a Jew. Jesus deliberately used this exclusiveness of the Jews as a means of testing this woman's faith. Would she be turned away from this seemingly barred entrance to help from Him? There is a certain point in a man's pursuit of anything that will accept a barred entrance as a signal to go no farther. But this woman did not consider this obstacle. She did not try to break the barrier. Instead she humbled her heart way down. "Lord, help me," she begged, worshipping Him. One brother minister years ago said that what God wants is for us to be first-rate beggars. A man may have a lot to fall back on and be ashamed to beg, but if he gets poor and destitute enough, he will beg. To beg is to put yourself at the pity of everyone else. You are not ashamed to ask for the slightest amount. This woman is begging and pleading with a purpose in mind like this: "This Man can help me, and He is the only One who can help me; so whether He turns me away or calls me a dog, I am still going to stay right here until I can get some help." What about being called a dog? Many people would not bear that, but this woman had a need. She let herself be called a dog, but reminded Jesus that, although dogs cannot eat AT the table, they can lick up the crumbs on the floor. And this broke Jesus' heart. Oh, let us take this lesson to our hearts today. In our pursuit of the blessings of God, let us not let anything turn us away to offence, discouragement, or lack of confidence.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We read and hear of the miracles that Jesus performed and we think that if only He were here on earth then we could see miracles again. This woman with the daughter who had an unclean spirit, came to Jesus asking for help. After Jesus tested her, He instructed her to, "go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter." He did not even go to the scene of the trouble. The woman could have refused to leave and could have demanded that Jesus come to her house and do the healing. However, she took Christ at His Word and the work was done. Jesus does not have to be present in the flesh to do a miracle. He is at the Father's right hand and He must only speak the word and the work will be done.

It was not a long flowery request that brought the answer to this Syrophenician woman. Matt. 15:22, records that she simply "cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Our prayers to God do not have to be a masterpiece or work of art. They can be short, and must be humble, fervent, and reverent.

She asked for just a crumb. She was not greedy. Her position in life prevented her from being proud. The Jews to whom Christ came rejected Him. If just a crumb cast out a devil, I wonder at the enormity of the meal that the Jews rejected! "Unto me, who am less than the least of all the saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. 3:8.

—Wayne Murphey

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May 27, 1984

THE TRANSGRESSOR FINDS MERCY

John 8:1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Memory Verse: For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. James 2:13.

Central Thought: "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:17.

Word Definitions: *Adultery:* The corruption or defilement of marriage sanctity or separateness. God ordained marriage and the physical relationship of man and woman to be con-

fined to the sacred bounds of holy matrimony. "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Heb. 13:4. *Conscience*: The Greek word which is translated conscience is "sunidaysis," which means co-perception, moral consciousness, or awareness. It is an exclusive word, translated no other way. The use of the word conscience in our lesson is its first appearance anywhere in the Bible, but is used several times hereafter in the New Testament.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The law did state that adulterers and adulteresses were to be put to death. Lev. 20:10. Adultery seems to head the list of moral sins. If there is any one phase of human life that is affected and damaged the most by the influence of sin, it would be that which involved the relationship between men and women. Because it involves such deep-felt emotions and senses in a being, the effects of adultery and the pit it affords to ensnare a person in, all help to make it the most serious moral sin. It is an evil to stay out of. It is better to never be tainted with it. It is an evil to flee from and take no chances with. This is all true, and the picture of the evils and harm adultery has done to the human race cannot be painted black enough. But notwithstanding all of this, the grace of God can restore and forgive the darkened heart stained with adultery. In our lesson we see the plight of the woman who was overtaken in this thing, and we also see the wrong spirit and attitude in those who were condemning her. Above all, let us notice the steps that our blessed Saviour took in dealing with this problem, and the attitude that He had for the offender. The words in the text: "as though he heard them not" are added words by the translator, and were not in the original text. Their sole purpose in coming to Jesus was to make occasion so that they could find fault. Jesus reacted in an entirely different manner than what they had expected. He shifted their gaze from the woman to themselves. He justified not the woman in what she had done, nor did He heap condemnation upon her. The problem was solved by awakening the consciences of the people who were accusing her. This is a great lesson for us today in our dealings with the lost and those who are straying into forbidden paths.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the Pharisees' purpose in bringing this woman to Jesus?
2. How was Jesus in a close place here?
3. What do you think Jesus' real purpose in stooping down and writing on the ground was?
4. How did He shift their thoughts from the woman and Himself to their own hearts?
5. Will a person be hasty to condemn someone else when they are fully conscious of their own need?
6. What does a person need when they truly are aware of the grossness of their sin and their separation from God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is so wonderful to be forgiven and justified by Jesus! A person feels the guilt and condemnation on their soul. They come repenting and pleading the mercy of God and the blood of Christ for their atonement. The Spirit of God draws them to the Saviour. They reach out in their hearts to Him. Faith springs up and their hearts are filled with assurance and joy as they are aware of their sins being washed away. No more do they desire to walk in the forbidden paths of sin. Instead they desire to walk the strait and narrow way, the way of holiness. What a beautiful picture this is! This is what Jesus came to bring to the souls of men. The law brings condemnation and punishment, but Jesus brings peace and deliverance. Justice called, but mercy answered. He who would wield the law must be conscious of his own condemnation and guilt. And the mercy that he would want for himself, he must give to others and learn what the real Spirit of Christ is. Yes, people must be made aware of the grossness of their sinfulness, but they must also be able to see the way to salvation. As Jesus wrote on the ground the first time, the crowd was probably so surprised and taken back that they were at a loss to know what to do next. This helped pull their minds away from their original purpose. Then what Jesus said about being without sin had its effect. The second time He stooped to write on the ground was the time when their consciences began to work. One by one they went out. What Jesus wrote on the ground is not an important factor. The fact that He had withdrawn from their net and was writing on the ground turned their minds. The Spirit of God and their consciences did the rest. Oh, the wisdom and love of our Lord and Saviour!

