

1984

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. 3
July, Aug., Sept.
1984

Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, Okla.
73044

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

(USPS054-680)

Volume 16

July, Aug., Sept.

No. 3

Table of Contents

	Page
July 1	The Transfiguration of Jesus Christ 1
8	The Devil-Possessed Son..... 5
15	Being the Lord's Little Ones..... 9
22	Lesson On Forgiveness 12
29	Jesus Sends out the Seventy..... 18
Aug. 5	Who Is My Neighbor?..... 22
12	The Hindrances of Earthly Care..... 25
19	Lesson On Prayer and Importunity..... 32
26	Christ Concerning Marriage and Divorce..... 35
Sept. 2	The Peril of Riches..... 39
9	Parable of the Householder 45
16	Desire for Pre-eminence Rebuked..... 48
23	Covetousness Rebuked 52
30	God's Fourth-Degree Mercy 56

Publishing the Bible truths in the interest of
Jesus Christ and His Church
Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Wayne Murphey

Subscription Price-50¢ a copy for quarter of year, or
\$2.00 per year, issued quarterly.

Second class postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma

Published Quarterly By

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
920 W. Mansur Ave.
Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044

Theme for Third Quarter, 1984



We will continue in this quarter our studies of precious lessons from the life and earthly ministry of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Beginning with His transfiguration at that northern most point of His earthly travels, we will journey with Him and His disciples as they prepare to turn their steps toward the inevitable climax of Christ's mission to the lost world of humanity. His meeting with different ones along the way are sure to provide wholesome and valuable instruction for us now. Mary and Martha, the rich young ruler, and the lawyer who unconsciously left a challenging question, "Who is my neighbor?" will hold very interesting as well as profitable lessons for one and all. May the precious Holy Spirit bless and inspire our hearts with the reality of this account of our Lord's dealings with men.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

—o—

July 1, 1984

THE TRANSFIGURATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Matt. 17:1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

Luke 9:29 And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening.

Mark 9:3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

Luke 9:30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses, and Elias:

31 Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

Matt. 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

Memory Verse: For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 2 Peter 1:17.

Central Thought: The eternal glory of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was made manifest, previewing the glory that was to be His when He would triumph over the grave and ascend to the right hand of God.

Word Definitions: *Transfigured:* To be changed from one form to another; transformation. It is interesting to note that the Greek word is "metamorphosis" which is the identity of the change that takes place from a caterpillar to the fully developed butterfly. *Fuller:* One who cleans, bleaches, and whitens cloth. *Glistening:* Radiant. *Decease:* Christ's death.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our last previous lesson we were with Jesus and His disciples up north of the Sea of Galilee in the area of the towns of Caesarea and Philippi where He drew from them the wonderful confession of His Sonship with God. Going on up farther north He comes with Peter, James, and John (as is generally believed) unto the heights of Mount Hermon. Here, in this farthest point north that He was ever to go during His earthly ministry, God saw fit to manifest to these faithful disciples His Son in glory and honour. While the world scurried on in its daily pursuits, the Master and these three men went apart into a high mountain to pray. It is surely proven a worthy venture for anyone to do at anytime. To go apart from the hustle and bustle of life to be alone with God brings great blessings and reward. Luke tells us that as Christ was praying a change began to take place in Him. Doubtless, Jesus was thinking and praying concerning the soon coming sojourn He would make to Jerusalem and the things that were to take place there. He was fully aware of what was in store for Him,

and in this lonely mountain He was pouring out His heart to His Father for strength and power to fully accomplish this holy mission upon which He was divinely sent. The disciples were probably agreeing in prayer at the first, but, as Luke informs us, they became heavy with sleep. We have included expressions from each one of the three writers who told of this. Being transformed into the realm of glory, Moses and Elias drew near to converse with Him concerning what He had been praying about. What did the decease that Christ was to accomplish soon at Jerusalem mean to them? It meant all their success, life, and fulfillment. Peter remembers this experience and made mention of it in his second epistle, 2 Peter 1:17 and 18, from which we have our Memory Verse.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Jesus take these three disciples?
2. What was Jesus engaged in while there?
3. What happened to Him while there?
4. What was the disciples' reaction to this glorious scene?
5. How did the disciples know that the two men were Moses and Elias?
6. What were these two men talking to Jesus about?
7. What did Christ's decease at Jerusalem mean to Moses and Elias?
8. What was God's reaction to Peter's idea about the three tabernacles?
9. What are we to do with God's well beloved Son?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, what a glorious place that holy mount was! Can you not picture Jesus in prayer, pouring out His heart to God? There the disciples began to fall asleep, as they later would do in Gethsemane. Suddenly the disciples woke up, and what a sight met their eyes! Somehow God made these disciples aware of who these men were. It was Moses and Elijah, two of the most colorful and important characters of the Old Testament. Moses had been buried in the plains of Moab, and no man had ever found His grave. Elijah had gone up to heaven in a whirlwind. But here they were just as plain as day conversing with their Lord and Saviour. I wonder just how their conversation went. No doubt there was rejoicing, anticipation, praise, honour, and worship to God intermingled in their expressions. Jesus would need the comfort and consolation

from this wonderful experience. The days ahead would be filled with conflict and trial. Impulsive Peter, with his quick ideas, did not realize what he was saying. The idea just struck his fancy that three monuments for these servants would be fitting tribute. But, oh, listen to the words that shaped themselves overhead and out of the cloud! "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him!" Falling on their faces, the disciples inwardly quaked with fear. Oh, think of the glory and majesty of that moment! God speaking from glory, and the scene of Christ's glory imbedded on their minds produced impressions that time could not wear out. How wonderful to know that we believe in and know a real Saviour, who was from everlasting to everlasting, who came from God, and went to God. Oh, let us serve Him faithfully and He will bring us to His everlasting glory and crown us with His life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

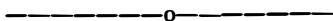
Three disciples: Peter, James, and John, observed a mountain top experience. As we ponder the different instances in the Bible that record such experiences, there were always good implications. There are a number who found the presence of God on a mountain. It was on Mount Horeb that God spoke to Moses on the burning bush as he tended the sheep. It was on Mount Sinai that God met Moses and imparted the law to him. The presence of God was so real that it made Moses' face shine. It was on a mountain that Moses finally went to be with the Lord. It was in the mount that Elijah heard the still, small voice of God. There were times when Jesus felt a need to go off into the mountains to be alone with God. He was no stranger to mountain top experiences.

We, too, need a mountain top experience. We must know what it means to hear the still, small voice of God, to receive instruction from Him to obtain strength for that which lies ahead.

A mountain top experience requires time and effort. It is not something that just suddenly plays upon your emotions. Emotions are created by the circumstances around you. Peter, James, and John had this mountain top experience because they were willing to exert the effort that it took to scale the mountain with the Lord. They devoted the time to pick their way up the mountain and they enjoyed the blessings of that heavenly scene. We, too, must carefully choose our way

through life, putting forth the effort to press up the Highway of Holiness, and then we may know the joy of dwelling in heavenly realms.

—Wayne Murphey



July 8, 1984

THE DEVIL-POSSESSED SON

Mark 9:17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing; have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

26 And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

Matt. 17:20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove

hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Memory Verse: Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Mark 9:23.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ has power to cast out of people's lives unclean spirits and devils, and through faith, prayer, and fasting, people yet today can be delivered from the devil and all of his woeful bondage.

Word Definitions: *Dumb:* Mute; cannot speak. *Teareth:* Rend asunder by separating parts. *Pineth away:* To shrivel or dry up; to go down in health or strength.