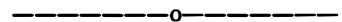
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Once again we find Jesus astounding the people with His wisdom. Solomon was considered the wisest man to have ever lived, making some remarkable decisions. We find that Christ manifested even greater wisdom, which was derived from the same source. In the situation that we are studying, Christ said very little, and yet the scribes and Pharisees were smitten by their own consciences. Many times it is wisdom to limit our words. Some individuals are so hard-hearted that no matter what is said they will feel no reproof, but when they suffer condemnation within themselves, it is much more effective.

After Jesus sent the woman on her way, He told the Pharisees that remained, "Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." Jesus possessed the wisdom from above to judge a person rightly if He so desired, and yet He declared that He judged no man. We should not feel that we are in any more of a position to judge. Some have the misconceived idea that not judging a person means not recognizing sin. This is not so. Jesus accepted the fact that this woman was guilty of wrong and He did not put His approval on it. To judge is to give the final say on a matter. It is to pass out sentence for deeds done. This is the place of God. It is our duty, after recognizing sin, to show forth the mercy of God, and not cut others off.

—Wayne Murphey



THE INFIDEL CAPTAIN

The ship **St. Thomas** (Captain: Robert Williams) was bound from New York to Liverpool, in the month of June. Favored by a fresh westerly wind, she soon cleared the land, and on the first Sunday out was going along finely with all drawing sail set. The chief mate, Mr. Wm. Briggs, after the crew had breakfasted, and the watch had been set, asked the captain if he had any objections to calling the men aft to prayers.

"No objection whatever, Mr. Briggs, provided you do the preaching and praying yourself; for you know well enough that I have but little faith in such exercises."

Captain Williams was between forty and fifty years of age, a plain, blunt seaman, who was more ambitious of being considered an enterprising shipmaster than a Christian. His mate was not quite thirty, and was indebted to him for his promotion from before the mast to second mate, and then to

that of chief mate; they had sailed together many years, and each had boundless confidence in the other. Appreciating the motives of his mate, he always permitted him to have prayers on board when the state of weather was favorable, although he took no interest in religious matters himself.

Mr. Briggs ordered the watch to arrange some seats on the quarter-deck, while he went forward himself and invited the watch below to come aft, and listen to the reading of the Scriptures, and such other religious exercises as the occasion might suggest, remarking at the same time, that it was not his desire to force any man against his will. Without a murmur the watch below, as well as that on deck, repaired to the quarter-deck, and were soon seated around the capstan. The captain took charge of the deck himself, that is, looked out for the proper steerage of the ship, and relieved the second mate, whose watch it was, to join the men at prayers. These arrangements completed, the chief mate placed a Bible on the capstan, read a chapter from the New Testament, made some remarks upon it, and then prayed; after which he gave a sermon, and closed with prayer. The whole exercise occupied about an hour, and seemed to produce a good effect upon the men, who, during the rest of the day in their intercourse with one another, talked about religion.

That afternoon, when it was the mate's watch on deck, Captain Williams entered into conversation with him as follows:—

"I say, Briggs, what does all your preaching and praying amount to in the long run? I have managed to get along very well thus far without either, and if I were to die today, I could safely say that I never injured any man knowingly, and have always endeavored to do my duty to my family and to all. What more can a man do, even if he has all the religion in the world?"

"Captain Williams," replied the mate, "this world, sir, is not our home; we are here only for a few short years, and then we go to the place for which we have prepared for ourselves."

"Place!" interrupted the captain, "place—what do you or I or anyone else know about any other place than this world? Place, indeed! You do not suppose that I am silly enough to believe in the Bible, with its strange fish-stories, and unaccountable yarns about miracles, etc.?"

"Yet," replied the mate, "you believe Bowditch's Navigator, and rely on its statements."

"Of course I do, because I have tested their correctness by actual experience."

"And for the same reason I believe in the Bible, and so will you, sir, when you come to Christ and learn of Him the truth."

"I have heard that statement before, Briggs. But how would you propose for me to come to Christ?"

"By retiring to your stateroom alone, sir, and throwing yourself upon your knees, and imploring Him with your whole soul to enlighten you. Continue this process every moment you can spare from the ship's duty, and I will be answerable that you will not pray long in vain, if you pray sincerely."

"But first you must convince me, Briggs, that the Bible is true before I make a fool of myself in my stateroom."

"My dear captain," replied the mate, "I cannot convince you. That is the work of the Holy Spirit; but I can, and often do pray for you. Yet let us recur to Bowditch's Navigator again, and see if we cannot make out a case from it in favor of the Bible. Both of us believe the Navigator, yet neither of us knows thoroughly the principles by which all its numerous tables have been calculated, many of which we use every day without question. If we make a bad landfall, or at the end of a day discover that we have made a different course from that which we projected, we do not attribute the errors to Bowditch, but to our own miscalculation. It is just so with the humble inquirer after truth; the Bible is his Navigator; he believes it the foundation of living truth, endeavors to shape the course of his life by it; and when he errs, he looks for the error in himself, not in the Bible."

"Still, Briggs," said the captain, "I don't believe the Bible. The fact is, I have never looked into it since I was a boy."

"The greater your loss, captain; but I have no doubt your mother believed, and has often spoken to you about God, and Christ, and taught you to pray when you were a child. If you will take the trouble to visit Jim Wood's gin-palace, in Playhouse Square, when we reach Liverpool, and enter into conversation with the people there about the Bible, they will laugh at you, and sneeringly tell you it is a humbug; in short, repeat your own arguments; but if you will leave there and obtain admission into the best society, you will find that every person present will speak with reverence of the Bible. Now I know you love good company here, and that you dislike the low, vulgar conversation of the profane; therefore, I should

like to see you make some effort to prepare yourself for the society of the redeemed in heaven."

"What you have said about my mother, Briggs, is true as the needle to the pole, God bless her; I can't help saying so, for she was good to me; and if there is a heaven she is sure of it."

"And, of course, captain, you would like to join her there, when you have run down your reckoning here. You have either to join her, or such fellows as those who frequent places like Jim Wood's. Which like you the best—gamblers, drunkards, and thieves, or your mother? This is the simple question which you must decide for yourself."

Here the ship's duty interrupted the conversation, but that night Captain Williams thought much of the teachings of his mother, her earnest prayers to God in his behalf, and the flimsy arguments with which he had so long deluded himself about the Bible; and the more he thought the more uneasy he became. He felt that he was a sinner in the sight of God, unworthy of the many favors he enjoyed, and during the whole of that passage, whenever an opportunity offered he engaged in earnest conversation with his mate. He was alarmed at the prospect of being forever separated from his mother, for he loved her dearly; and this feeling soon gave birth to others of a more spiritual nature, and finally he was led to exclaim, "What shall I do to be saved?"

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June 3, 1984

THE ANTAGONISM OF THE JEWS

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

38 I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.

42 Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

Memory Verse: For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Heb. 12:3.

Central Thought: Even though some of the Jews believed on Christ, they could not perceive the spiritual depths of His teachings, and they were again enraged and turned against Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In last Sunday's lesson, we beheld Christ's mercy with the sinful woman. After He had spoken peace to her soul, there began a back and forth conversation between Jesus and the Jews with the Pharisees. The things that Jesus said concerning His Father (God) and Himself, concerning where He came from and where He was going, and about who He was—all of this the Jews could not seem to comprehend. It is interesting to note, however, that at one point (in verse 30) many believed on Him as He spoke these words. But it seems as we observe in the account that follows, that their faith was short-lived and sickled over by the antagonism that arose in their hearts against what Jesus said. And it is sad to see that the reason for their objections to what Jesus told them lay in their own