LESSON BACKGROUND

While Jesus and the three disciples were up on the holy Mount of Transfiguration, the world languished under the dark control of Satan. "When the world was held in bondage under Satan's dismal sway, Jesus healed their dread diseases: **He is just the same today!**" Yes, Satan's power oppressed mankind in general. A survey of the accounts concerning Christ's visit to this earth shows a dark and dismal picture of suffering and sorrow. Jesus and the three rejoined the rest of the disciples, finding great multitudes about them, and the scribes questioning them. And it was all about this certain man who had brought his sad case to the disciples for to get some help. Satan had entered into this son, and had been there (according to the father's testimony) from a child. Luke tells us that he was an only child. We could judge that this son was not a full grown person, yet was not a small child either. He had probably been in this condition for several years. A pitiful case it was, indeed. But let us notice something. Just as the deliverance of the Canaanite woman's daughter hinged upon the faith of that mother, just so the deliverance of this son by Christ is hinging upon this father mustering faith to receive it. Sometimes we wonder why or how Satan is permitted to prevail in some cases as he does. If the devil could have his own way, he would no doubt rush upon all humanity and drag them down into the depths of torment and suffering. But he is restrained, kept, and hindered in some. Satan works where he can find and secure a place. There could very well have been sin and selfish indulgence on

the part of this father. Faith, prayer, and self denial counteracts the works of Satan. Jesus was ready for this venture. The disciples were not. Note Jesus in His reaction to this. Note also His response to the father's plea and wavering faith. There are some important lessons here. Matthew's account of Jesus' response to the disciples' query is very clear.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus' response to the statement that His disciples could not cast out the devil?
2. Was the faithless generation His disciples, this father, or both?
3. What did the father say that gave evidence to doubt?
4. The father had an "if" and Jesus had an "if". Which one of these "if's" had credit to it?
5. Is prayer and fasting important in dealing with such conditions? Why?
6. Why could not the disciples cast him out?
7. Why is doubting a hindering and weakening influence?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Unbelief is a lack of faith. Perhaps one has some faith, but is lacking faith to a certain extent. Jesus wants us to have faith like a mustard seed. He said in Matthew 13:31, 32, that a mustard seed is the least of all seeds, but when it is sown it becomes the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air lodge in the branches of it. The mustard seed thrives and increases. That is the way our faith must be. It must increase and grow bountifully. And it will as we keep in mind the power and authority of Jesus. The disciples lacked faith. This faith can abound through fasting and prayer. We have need of abounding faith. We want the love of God to abound in our hearts along with it. This father lacked faith also. He had some faith, but in endeavoring to assert this faith, he was made conscious of the enormity of his unbelief. The Lord can help our unbelief to be transformed into faith. Many things are too big for us, but through triumphing faith we can overcome. We have a mighty Saviour who can help us face the stormy gales of life. Every need can be met and every problem can be solved. "Bring him to me!" We can take it all to Jesus. Every one of us has a wonderful privilege to cut across every opposition of the devil and come

directly to Christ for the needs of our lives. Pray in secret, and pray with one another. As we pray, we draw closer to God. Jesus had been engaged in prayer up on the holy Mount. He was a Man of prayer. Let us be prayer warriors. Pray without ceasing. Keep an attitude of prayer always. Then we can be ready when the crises come. God will help and deliver. Luke tells us in his account of this that the people were all amazed at the mighty power of God. God was glorified in answering this poor father's prayer.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems that in many cases in the Bible those who sought after Jesus for help persevered against discouragement of some type. This man brought his devil-possessed son to Jesus' disciples to be healed and they could do nothing for him. It would have been very easy for the father to have taken the son home with the impression that the gospel was a sham. However, his desire and need for help kept him right there and what little faith he had caused him to ask the second time.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Can you not feel that father reaching out to God with those words? Words could not express the full desire that he had, but we can glimpse his deep-seated yearning. The father could have, with indignation, interrogated Jesus and asked why His disciples had been a failure. He could have questioned why God had allowed his young son to become devil possessed, but all these things were laid aside and he reached out in humility for help. One writer stated, "Man is not made to question, but adore." When we commit our all into the hands of God, not charging Him foolishly, but reaching forth with full confidence and thanksgiving, we are getting in line for a blessing.

The same writer declared, "Faith is not reason's labor, but repose." Undoubtedly, the father did not understand how his son came to be devil possessed, neither do we find him telling Christ how to handle the situation. His faith simply laid it all in the hands of Jesus. We may not understand the why or wherefore of the problems that touch us so deeply, but faith will just rest them in the hands of God, knowing that He holds the answer to each one of them.

—Wayne Murphey

July 15, 1984

BEING THE LORD'S LITTLE ONES

Matt. 18:1 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

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

7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

Memory Verse: Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matt. 18:3.

Central Thought: To become one of the Lord's little ones assures us of salvation from sin and a lost state, protection and care, and a place in His everlasting kingdom.

Word Definitions: *Converted:* Turned around to go in the opposite direction. *Offend, offence:* To ensnare or trap, the Greek word being "scandal" or "scandalize".

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus is in Capernaum, and has just had the tribute money affair settled by sending Peter down to the sea to get the money that was to be found in the fish's mouth. The disciples are wondering just who will be the greatest in the kingdom of the Lord. Their query shows the shallowness and blindness of their minds, yet influenced by the carnal pattern of humanity around them. But Jesus is their teacher. There is nothing quite so heart warming and lovely as a little child in the bloom of innocence and sweetness. Jesus uses this as an object lesson for us. When Jesus speaks of "little ones" He is speaking principally of those who humble themselves to follow Him in His purity, humility, and utter faith in God. He speaks about these little ones being offended, despised, lost, and astray. To offend is to ensnare or injure. To despise is to look down upon with scorn or contempt. To lead astray is to beguile or deceive. For each of these danger points Jesus reveals the all-sufficient counteraction of the Father to offset any effort to harm these "little ones." This thought of being humble and meek is so important that enough stress cannot be put upon it. It is the insurance against loss and defeat in serving God. Pride will ruin everything, but humility will preserve. When we assume the rightful proportions as to what we really are in God's sight, this puts us in focus with God. He uses the hand, the foot, and the eye as agents that Satan works through to cause us to offend. These three things can correspond directly with the lusts of the flesh (the hand), the lust of the eyes (the eye), and the pride of life (the foot). 1 John 2:16. These things will render us not as "little ones." They will disannul the lowly and simple way that He would have us own. Let us take heed to this lesson and make sure that we are the Lord's "little ones." —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you think could have been prompting the disciples to ask this question concerning the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2. What causes people to strive to be great in the eyes of people?
3. Can you name the dangers that the Lord's "little ones" are constantly in?
4. Can we take verses 8 and 9 literally? Just what is He referring to?
5. What about the angels, and what are the angels doing beholding the face of the Father?
6. Is it a very serious thing to seek to harm one of the Lord's saints?
7. What will the man do if one of his sheep goes astray? How does this relate to the Lord and His "little ones"?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful to know that we are the Lord's little ones! The first line of Song No. 425 in the *Evening Light Songs* says: "Rejoice, little ones, in the promise divine, for Jesus has willed that His glory be thine!" When we come down off of our high horse of pride (and we were all up there at one time) and reckon ourselves to be what we really are (less than nothing, poor and needy) we are welcomed into His arms of salvation, mercy, protection, and hope. When Saul was little in his own sight, he was anointed king over Israel. 1 Sam. 15:17. But, being lifted up with pride, Saul fell from God's favor. Oh, it is so tragic for a soul to lose sight of how small and insignificant he really is! Pride infests our world today. Strife and turmoil would all end if everyone could but be aware of how little they really are. Here in our lesson we have the clue to spiritual success and prosperity. Jesus humbled Himself and became nothing. He was cut off out of the land of the living. He received no just judgment at the hands of men. And He did not fight it, either. He submitted to the cross, committing Himself to God who judges righteously. How much better it is to be one of the Lord's little ones, than to try to push and promote one's self. I once learned a little poem in school and have never forgotten it: "I'm nobody. Who are you? Are you nobody, too? Then there's a pair of us—don't tell! They'd banish us, you know. How dreary to be somebody; how public like a frog—to tell our name the live-long day to some admiring bog!" Oh, to be humble and meek like Jesus was. There we shall not fear what man shall do unto us, for we know that God is on our side. We will never perish if we become and remain one of the Lord's little ones. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Many a parallel can be drawn from our lesson on becoming as little children. By observing children's attitudes, we catch a glimpse of what we should be. Notice how forgiving they are. Someone can do a child wrong and in just a few minutes he will have forgotten it and is ready to be friends. What confidence little children have in their parents. They think that Dad and Mom are the greatest and they have no anxiety about being provided for. They are ever eager and anxious to learn. Their minds are always probing for more knowledge. They are pliable in that they are easily convinced of that which is right. Last but not least is the humility that they exhibit. If they get out of line, sometimes just a word and discipline will bring about a repentant attitude. Many times a child will be the most lovable after receiving correction. J. R. Lowell one time wrote, "Children are God's apostles, sent forth, day by day, to preach of love, and hope and peace."