ignorance of His true meaning. Over and over we have seen this to be true. It seems that the Jews had a terrible complex. They were quick to be up in arms against anything they did not agree with. They were not for due consideration and pondering at all. Their unbelieving attitude toward Christ usually brought them to violent reaction. The outcome of their confrontation with him in our lesson was to take up stones to cast at Him. Some have thought that their statement in verse 41 about not being born of fornication was an expression of slander against Christ and the seeming reproach about His mother Mary conceiving before her marriage to Joseph. This could be what they had in mind. However their claim to being Abraham's seed and children of God was refuted by Christ who plainly told them who their real father was in verse 44. Christ's last assertion about Abraham rejoicing to see His day they did not understand. They had no thought of Christ's divinity and everlasting abiding. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we be Christ's disciples indeed?
2. Besides being His disciples indeed, what will we gain by continuing in Christ's Word?
3. What will the truth do for us?
4. What kind of bondage will the truth free us from?
5. What kinds of works will we do if we are the children of Abraham?
6. Who was the real father of these Jews?
7. Explain the meaning of Jesus' words in verse 58: "Before Abraham was, I am."

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We have in our lesson today a vivid example of the contradiction of the Jews with Christ. Oh, how His words caused such anger and rage in their hearts against Him! The different statements Christ made in this lesson is a great comfort and inspiration to us today. He is literally telling them that He is the only way that they can truly be made free. As they sensed not their bondage and were not aware of what Jesus was trying to point out, He tried to explain further. The bondage He was dealing with was that of sin. Being a servant of sin, to be ruled and governed by the passions of evil and wrong—this is the worst bondage a man could ever be in. It was not God's primary intention that man be dominated by

his own passions and lusts. God wants a man to be free, but this freedom is only gained by voluntary submission to God and His holy will. He speaks about the servant abiding not in the house forever. It is a simple thought, yet full of spiritual weight. To be a servant to the world and its ways of sin is to forfeit eternal habitation. There is no assurance of eternal life in living to the flesh. "But the Son abideth ever." Jesus was not a slave to the things of sin and this world; He is the Son of God. He is the Son that abideth ever. The freedom that He was offering was the freedom from sin and this present evil world. This is a freedom that every person needs. Note the word "indeed." To be disciples of Christ indeed and to be free indeed, is the highest and most wonderful state any person can enjoy. How could the Jews perceive this freedom when they were unaware of their bondage? About the only bondage that they were aware of was the oppression from Rome. They did not realize that they were children of the devil and under the bondage and yoke of sin. Jesus had a liberty to give to them, a liberty and freedom that He still offers today for all who will yield to Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It means much to persevere in the Christian life. By a faithful continuance in the things of God we can become His disciples. Not only will we be disciples but we will find the truth. Truth will come to us through perseverance. Many people have a sense of what is wrong, but they don't really comprehend the truth. They know when something is sin, but they do not have the truth. Consequently we can say that it requires a searching effort to discover and obtain truth whereas wrong will surface on its own.

"... and the truth shall make you free." It is quite evident that the truth will not free one from ridicule and persecution. Christ often had this to contend with. Truth will liberate from that carnal nature which the Jews were demonstrating. This is why we must continue in His Word. There are things which will come our way to try the natural man and to destroy our steadfast belief in God, but as we rely on Him we can be free from inner turmoil.

Christ, referring to the devil, declared, "He was a murderer from the beginning." What Satan sought from the very beginning was to bring a spiritual death upon all humanity. This resulted in the bondage of sin. Christ came to re-establish truth and free from sin.

—Wayne Murphey

June 10, 1984

JESUS OPENS THE EYES OF THE BLIND

John 9:1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay,

7 And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing.

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.

25 He answered and said, Whether he is a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also?

41 Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Memory Verse: And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. John 9:39.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ showed His power to open the eyes of the blind, but it is a greater miracle and a far more important work to open the eyes of the spiritually blind that they might see the wonderful blessings of God.

Word Definitions: *Siloam (by interpretation, Sent):* The pool of Siloam was a fountain under the wall of the city, used as a water supply for the city, one of the streams of which supplied water for the pool of Bethesda. (Clarke) The Hebrew word means "sent". No doubt the people so appreciated this source of water that they counted it a blessing "sent" from God.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The full extent of this lesson concerning the opening of the blind man's eyes covers the entire 9th chapter of John. However, since we do not have space for repeating the entire chapter, we have found the main channel of the lesson in the Scriptures we have included. Christ encountered the blind man, healed him, and had to deal with the remonstrating Jews about the matter. We have the neighbors of the blind man entering the picture, too. In their wonderment they took him to the Pharisees. Once again Jesus had to tangle with the religious leaders, and as it was on numerous other occasions, Jesus performed this act of mercy on the sabbath day. Here we see another aspect of the spiritual darkness of the Jews. The parents of the blind man were also involved. The Pharisees did not believe that he had been blind, so they called for the parents to testify about it. Here we see them affirm two things: that he was their son, and that he was born blind. But to confess how he was healed they would not, because of their fear of the Jews and of being excommunicated. Thus, being of age, the man who had been healed was called upon to answer for himself. The Jews counted a man of age when he was thirty. The man's testimony in verse 25, shows the vivid truth of the work of Christ. Despite all the strife and condemnation that the Jews sought to heap on Christ for the incident, the healed man's testimony still rings clearly: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." Then the reasoning of the man healed from blindness was good. "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." The Jews rejected this man's testimony and cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus found him, however, and he accepted Christ. Then Jesus reproved the blinded Jews for their stubborn hearts, and not sensing their blindness.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Jesus say was the reason for this man's blindness?
2. What important part did the man's obedience to Jesus in going to wash in the pool play in his healing?
3. What was the Pharisees' objection to Christ healing this man?
4. What was the blind man's statement concerning his healing and Christ?
5. Can a person be made to see if they do not sense their blindness?
6. Why is it hard for a person to see his own need?
7. What is the outcome of a person who does not sense their sin and darkness?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It was wonderful for a man who had been blind from birth (for at least thirty years) to be made well and to see. No doubt his joy was boundless. Probably he had adjusted to the state of blindness, and, like men have done, was capable of getting along. Jesus saw that this disorder and affliction was but an opportunity for Him to show the works of the Father. Regardless of how wonderful this miracle was, the last three verses of our lesson open up a more serious and vital thought for us to consider. Jesus came into the world for judgment. He came to bring judgment into the world so that those who see not might have a chance to get their hearts enlightened as to what the truth is. Those who see not are those who sense their ignorance and are reaching and yearning for knowledge and wisdom. Those who see are those who are already filled with their own devices and thoughts so that the heart is not receptive or open to the counsel of the Lord. The Pharisees' response to this shows that they had some wonderment about themselves. "Are we blind also?" Then Jesus gave the key to receiving the blessings of God. "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin." That means that when a person can come to grips with his real and true condition, he is getting into a position to receive help from God. "But now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." This means that if anyone refuses to acknowledge the truth concerning the need of their heart and life, their sin will remain lodged there in their innermost being, unforgiven, uncovered, and unpurged. Think of what this will mean. Light has come into the world, but

men love darkness rather than light because they are unwilling to declare and acknowledge their condition. Oh, blessed is the man who will be honest and willing to examine and prove his own heart. This is one of the greatest lessons that Jesus brought to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our lesson opens by stating that Jesus passed by. This turned out to be the greatest event in the life of this blind man. The poor man was humbly desiring help. The combination of these two circumstances resulted in a miracle. There are several indications that the blind man had humble faith in Jesus. The disciples asked Jesus, "Who sinned that this man was born blind?" This question contained quite an accusation. Adam Clarke wrote that the doctrine of transmigration of souls appears to have been an article in the creed of the Pharisees, and it was a general belief among both the Greeks and the Asiatics. The Pythagoreans believed that the souls of men were sent into other bodies for the punishment of some sin which they had committed in a pre-existence state. This is probably the basis for the disciples' question. If the integrity of people today were questioned in like manner, it would create a great fervor, but the Scriptures do not record that the blind man was offended. It is a misconception to believe that all trouble which touches a life is brought about because of disobedience in someone's heart. However, we can be assured, according to Jesus' reply to the disciples, that those things which trouble us in life are opportunities through which the works of God may be manifested.

—Wayne Murphey

June 17, 1984

CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

8 All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.

9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Heb. 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Memory Verse: The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. John 10:10.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ as the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls came to save, shelter, care, provide for, and nourish us and bring us to the blessed state of eternal life.

Word Definitions: *Shepherd:* One who herds sheep. To herd sheep, they must be cared for in protection and guidance, and they must be fed. *Hireling:* One who works for wages.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today comes right on the heels of last week's lesson concerning the blind man. Right after what Jesus said about the Pharisees saying, "We see," (indicating that they were actually spiritually blind and did not sense it) He proceeded to speak a parable unto them about the shepherd, the thief and robber, and the stranger. Of course, as with all of