Inasmuch as a saint should be as a little child, let it never be said that a saint is childish. How repulsive it is to see a child throw a fit, sulk, pout, hit back, or talk ugly. These are things that the enemy of our souls would like to see mature, grown, professed Christians do. It is something that we must always guard against. We cannot fight, hit back, or talk ugly even in the name of defending the truth. —Wayne Murphey

—o—

July 22, 1984

LESSON ON FORGIVENESS

Matt. 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their Lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Memory Verse: And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Eph. 4:32.

Central Thought: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matt. 6:14, 15. Our fellowman's trespasses are but a drop in a bucket in comparison with our trespasses against God.

Word Definitions: *Talent:* A Jewish coin or weight, worth about \$1500.00. Ten thousand (the highest number in the Bible) talents would equal \$15,000,000.00 (fifteen million dollars). *Pence:* The Greek word is "denaria" which was a Roman coin worth about 14¢. One hundred pence would be about \$14.00 (fourteen dollars). *Trespass:* Sin; error; transgression; fault.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In Luke 17:3, 4, we have the account where Jesus said to forgive your brother seven times in a day if he sins against you. Part of the Lord's prayer given in Matt. 6:9-14, was to ask forgiveness for our debts as we forgive our debtors. Luke 11:2-4, has the same account but uses the term "sins" instead of "debts". This lesson and what the Bible teaches about forgiveness can be a close and difficult matter. It calls for much patience and forbearance. In the parable Jesus used in our lesson we should observe the comparison that Jesus expressed between our sins against God, and the sins and trespasses of others against us. He uses extreme comparisons to get the thought across. The \$15,000,000.00 figure is that of the silver talent being multiplied by 10,000. The gold talent was worth about \$25,000.00 It represents an impossible figure. What kind of weight that would be! If pressured to pay up we would utterly be in despair. We would be begging for mercy. Let the weight of that burden rest on us for awhile. An average person who could earn \$5.00 an hour would have to work night and day for 345 years to get enough money to pay that off. It is an impossible figure. Christ uses this to express the enormity of our debt to God in the way of sin and transgression. The \$14.00 is a very small amount. It looks like this man who had been forgiven of that tremendous debt would have been walking around with such joy and freedom that he would have been just looking for someone to forgive. This shows how inconsistent a person can be. To hold a grudge or malice for someone who trespasses against us is to forfeit all of God's mercy and forgiveness. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Figure up how often a trespass would have to be committed to amount to 490 times in a day, and then in a week.
2. What is the Lord trying to show us here?
3. Is there any possible way to get around this?
4. Is it possible to absolutely forgive everyone every time they trespass against us?
5. What does unforgiveness do to the heart?
6. In what way does Christ show the inconsistency of unforgiveness?
7. Is there any chance of this being a real problem to anyone?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What does it mean to forgive? It means to absolve and free from all guilt and consequences. It means to forgo or cancel all revenge or retaliation. When one forgives another, it is as if the offense had never happened. No getting even or inward satisfaction to see something happen to the offender is allowed in the heart of one who truly forgives. Just as God forgives, so are we to forgive. God accepts the feelings and dealings that we have toward others as the feelings and dealings He has toward us. How would we like to go into the presence of God knowing that He will deal with us just in like manner as we have dealt with others? This is a close thought for us to keep in mind. Oh, how much trouble and strife would cease in the world today if all would forgive and seek no place for revenge! It is one thing to accept and enjoy the blessings of forgiveness, and it is quite another thing to administer this blessing to others. In our lesson we had two men who both cried: "Have patience and I will pay all." One wanted patience and mercy and obtained it, but was unwilling to have patience for so much less. We should arm ourselves against these inconsistencies! In the face of such immoveable commandments such as we have in our lesson, we should diligently discipline ourselves to forgive on the spot every trespass that anyone ever does to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A certain General Oglethorpe told John Wesley, "I never forgive." "Then I hope, sir," replied Wesley, "you never sin." When one declares his inability to forgive, in essence he is saying, "Something has been done to me that I cannot get over." Do you see where the weakness lies? It is not an indication of strength when you are determined to repay a wrong, but it is a fault in your character. It is much nobler to live so that what others do to you will not be the determining factor of how you live your life.

It is an unhealthy body that is unable to repair itself of even a small wound. It is the sign of an unhealthy soul that becomes bitter and unforgiving when it has been mistreated.

This may sound like just a good theory. It is more than just a theory; it is a vital truth. Jesus was the prime example. He was beaten, spit upon, falsely accused, wrongly judged, mocked, reviled, robbed of even his clothes, taunted, and

crucified. After all this, and with the tormentors' attitudes unrepentant, we hear Him saying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

You will find that it is far more productive to pardon than to be resentful. It will save you the torment of frustration, the futility of anger, the poison of hatred, and the cankering and ultimate loss of your soul. —Wayne Murphey

THE INDIAN'S REVENGE

The beautiful precept, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," is drawn from our Lord's sermon on the mount, and should be observed by all professing Christians. But unless we are truly His children, we can never observe this great command as we ought.

History records the fact that the Roman emperor Severus was so much struck with the moral beauty and purity of this statement that he ordered the "Golden Rule" to be inscribed upon the public buildings erected by him. Many facts may be stated, by which untutored heathen and savage tribes in their conduct have put to shame many of those calling themselves Christians, who have indeed the form of godliness, but by their words and actions deny the power of it. One such fact we here relate.

Many years ago, on the outskirts of one of our distant new settlements, was a small but neat and pretty cottage, or homestead, which belonged to an industrious farmer. He had, when quite a lad, left his native England, and sought a home and fortune among his American brethren. It was a sweet and quiet place; the cottage was built upon a gently rising ground, which sloped toward a sparkling rivulet, that turned a large sawmill situated a little lower down the stream. The garden was well stocked with fruit-trees and vegetables, among which the magnificent pumpkins were already conspicuous, though as yet they were wanting in the golden hue which adorns them in autumn. On the hillside was an orchard, facing the south, filled with peach and cherry trees, the latter now richly laden with their crimson fruit. In that direction also extended the lower portion of the farm, now in a high state of cultivation, bearing heavy crops of grass, and Indian corn just coming into ear. On the north and east, the cottage was sheltered by extensive pine woods, beyond which were fine hunting-grounds, where the settlers, when their harvests were

housed, frequently resorted in large numbers to lay in a stock of dried venison for winter use.