His parables, He offered no explanation at first, but let them feel their bewilderment at what He meant. We did not include the recitation of the parable in our lesson, but we have included Christ's application. The access to the fold, and he to whom the door is opened constitute a very important matter. The aspect and likeness of Jesus as being a Shepherd is one of the most sublime and encouraging truths of the Bible. When one really sees Jesus as a tender, loving Saviour so full of understanding and pity, the heart is drawn to Him. The door is presented as two-fold. The door of the heart can only be entered by Christ. The entrance into the fold of God's care is also only opened by Christ. All else that influences the heart of man comes as a thief and robber, blinding the eyes as to its real purpose to kill and destroy. Jesus comes through the open door. Christ comes to us by way of the prophecies and how God planned that He should come. Christ goes before His sheep. He does not drive them. If they are His sheep, they will follow Him. If there appears a need for force or driving, it shows that they are not His sheep. His sheep learn and know His voice. All these are vital truths concerning the children of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. In what way is Jesus the door?
2. In what way can anyone else come before Jesus?
3. What is the response in the true child of God to a false spirit?
4. What is Christ's purpose in coming to a soul?
5. What did Christ as the Good Shepherd do for us?
6. What did Christ say about His relationship with His sheep?
7. What does God desire to do for us through the blood of His Son, the great Shepherd of the sheep?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

From the 23rd Psalm, from the precious prophecies in Isaiah 40:11, and from several other places in the Old Testament come the clear and joyful tidings of the Lord being a Shepherd of the souls of men. It is so comforting and inspiring to visualize the Lord Jesus Christ going forth seeking out His flock and being known of them as the Good Shepherd. It has inspired songs and beautiful hymns as well as the brushes of various artists. But most of all, it is the blessedness of those

who know Him and experience the wonderful majestic glory of being one of the sheep of His pasture. No other animal is as widely and as often used to illustrate a child of God than a sheep. It is precious to know that the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of glory, has as much care and feeling for us as a true shepherd does his sheep. We can enter into the favor of God in forgiveness and grace through Christ and what He accomplished. We can go to the rich pastures of love and knowledge under His guiding care. He watches over us in trials and hardships of this natural life. We can commit our lives to Him and know that He will guard and keep that which pertains to us. His way is best, and we do best to follow Him faithfully. Jesus as the faithful Shepherd of the sheep gave His life for us. He shed His precious blood, and through the merits of that blood God has promised to make us perfect in every good work to do His will. It is a beautiful aspect of the work of God through Christ. The Lord is our Shepherd, and all the benefits derived from following Him we can safely enjoy and treasure forever.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Monumental things can be accomplished wherever there is a great leader for the people to rally around. Military history bears record of the fact that many victories were won because of a brave general or leader who bravely led the way into battle.

George Washington was a leader who refused to succumb to defeat. He fought on in spite of the great odds. His men drew courage from his brave example and as a result, history was made. Had his courage failed, the army would have scattered and the cause of freedom lost. Mr. Washington is known as the father of our country because of his notable sacrifice.

We have One to rally around, and that is Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep. He endured all the way to Calvary. A hireling or false saviour would have refused the suffering and humiliation of the cross and thus proved himself of no worth.

Christ paid the ultimate sacrifice and then ascended into heaven, but provided a Comforter who is still leading the Church to victory. He does not want His flock scattered by spiritual discord, but desires a harmony that will draw others into the fold. May we clearly distinguish the voice of God and direct our way into His paths.

—Wayne Murphey

June 24, 1984

A CONFESSION AND A WARNING

Matt. 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 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?

27 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.

Memory Verse: And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matt. 16:18.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Saviour, the Son of the living God revealed to the hearts of men by the heavenly Father through the Holy Spirit, is the foundation stone for the Church of God.

Word Definitions: *Simon Bar-jona:* Simon, son of Jona. *Church:* The Greek word, "ekklesia", means a called-out congregation or assembly. "*Get thee behind me, Satan*": Get thee behind me, thou adversary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Caesarea Philippi was a settlement about 25 miles to the north of the Sea of Galilee. We are seeing in these studies how that the antagonism of the Jews was increasing. In the early part of this 16th chapter of Matthew, Jesus had a run-in with the Pharisees and the Sadducees who tempted Him, desiring Him that He would shew them a sign from heaven. Jesus did not satisfy their desire and rebuked them as a wicked and adulterous generation. He then warned the disciples later to beware of the leaven of these darkened people, explaining that their doctrine was to be avoided. It was then that He journeyed north of the area of His labors towards Mount Lebanon where doubtless the transfiguration took place. As they journeyed we find Jesus probing the minds of His disciples for a clear statement from them as to whom they believed He was. Note that He asked first what the opinion was of men. This was an important matter. He wanted to hear from their own lips their persuasion concerning Him. He wanted the comparison between their convictions and the ideas of men brought out. It is a very important thing for us today to be persuaded in our own minds just who Jesus really is. And not only must we be persuaded, but we must be able to express ourselves vividly and earnestly about it. It is also interesting to note that the same disciple that so stoutly declared his conviction about Jesus later withstood Him concerning what was soon to happen. "Blessed art thou," Jesus said at one point, and later to the same disciple (Peter) He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." It was very difficult for the disciples to understand the Lord's prophecies concerning His death and resurrection. The responsibility of bearing our cross and losing our life for His sake is passed on down to us. Our lesson today has serious and weighty truths that we should not be ignorant of.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the varied opinions of men concerning Christ?
2. Who was Jesus in Simon Peter's persuasion?
3. Where did this conviction come from?
4. Is there any danger in us being influenced by "flesh and blood" today?
5. What would you say the Rock upon which Jesus said He would build His Church was?
6. Why is such a foundation so strong?
7. Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?
8. Why did Jesus call Peter "Satan"?
9. What are the requirements for following Jesus?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

When Jesus said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," He was not saying that upon Peter He would build His Church. Peter means "a stone." Jesus had surnamed Simon as "Peter" because he was to be a solid supporter, promoter, and preacher of His gospel. He wanted him to be that. Peter had just given a firm testimony of his persuasion concerning Christ. That was a rock in itself. But Jesus was referring to what Peter believed as being the Rock upon which He would build the Church. The solid Rock of the Church is Jesus Christ Himself being revealed to the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit. That is a firm foundation that the powers of hell cannot prevail against. The gates of hell refer to the authorities and powers of darkness and Satan. The many ways of strife and error that lead men to perdition could be rightly termed as "the gates of hell." This would include churches and organizations that are inhabited by false doctrines and spirits contrary to the Spirit of Christ. He told Peter that He would give unto him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. The idea has been held through the years that "St. Peter keeps the gates of heaven." I suppose that this comes from false ideas about what Jesus said here, but what He was referring to here was the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom which would open or close the way to life, according to how people respond. Paul said in 2 Cor. 2:16, that his ministry was a savour of death unto death to some, and a savour of life unto life to others. Peter just about locked himself out of the kingdom when he tried to withstand the Lord concerning what was to take place at Jerusalem. Every-

one must be willing to deny himself, take up his cross, and follow life, but that is the only way to really find or save it. To gain the whole world while losing one's soul is indeed a great loss.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is a wonderful thing to possess the keys of the kingdom of God. When we are faced with a necessity, we have the means to obtain what we need from that great storehouse. However, along with the privilege comes responsibility. God expects the members of His Church to act in a responsible manner, in a way that will bring glory to His name and be an asset to His cause. Always remember that Christ did not establish His Church and endow it with divine gifts to further the selfish purposes of men. The ministry of Christ was one of self-denial and a giving of Himself to others. When Peter rebuked Christ for prophesying of His approaching crucifixion, Christ replied, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." Those individuals who favor self-exaltation more than the furtherance of God's kingdom are acting in an irresponsible manner. God cannot invest His power in them. When we expand our view to a lost world, and are willing to lose our life for His sake, then we will help the Church of God move forward with greater power. As the poet stated,

" 'Tis the day of full salvation,
Go, the joyful message tell;
While we wait the millions perish,
And we do not well."

We must not accept this matter as a philosophical view, but as an integral part of our very living.

—Wayne Murphey

AFFECTING SCENE IN A SALOON



One afternoon in the month of June, 1870, a lady in deep mourning, followed by a little child, entered one of the fashionable saloons in the city of N----- . Stepping up to the bar, and addressing the proprietor, she said:—

“Sir, can you assist me? I have no home, no friends, and am not able to work.”

He glanced at her and then at the child, with a mingled look of curiosity and pity. Evidently he was much surprised to see a woman in such a place, begging, but, without asking any questions, gave her some change, and turning to those present, he said:—

“Gentlemen, here is a lady in distress. Can’t some of you help her a little?”

They cheerfully acceded to the request, and soon a purse of two dollars was made up and put into her hand.

“Madam,” said the gentleman who gave her the money, “why do you come to a saloon? It isn’t a proper place for a lady, and why are you driven to such a step?”