At that time the understanding between the whites and the Indians was not good; and they were then far more numerous than they are at the present time, and more feared. It was not often, however, that they came into the neighborhood of the cottage which has been described, though on one or two occasions a few Minateree Indians had been seen on the outskirts of the pine forests, but had committed no outrages, as that tribe was friendly with the white men.

It was a lovely evening in June. The sun had set, though the heavens still glowed with exquisite and radiant tints. The moon shed her silvery light all around, distinctly revealing every feature of the beautiful scene which has been described, and showed the tall, muscular figure of William Sullivan, who was seated upon the door-steps, busily employed in preparing his scythes for the coming hay season. He was a good looking young fellow, with a sunburnt, open countenance; but though kind-hearted in the main, he was filled with prejudices, acquired when in England, against Americans in general, and the North American Indians in particular. As a boy he had been carefully instructed by his mother, and had received more education than was common in those days; but of the sweet precepts of the gospel he was as practically ignorant as if he had never heard them, and in all respects was so thoroughly an Englishman, that he looked with contempt on all who could not boast of belonging to his own favored country. The Indians he especially despised and detested as heathenish creatures, forgetful of the fact that he who has been blessed with opportunities and privileges, and yet has abused them, is in as bad a case, and more guilty in the sight of God, than these ignorant children of the wilds.

So intent was he upon his work, that he heeded not the approach of a tall Indian, accoutred for a hunting excursion, until the words:—

“Will you give an unfortunate hunter some supper, and a lodging for the night?” in a tone of supplication, met his ear.

The young farmer raised his head; a look of contempt curling the corners of his mouth, and an angry gleam darting from his eyes, as he replied in a tone as uncourteous as his words:—

“Heathen Indian dog, you shall have nothing here; be-gone!”

The Indian turned away; then again facing young Sullivan, he said in a pleading voice:—

“But I am very hungry, for it is very long since I have eaten; give only a crust of bread and a bone to strengthen me for the remainder of my journey.”

“Get you gone, heathen hound,” said the farmer; “I have nothing for you.”

A struggle seemed to rend the breast of the Indian hunter, as though pride and want were contending for the mastery; but the latter prevailed, and in a faint voice he said:—

“Give me but a cup of cold water, for I am very faint.”

This appeal was no more successful than the others. With abuse he was told to drink of the river which flowed some distance off. This was all that he could obtain from one who called himself a Christian, but who allowed prejudice and obstinacy to steel his heart—which to one of his own nation would have opened at once—to the sufferings of his red-skinned brother.

With a proud yet mournful air the Indian turned away, and slowly proceeded in the direction of the little river. The weak steps of the native showed plainly that his need was urgent; indeed he must have been reduced to the last extremity, ere the haughty Indian would have asked again and again for that which had been once refused.

(To Be Continued)

July 29, 1984

JESUS SENDS OUT THE SEVENTY

Luke 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, now shoes: and salute no man by the way.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

17 And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Memory Verse: Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. Matt. 10:16.

Central Thought: Jesus Christ needs vessels to work through today: men and women who will leave all and go when and where He leads them to search out the lost and needy souls for the kingdom of God.

Word Definitions: *Scrip:* A wallet or leather pouch for food. *Salute:* To greet, welcome, or embrace.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In Luke 9:51, we are told that the time came that Christ should be received up, and Jesus stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. This could mean only one thing. The days of His earthly ministry were swiftly drawing to a close. Luke provides us with a special insight here to Christ's inner thinking. Christ's mission was being fulfilled. Soon it would be time for Him to offer His life as a sacrifice for the world. He begins to work His way southward in the direction of Judea. One village of the Samaritans refused to receive Him and His disciples. Rather than seek revenge, Jesus directed them to go to another village. Three men came to Him wanting to follow Him.

He let them know what they were in for, and what it would mean to leave all to follow Him. Then this brings us up to His appointment and commissioning of the seventy. Not only had Jesus the twelve apostles as His deputy-force, but He had also recognized among the great company of those who journeyed with Him seventy other worthy and trusted men. As He knew that His journey toward Jerusalem would be slow, and that He would be passing through many little towns and villages along the way, He deemed it wise to send forth an ambassage to go before His face. It seems that His commission of the seventy did not have quite the import that His sending forth the twelve had. (Matthew 10). Nevertheless, the power of God was with these men to accomplish great things. The consequences of rejecting them were just as great. Jesus rejoiced with these men, but cautioned them as to where their real rejoicing should be. This is for us today, also. Satan was being dethroned from the realms of power over man. Those who reject Christ's Word will not escape, but those who hear will be saved.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Christ's purpose in sending forth the seventy?
2. Do you think that He could probably have used more?
3. Ponder the Lord's prayer request. Why did He make such a request?
4. Can you think of any reason why the labourers are few?
5. Why did He not want them to salute any man by the way, or as they travelled?
6. What do you think the shaking of the dust off their feet signifies?
7. Is Jesus saying in our lesson that He saw Satan kicked out out of heaven? What did He mean by His statement in verse 18?
8. What is the real cause for us to rejoice?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In the Old Testament, Moses had seventy elders to help him with the great task of leading the children of Israel. I have my doubts that this number pattern was intended to influence Christ in His sending forth the seventy here. I would rather think that seventy good and trustworthy men were all that He could muster from the ranks of those who followed Him. He said, "The harvest is great, but the labourers are

few." How true that is today! I look around in our camp meetings. I see the empty front benches that at one time held those dear ministers who are gone on to glory. The labourers are few. With the great work that Christ desired to accomplish, I believe that He could have used 2 or 3 times that number of faithful men. This is one thing He told us to pray for. "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." Think about the dangers that awaited these brethren. As lambs among wolves He was sending them. Two by two they went forth. They were being sent of the Lord. If they were rejected, they were not to allow any grief or remorse to fill their hearts. They were to shake off the dust and go on. That is the way it is today. The gospel is refused by the majority, but they will have to answer. Think of the hundreds and thousands of cities, towns, and villages across our land. The majority of these places have not the chance to hear the real truth. What are we to do? Pray to the Lord of the harvest. Say, as Isaiah of old, "Here am I, O Lord, send me!"

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The New Testament Church is modeled after the Old Testament system that was established by God. That which is in the Old Testament is a similitude of that which is in the New. Christ chose twelve apostles which would correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel. When Moses needed someone to help with the affairs of leading the children of Israel, God told him to choose out seventy to fill that need. In our lesson we find Christ choosing out seventy to help spread the gospel to different areas. Christ did not plan that the appointment of workers would end with seventy. After appointing them, He instructed them to pray that the Lord would send forth more laborers. Here is the commission that applies to each one of us. It may be that the time of harvest is nearing the end, but there is still a need to glean out the few honest souls that are left. When this is done, it will be time to call all things into judgment.

I am glad that along with the commission came authority. "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." Many people take this verse very literally. However, if applied in context I am inclined to believe that Jesus was referring to spiritual things. In Matt. 23:23, Jesus referred to the scribes and Pharisees as "serpents;

a generation of vipers." Christ has given us power to overcome all things through which Satan is working to oppose the gospel of salvation, as we labor in the Lord's harvest field.

—Wayne Murphey

—————o—————
August 5, 1984

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

Luke 10:25 And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.

28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Memory Verse: As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6:10.

Central Thought: It is God's will and good pleasure for us to do good and lend a helping hand to everyone we come in contact with. The question is not: "Who is my neighbor?" but rather "Will I be a neighbor to those around me in need?"

Word Definitions: *Neighbor:* One who is near to us; an associate or fellow man. *Tempt:* To test thoroughly.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In Mark 12:28, Jesus was asked by a certain scribe as to what the greatest commandment was. Christ's answer was similar to the answer that the tempting lawyer gave to Jesus in our lesson. The first commandment is quoted from Deut. 6:4 and 5. But the second commandment is found lodged among the various ordinances that God gave to Israel in Lev. 19:18: "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord." This is actually the substance of the Golden Rule which states: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Jesus put it this way in Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." The lawyer answered Jesus rightly. Think what a transformation this world would undergo if everyone would begin to keep this Golden Rule! Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live." Oh, how many problems among people can be traced to their root and found in the violation of this simple commandment. Is this Scripture very important to us obtaining eternal life? Jesus said it was. The lawyer recognized this, also, but why did he seek to justify himself? See his shield in asking who his neighbor was. Why would he want to justify himself? It is a matter of life or death. Why did he not seek a cover for the first commandment? Perhaps he felt that his profession of godliness would take care of that. This relationship with his fellowman was a different thing, however. This had a way of showing itself. So he decided to narrow down the scope of his responsibility by limiting those who would qualify as his neighbor. Jesus showed him differently. He showed him that the question is not, "Who is my neighbor?" but "Are we willing to be a neighbor?"

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Was this lawyer's attempt to justify himself the right thing to do?

2. Are the two commandments mentioned here to be obeyed today?
3. Why did Jesus ask the lawyer how he read the law?
4. What was the man's answer?
5. How did Jesus respond to this answer?
6. Why does a man seek to soothe his conscience or justify himself?
7. What kind of men were the two who passed by the wounded man?
8. What all did the Samaritan do?
9. What does Jesus tell us to do in times of others' need?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

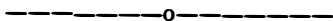
If we are not careful we may be like this lawyer in trying to justify ourselves. It is so easy to do. It is hard to face up to one's shortcomings and faults. The lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?" was not asked in an effort to find out who his neighbor was so that he could be sure to love his neighbor. It was an effort to excuse himself from responsibility, and to cover over things wherein he had failed in his life. What a mistake so easily made! Jesus wisely disregarded this man's bluff and went right ahead to illustrate this important truth. The term "The Good Samaritan" has become a classic figure of one who stops to help a person in their time of need. Out on the highway of life are many people who are broken down, so to speak. Misfortune and adversity have brought a halt to all their plans and purposes. Many lie wounded and despaired of life. A sharp tongue has stripped them of courage and dignity. How can we help them? Go to them, and seek to bring about a healing. Let us not push them down farther, but see what we could do to help lift them up. Let us pour in oil and wine. Oil and wine are both symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Do we have a good supply on hand to give to people? Let us make straight paths for our feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. (Heb. 12:13). The bruised reed let us not break, nor the smoking flax quench until we can bring forth judgment unto victory. (Matt. 12:20). Let us be a repairer of the breach, a restorer of paths to dwell in. (Isa. 58:12). Let us let the living waters from heaven flow into our souls and out to those around us. With this kind of attitude we can have the mind of Christ. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is much wisdom portrayed in our lesson. Jesus was interrogated by a lawyer who was undoubtedly trained in his art, but notice how Jesus placed the lawyer on the defensive. Jesus answered the first question, not by sailing into a lengthy discourse, but by simply stating what was recorded in the law. This is a good lesson for us today. When someone questions your belief, stay with the Bible and you will be on safe ground. There was nothing in this response that the lawyer could condemn, so he inadvertently ensnared himself by asking Jesus to explain the Scripture. His self-righteous profession would have upheld him in doing good to those of his own nationality. However, Christ so aptly described to him the definition of a neighborly act that there is no record that the lawyer offered any response.

It would be good if we could so appropriately respond to the world today. By the help of the Lord and by following in Jesus' footsteps, I believe we can do just that.

Notice briefly the thoughtfulness of the good Samaritan. He used all within his means to relieve the pain of the man who fell among thieves. He used oil to soften the painful wounds. He poured wine into them to cleanse and kill the infection. He used all within his possession to the best potential. He gave of his means for lodging. He even committed himself for future expenses in caring for the wounded man. If we will use our talents to their fullest potential to help our fellow brother as this good Samaritan did, we will truly be fulfilling this commandment of Christ. —Wayne Murphey



August 12, 1984

THE HINDRANCE OF EARTHLY CARE

Luke 10:38 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

Matt. 6:26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Memory Verse: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Phil. 4:6.

Central Thought: The cares of this present life can so take up the interests and concerns of our hearts that we will be hindered from receiving the help and encouragement that God wants to give us for duty and success.

Word Definitions: "*Be careful for nothing*": The Greek expression is: "Be over-careful for nothing." *Cumbered*: Over-busied.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Mary and Martha were sisters who, according to John 11:1, lived in Bethany, a town about two miles to the east of Jerusalem. It is very evident that the sequence of Luke's account was not always in proper order. Most of the incidents related from Luke 9:51, to Luke 19:28, were supposedly to have taken place during Christ's journey to Jerusalem. Our account in this lesson doubtless must have taken place just prior to Christ's entry to Jerusalem. Along with the section taken from

the sermon on the mount we have a strong warning and admonition to us concerning the danger and spiritual peril of earthly care. The scene of Martha's home is typical of just about any home. Anyone who has the responsibility of a household has certain duties and responsibilities that have to be consistently performed and seen about. This realm of labor, or this position of leadership and responsibility is not to be tampered with by our Lord. Jesus deals with this situation very positively. He does not criticize or condemn Martha's position, but He *does* elevate Mary's position above Martha's. The mention that Jesus makes of the fowls and the lilies in His sermon on the mount is very pointed and plain. These are common things that Jesus uses to illustrate His point. The fowls are relieved of the toil of sowing, reaping, and storage. The heavenly Father feeds them. It would be interesting to be informed that birds are among the biggest gobblers of food in the animal kingdom. It has been said that in one day a bird can eat several times its weight in food. The multiplicity of the breeds and sizes and colors of birds and the vastness of their numbers also illustrate the heavenly Father's design and care. The same is true with the flowers. Who does not marvel and thrill at the color, fragrance, and design of the many flowers that adorn our fields and gardens? These are also not allowed the responsibility of sewing and spinning, yet their beauty far exceeds all the wealth and grandeur of Solomon or any other earthly monarch. It is God that supports and cares for these masterpieces of His creation. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did the Lord feel about Martha's work?
2. What were Martha's feelings toward Mary?
3. What value did sitting at the feet of Jesus have to Mary?
4. What is the "one thing" that is "needful"?
5. What will become of all of our earthly care?
6. What does the Lord tell us to behold and consider?
7. Is it possible to expect the Lord to care for us like He does the birds and flowers?
8. What does the Lord command us to seek first?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Mary loved to sit at Jesus' feet to hear His Word. She lost interest in serving the physical needs in view of the fact that before her was One who had the Words of eternal life. Volun-

tarily Mary positioned herself at Jesus' feet. Oh, what a wonderful place for us all! "Sitting at the feet of Jesus! There I love to weep and pray, while I from His fulness gather grace and comfort every day." Mary had to withdraw from the normal routine of life to take time to fix her mind and attention on what the Lord had to say. So must we take time to be holy. It takes time to build Christian character through the avenue of Bible study and prayer. A person who wants to be spiritual and find success in the Christian life must take time to be alone with the Lord. I am sure that if we will take time to pray and feed our souls, we will be able also to take care of the duties of domestic life. Martha's position and action as to her executing her duties as a head of a household is not condemned, but her feelings of indignation against Mary and her implication that Jesus did not care was lovingly and firmly rebuked by the Lord. Jesus was going to see to it that the needs of life would be met. Where did Jesus get the bread and fish upon the fire when He appeared to the disciples after He was risen from the dead? Where did the fish come from that filled the nets of the disciples after that fruitless night of fishing? It was the care of the Lord, commanding the elements of nature for the benefit of the children of His choice. God still cares for us. All worry, fret, fear, and doubt can be easily quenched in the light of the truth of the lesson today.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