“Sir,” said the lady, “I know it isn’t a proper place for a lady to be in, and you ask me why I am driven to such a step. I will tell you, in one short word,” pointing to a bottle behind the counter labelled “whiskey,”—“that is what brought me here—whiskey. I was once happy, and surrounded with all the luxuries wealth could produce, with a fond, indulgent husband. But in an evil hour he was tempted, and not possessing the will to resist the temptation, fell, and in one short year my dream of happiness was over, my home was forever desolate, and the kind husband, and the wealth that some called mine, lost—lost, never to return; and all by the accursed wine cup. You see before you only the wreck of my former self, homeless and friendless, with nothing left me in this world but this little child;” and weeping bitterly, she affectionately caressed the golden curls that shaded a face of exquisite loveliness. Regaining her composure, and turning to the proprietor of the saloon, she continued:—

“Sir, the reason why I occasionally enter a place like this is to implore those who deal in this deadly poison to desist, to stop a business that spreads desolation, ruin, poverty, and starvation. Think one moment of your own loved ones, and then imagine them in the situation I am in. I appeal to your better nature, I appeal to your heart, for I know you possess a kind one, to retire from a business so ruinous to your patrons.

"Do you know the money you take across the bar is the same as taking the bread out of the mouths of the famishing? That it strips the clothing from their backs, deprives them of all the comforts of this life, and throws unhappiness, misery, crime, and desolation into their once happy homes? Oh, sir! I implore, beseech, and pray you to retire from a business you blush to own you are engaged in before your fellow men, and enter one that will not only be profitable to yourself; but to your fellow-creatures also. You will excuse me if I have spoken too plainly, but I could not help it when I thought of the misery, the unhappiness, and the suffering it has caused me."

"Madam, I am not offended," he answered, in a voice husky with emotion, "but I thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you have said."

"Mamma," said the little girl—who, meantime, had been spoken to by some of the gentlemen present—taking hold of her mother's hand, "these gentlemen want me to sing 'Little Bessie' for them. Shall I do so?"

They all joined in the request, and placing her in the chair, she sang, in a sweet, childish voice, the following beautiful song:—

"Out in the gloomy night, sadly I roam;
I have no mother dear, no pleasant home;
No one cares for me, no one would cry
Even if poor little Bessie should die.
Weary and tired I've been wandering all day,
Asking for work, but I'm too small, they say;
On the damp ground I must now lay my head;
Father's a drunkard, and Mother is dead.

"We were so happy till Father drank rum,
Then all our sorrow and trouble begun;
Mother grew pale, and wept every day;
Baby and I were too hungry to play;
Slowly they faded, till one summer night
Found their dead faces all silent and white;
Then with big tears slowly dropping, I said,
'Father's a drunkard, and Mother is dead.'

"Oh! if the temperance men could only find
Poor, wretched Father, and talk very kind;
If they would stop him from drinking, then
I should be very happy again.
Is it too late, temperance men? Please try,
Or poor little Bessie must soon starve and die.

All the day long I've been begging for bread;
Father's a drunkard, and Mother is dead."

The game of billiards was left unfinished, the cards thrown aside, and the unemptied glass remained on the counter; all had pressed near, some with pity-beaming eyes, entranced with the musical voice and beauty of the child, who seemed better fitted to be with angels above than in such a place.

The scene I shall never forget to my dying day, and the sweet cadence of her musical voice still rings in my ears, and from her lips sunk deep into the hearts of those gathered around her.

With her golden hair falling carelessly around her shoulders, and looking so trustingly and confidently upon the gentlemen around her, the beautiful eyes illuminated with a light that seemed not of this earth, she formed a picture of purity and innocence worthy the genius of a poet or painter.

At the close of the song many were weeping; men who had not shed a tear for years wept like children. One young man who had resisted with scorn the pleadings of a loving mother, and entreaties of friends to strive and lead a better life, to desist from a course that was wasting his fortune and ruining his health, now approached the child, and taking both hands in his, while tears streamed down his cheeks, exclaimed, in deep emotion:—

"God bless you, my little angel. You have saved me from ruin and disgrace, from poverty and a drunkard's grave. If there are angels on earth, you are one! God bless you! God bless you!" and putting a note into the hand of the mother, said:—

"Please accept this trifle as a token of my regard and esteem, for your little girl has done me a kindness I can never repay; and remember, whenever you are in want, you will find me a true friend;" at the same time giving her his name and address.

Taking her child by the hand she turned to go, but, pausing at the door, said:—

"God bless you, gentlemen! Accept the heartfelt thanks of a poor, friendless woman for the kindness and courtesy you have shown her." Before anyone could reply she was gone.

A silence of several minutes ensued, which was broken by the proprietor, who exclaimed:—

"Gentlemen, that lady was right, and I have sold my last

glass of whiskey; if anyone of you want anymore, you will have to go elsewhere."

"And I have drunk my last glass of whiskey," said a young man who had long been given up as having sunk too low ever to reform, and as utterly beyond the reach of those who had a deep interest in his welfare. —Selected

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