All things have properties of evolution when they are left to themselves. Some things will get better and some things will get worse. A sorrow will soften if it is not nurtured. Time has a way of healing it. Care is the opposite. It worsens with time. In order to rid yourself of an over abundance of care, you must actively pursue that goal.

The weight of care we feel may be determined by our attitude toward it. Perhaps Martha would have had a more pleasant day if she had considered the situation that she found herself in as a privilege and opportunity to serve her Lord by preparing Him a meal. Instead, it seemed a great burden. Many times we dwell on only those things that appear burdensome to us rather than looking for the blessings offered in each situation.

Once there was a man who expressed this sentiment. "Take my advice, and never draw caricatures [a picture in

which certain features or mannerisms are exaggerated for satirical effect]. By the long practice of it I have lost the enjoyment of beauty. . . . I never see a face but distorted, and never have the satisfaction to behold the human face divine." There is a secret truth in his statement that can be applied to our lesson on freedom from care. We must not allow ourselves to acquire the habit of perceiving only the negative things in life, but look for the good. James 1:2 and 3, very aptly points this out. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." Facing every-day life with this attitude would eliminate much of the weight of our cares.

Some people mistakenly suppose that freedom from care is freedom from work. This is not so. It simply means that one directs his life in such a way that he is at peace with God, himself, and his surroundings. —Wayne Murphey

THE INDIAN'S REVENGE

(Continued from page 18)

Happily his supplicating appeal was heard by the farmer's wife. Rare indeed is it that the heart of woman is steeled to the cry of suffering humanity; even in the savage wilds of central Africa, the enterprising and unfortunate Mungo Park was over and over again rescued from almost certain death by the kind and generous care of those females whose husbands and brothers thirsted for his blood.

The farmer's wife, Mary Sullivan, heard the whole as she sat hushing her infant to rest; and from the open casement she watched the poor Indian until she saw his form sink, apparently exhausted, to the ground, at no great distance from her dwelling. Perceiving that her husband had finished his work, and was slowly bending his steps toward the stables with downcast eyes—for it must be confessed he did not feel very comfortable—she left the house, and was soon at the poor Indian's side, with a pitcher of milk in her hand, and a napkin, in which was a plentiful meal of bread and roasted kid, with a little parched corn as well.

"Will my red brother drink some milk?" said Mary, bending over the fallen Indian; and as he arose to comply with her invitation, she untied the napkin and bade him eat and be refreshed.

When he had finished, the Indian knelt at her feet, his eyes beamed with gratitude, then in his soft tone, he said:

“Carcoochee protect the white dove from the pounces of the eagle; for her sake the unfledged young shall be safe in its nest, and her red brother will not seek to be revenged.”

Drawing a bundle of heron’s feathers from his bosom, he selected the longest, and giving it to Mary Sullivan, said: “When the white dove’s mate flies over the Indian’s hunting-grounds, bid him wear this on his head.”

He then turned away; and gliding into the woods, was soon lost to view.

The summer passed away; harvest had come and gone; the wheat and maize, or Indian corn, was safely stored in the yard; the golden pumpkins were gathered into their winter quarters, and the forests glowed with the rich and varied tints of autumn. Preparations now began to be made for a hunting excursion, and William Sullivan was included in the number who were going to try their fortune on the hunting-grounds beyond the river and pine forests. He was bold, active, and expert in the use of his rifle and woodman’s hatchet, and hitherto had always hailed the approach of this season with peculiar enjoyment, and no fears respecting the not unusual attacks of the Indians, who frequently waylaid such parties in other and not very distant places, had troubled him.

But now, as the time of their departure drew near, strange misgivings relative to his safety filled his mind, and his imagination was haunted by the form of the Indian whom in the preceding summer he had so harshly treated. On the eve of the day on which they were to start, he made known his anxiety to his gentle wife, confessing at the same time that his conscience had never ceased to reproach him for his unkind behavior. He added, that since then all that he had learned in his youth from his mother upon our duty to our neighbors had been continually in his mind; thus increasing the burden of self-reproach, by reminding him that his conduct was displeasing in the sight of God, as well as cruel toward a suffering brother. Mary Sullivan heard her husband in silence. When he had done, she laid her hand in his, looking up into his face with a smile, which was yet not quite free from anxiety, and then she told him what she had done when the Indian fell down exhausted upon the ground, confessing at the same time that she had kept this to herself, fearing his displeasure, after hearing him refuse any aid. Going to a closet, she took out the beautiful heron’s feather, repeating at the same time the parting words of the Indian, and arguing from them that her husband might go without fear.

"Nay," said Sullivan, "these Indians never forgive an injury."

"Neither do they ever forget a kindness," added Mary. "I will sew this feather in your hunting-cap, and then trust you, my own dear husband, to God's keeping; but though I know He could take care of you without it, yet I remember my dear father used to say that we were never to neglect the use of all lawful means for our safety. His maxim was, 'Trust like a child, but work like a man'; for we must help ourselves if we hope to succeed, and not expect miracles to be wrought in our behalf, while we quietly fold our arms and do nothing. Dear William," she added, after a pause, "now that my father is dead and gone, I think much more of what he used to say than when he was with me; and I fear that we are altogether wrong in the way we are going on, and I feel that if we were treated as we deserve, God would forget us, and leave us to ourselves, because we have so forgotten Him."

The tears were in Mary's eyes as she spoke; she was the only daughter of a pious English sailor, and in early girlhood had given promise of becoming all that a religious parent could desire. But her piety was then more of the head than of the heart; it could not withstand the trial of the love professed for her by Sullivan, who was anything but a serious character, and like "the morning cloud and the early dew," her profession of religion vanished away, and as his wife she lost her relish for that in which she once had taken delight. She was very happy in appearance, yet there was a sting in all her pleasures, and that was the craving of a spirit disquieted and restless from the secret though ever-present conviction that she had sinned in departing from the living God. By degrees these impressions deepened; the Spirit of grace was at work within, and day after day was bringing to her memory the truths she had heard in childhood and was leading her back from her wanderings by a way which she knew not. A long conversation followed; and that night saw the young couple kneeling for the first time in prayer at domestic worship.

(To Be Continued)

NOTICE: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the fourth quarter of 1984 be in this office by Sept. 1. For your convenience there is an order blank at the end of this book.

August 19, 1984

LESSON ON PRAYER AND IMPORTUNITY

Luke 11:1 And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3 Give us day by day our daily bread.

4 And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7 And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Memory Verse: Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Phil. 4:6.

Central Thought: Continuous praying and earnestly holding on to God will bring results. We may be tempted to give up praying but we must hold on and keep seeking God's will to be done.

Word Definition: *Importunity*: The Greek word here means the opposite of bashfulness, shamefacedness, and modesty. It indicates a determination to overcome any hindrance or obstacle or discouragement in the pursuit of the need. It is a holding on for the fulfillment of that need regardless of the opposition.

LESSON BACKGROUND

As a part of the sermon on the mount, Jesus gave us a model prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13). The thought that He no doubt had in this was not merely words to repeat. It was rather a guideline to follow in our approach and expressions to God. In our lesson today we have Jesus giving a nearly identical prayer form. It is very evident that this occasion was not the same as that mentioned concerning the sermon on the mount. So we have in the Scripture two witnesses that relate Jesus telling the manner in which to pray. Both witnesses agree. This guideline to prayer should not be taken lightly. The account in Matt. 6:9-13 has one sentence that this account in Luke does not have, and that is the closing: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." There are some translations that exclude this from the text. It is a good inserted closing however; one that we should employ.

Then we have the parable of the man who came to his friend's house at midnight for some bread. This is, as are some others of Jesus' illustrations, an extreme case to bring out the value of importuning. This is somewhat a similar case to the one in Luke 18, about the widow and the unjust judge. Survey this story in our lesson today. Feel the import and the weight of Christ's counsel here. Picture it in your mind. View the position of both men. The man in bed, comfortably settled for the night, refusing to grant his friend's request, was not afraid of offending him. He was his friend. He knew that it would do very little damage if he would turn over and go to sleep, but the man below kept calling and knocking. This is what Jesus is talking about. We must keep on asking, seeking, and knocking. What a glorious privilege we have to pray and importune with God!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did the disciples desire of the Lord?
2. Do we need to consider and follow the guideline that Jesus gave us in this prayer?
3. What was the main purpose and thought that Jesus expressed in this parable?

4. What are the three things that Jesus tells us to do?
5. How willing is the heavenly Father to give good things and the Holy Spirit to His children?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, what a wonderful privilege we have to be able to entreat the great heavenly Father for the needs of our lives! We have a wonderful access and entry to the vast resources of God! At any time of the day and night we can come to our gracious Friend. We need not be afraid to approach Him with the smallest care or need. The expression of our heart uttered before God is very precious to Him. He has given us a glorious invitation to come boldly to the throne of grace. Christ availed Himself of this glorious access. He was a man of prayer. He set a very good example for us to follow. It would be good to accept this form of prayer given in our lesson as a guideline for the way we pray. Look at God as a Father. Christ portrayed Him as a Father: holy, heavenly, righteous, and true. He is to be respected, honored, worshiped, and trusted. When you say these words, let your heart dwell deeply on the meaning of what is spoken. Really and truly hallow and hold sacred His great and mighty name. Plead for His kingdom to come forth in power and glory. His kingdom is the answer for every man's need. Say from your heart: "Thy will be done." Plead for Him to work His sovereign will in your life, and bring yourself into an obedient and submissive attitude. Trust God for today's needs. Not for tomorrow do we have need; it is for today. Forgive as you seek God's mercy and forgiveness. Do not hold things down on people. Give them every chance with you that you are wanting God to give you with Him. Seek for God's guidance on your life's journey. You need it. If we pray this prayer consistently from our hearts and yield to the Lord in all things, we will enjoy the rich, full life that Jesus came to bring us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

John Bunyan summed up a definition of prayer very well: "Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, for such things as God has promised."

Prayer is not an eloquent flowery speech that is read or memorized; it is earnestness of the heart. It is not a definition

of helplessness, but the feeling of it. It is not reminding God of your humility, but the possessing of it. It is not any kind of figure of speech, but the earnestness of the soul.

I do not believe that Christ intended the prayer which He taught His disciples to be used as simply an all-purpose prayer. It undoubtedly contained the substance of their needs at that time and the disciples could relate to each request with a sincere desire of the heart.

Some may pray and in failing to receive their answer at once, develop the idea that God is reluctant to answer their prayer. Our lesson should prove to us that this is not the case. We serve a just, loving Father who gives us everything we need. Many times our prayers and petitions are not with wisdom in the sight of God. One person declared that, "I have lived to thank God that all my prayers have not been answered." Can you imagine the circumstances that might develop and how spoiled we would be if all of our desires were instantly granted? Other times it is simply the timing. God will send the answer at the right time. In this case we should be faithful and patient as we wait upon Him.

—Wayne Murphey

-----o-----

August 26, 1984

CHRIST CONCERNING MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

Matt. 19:1 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan;

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Memory Verse: What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Mark 10:9.

Central Thought: God's original plan for marriage is that a man and a woman be united into one and cleave to each other until death parts them. Nothing but death must sever the tie that binds in holy matrimony.

Word Definitions: *Divorce:* Separation; a dissolving of the marriage bond. *Hardness of heart:* Being destitute of spiritual perception. *Fornication:* Harlotry; unlawful sexual relations between unmarried parties. *Adultery:* Unlawful sexual relations between married persons. *Eunuch:* One who refuses or is deprived of the marriage privilege.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus, after returning from the Mount of Transfiguration, began His slow, deliberate journey to Jerusalem. He departed from Galilee and traveled southward toward Jerusalem and came to the coasts of Judaea. Great multitudes followed Him. Healing virtue went out to heal those who needed help. There He found a group of Pharisees waiting for Him with a question that was designed to draw something from Him that they could criticize. The Pharisees were those who were in pre-eminence among the Jews, and we cannot really be surprised at their feelings and suspicions against Christ. They were reacting as carnal men always do when surpassed by someone superior. They brought up to Him at this time an age-old

issue—that of marriage and divorce. There were (as there are now) diversities of opinion concerning what were just causes for divorce proceedings. Some believed that a man could sever the marriage bond only for his wife's unfaithfulness to him, while others believed that there were other causes that would justify the breaking of the marriage bond. Jesus, as on other occasions, did not answer the question like they wanted Him to. He pointed them to the beginning of time and the institution of marriage. It is important to notice Jesus' explanation of why Moses gave permission for a man to divorce his wife. Read Deut. 24:1, 2. It was because of the hardness of men's hearts that Moses allowed them to put away their wives. If they were forced to keep their wives, no telling what the poor women would have suffered. A hard-hearted man who was made to live with a woman he did not love would, no doubt, heap abuse upon her. But God never planned at the first for this to be. It is His plan for a man to love and keep tender affection for his wife all the days of their life. If a separation takes place, there is no permission granted to remarry, but to rather remain alone with the hope for reconciliation. And, as Christ's final statement in verse 12 implies, there are some people who will remain single for the sake of their spiritual welfare.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the purpose of the Pharisees for asking this question to Jesus?
2. What would cause anyone to ask such a question concerning a man putting away his wife?
3. What did God say for a man to do when he takes a wife?
4. What command did Jesus insert concerning this?
5. Why did Moses permit men to put away their wives?
6. What did Jesus have to say about this?
7. What did Jesus call a person who puts away his wife and marries another?
8. Can you think of a case where an individual would be wise to deny marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

In surveying our lesson today we are impressed with how serious a step in the sight of God marriage truly is. If every person would weigh carefully and prayerfully this great step in life, and want God to go before them, how much pain

would be saved! Marriage is a lifetime proposition. Its laws and standards, according to the plan of God, are binding for life, until death parts them asunder. Oh, think of a young man falling in love with a young woman. After praying and seeking God for guidance, he begins to seek to win her affection. When this is successfully accomplished, a period of courtship follows in which they both get acquainted and enjoy each other's company. Then the engagement is set, and finally the wedding day comes. Oh, how happy they are! How tenderly they love and care for one another! Let us ask ourselves the question: is it possible for this to continue? Yes, it is not only possible, but it is commanded of God. God wills that this married couple remain lovingly attached and endeared to one another throughout all the years they both shall live. What causes or who is responsible for any other course taken? The devil, of course. Satan is the cause of the hardness of men's hearts. What would cause a man or woman to turn against that one whom they had once loved so tenderly? The disciples, in view of the seriousness of this, said (I paraphrase), "If that is the way it is with a man with his wife, it is not good to marry." But let us consider which is harder. Is it easier to stay clear of marriage and keep one's self from temptation than it is to enjoy the grace and benefit of a companion given of God? God said in the beginning, "It is not good that the man should be alone." But Jesus did say that there are some who make themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God. It has been proven that some have refrained from marriage for the sake of the work of God. The apostle Paul was a fair example of this.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

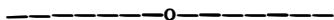
Marriage is not just a union of two creatures; it is the union of two spirits. It is the purpose and plan of God from the beginning of time, that this union be made to perfect the nature of both. Whereas the man is created to be strong and aggressive, this union with the woman will temper him with sympathy, meekness, and tenderness. The woman should be affected by her husband's strength of character and his courage in facing the elements and adversity. In this we find a union that is supporting itself, one that is not self-destructing.

A deterioration of this union of spirits always precedes a divorce. Divorce begins when a couple resolve in their hearts that they no longer care to help and support each other. They

have lost the qualities of a mutual tempering. Can you not see then why God forbids them to marry again? They have erred in following the plan that He has established.

How often the enemy deceives souls into believing that a new marriage partner is the solution to their lack of contentment. However, the study of many cases has proven that often the same problems develop in second marriages. The best policy is to earnestly entreat God for a workable solution to every difficulty and to hold sacred the commitment each has made to the other.

—Wayne Murphey



September 2, 1984

THE PERIL OF RICHES

Mark 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?

Matt. 19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Matt. 19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Mark 10:23 And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answered again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

28 Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Memory Verse: For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Tim. 6:10.

Central Thought: The riches of this present world can cause a soul to be lost if that individual allows his heart to be set upon them.

Word Definitions: *Eye of a needle:* This is an accurate translation, but Adam Clarke states that the word "camel" is translated by several manuscripts to be the word "cable." As the two words are similar in the English, so are they in the Greek. Camel: "kamelon," and cable: "kamilon." I would say that the term cable would be a more accurate and realistic expression.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Luke 18:18, says that the man in our lesson was a ruler. Our lesson tells us that he had great possessions and that he was young. Thus we have the term, "the rich young ruler." He came running to Jesus. The thought of eternal life that he had heard Jesus speak about was on his mind. It sounded very desirous to him, just as it does to anyone. The pursuit of eternal life must be purged of everything selfish and fleshly. No doubt Jesus had several people in His time ask Him about this very important question. Here we have His answer in plain language. Note how Christ points first to the commandments. He names over several, one of which is, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This commandment covers the last six of the ten commandments. What about the other four commandments, though? Why did He not present them first? He wanted this young man to be aware of their value to Him, and also to hear an expression from him about the satisfaction that those commandments afforded. The rich

young ruler's question, "What lack I yet?" shows that he had some doubts. He was keeping the last six, but was unaware of the meaning of the first four, which commandments have to do with our relationship with God. He was breaking that first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." His money was his god. He refused to part with it. We do not hear from this man ever again. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the thought of eternal life so attractive and alluring to the human mind?
2. Of what value is the keeping of the commandments of God to the soul of man?
3. What did Jesus feel within His heart as He beheld the young man?
4. What did Jesus tell this man to do in order to be perfect?
5. What is there about riches that cause men to miss the mark?
6. What do people usually do when riches are in their grasp?
7. What can a person have hope of receiving for leaving all for Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Here was a young ruler who had already attained success and wealth. Some people are honest and work hard for their money. Others are dishonest and crafty in their pursuit of an inheritance. This could have been the case with this young man. He had great possessions, and it could very well be that he had obtained it all honestly. He stated that he had kept these commandments from his youth. What was this man's hang-up? It was the fact that his heart was wrapped up in that earthly gain, and that he was trusting in it for security and success. Jesus knew this. Jesus knew that he would have to get the money out of his heart before he could ever lay hold of eternal life. This is why Jesus answers the questions of His disciples as He did. Who is a rich man? Adam Clarke has a very good expression concerning this: "A rich man, in my opinion, is one who gets more than is necessary to supply all of his wants, and those of his household, and keeps the rest to himself, though the poor are starving through the lack of the necessaries of life. He is a man who *gets* all he can, *saves* all he can, and *keeps* all he has gotten. Can such a person enter God's kingdom? No!"

The disciples had left all to follow Christ. Jesus gave them a bright prospect for the future, and this bright hope is for us today who will leave all to follow Jesus and prove to Him that our treasures are not in this world, but in heaven above.

—Leslie C. Busbee

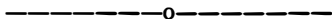
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

If you view a rich man's wealth you may envy him. If you could feel his accompanying misery you would pity him. Riches will not satisfy the heart. If you have riches and are content, it is not because of them, but in spite of them. The thought was once expressed that the rich are the real outcasts of society and that special missions ought to be organized to meet their unique problems.

Riches are the pettiest and the least worthy of gifts which God can bestow. What are riches in comparison to God's eternal Word, to good health, a nice family, wisdom, and understanding? Yet men will toil after riches day and night and exclude God from their lives.

It is not wrong to acquire material goods but the way to receive a blessing is the dispersing of them. Think of the genuine satisfaction the rich young ruler could have felt to see the faces of the poor light up as he provided the necessities of life for them. Jesus taught this simple truth when He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35.

--Wayne Murphey



THE INDIAN'S REVENGE

(Continued from page 31)



The morning that witnessed the departure of the hunters was one of surpassing beauty. No cloud was to be seen upon the brow of William Sullivan. The bright beams of the early sun seemed to have dissipated the fears which had haunted him on the previous evening, and it required an earnest entreaty of his wife to prevent his removing the feather from his cap. She held his hand while she whispered in his ear, and a slight quiver agitated his lips as he said, "Well, Mary dear, if you really think this feather will protect me from the redskins, for your sake I will let it remain." William then put on his cap, shouldered his rifle, and the hunters were soon on their way seeking for game.

The day wore away as is usual with people on such excursions. Many animals were killed, and at night the hunters took shelter in the cave of a bear, which one of the party was fortunate enough to shoot, as he came at sunset toward the bank of the river. His flesh furnished them with some excellent steaks for supper, and his skin spread upon a bed of leaves pillowed their heads through a long November night.

With the first dawn of morning, the hunters left their rude shelter and resumed the chase. William, in consequence of following a fawn too ardently, separated from his companions, and in trying to rejoin them became bewildered. Hour after hour he sought in vain for some mark by which he might thread the intricacy of the forest, the trees of which were so thick that it was but seldom that he could catch a glimpse of the sun; and not being much accustomed to the woodman's life, he could not find his way as one of them would have done, by noticing which side of the trees was most covered with moss or lichen. Several times he started in alarm, for he fancied that he could see the glancing eyeballs of some lurking Indian, and he often raised his gun to his shoulder, prepared to sell his life as dearly as he could.

Toward sunset the trees lessened and grew thinner, and by and by he found himself upon the outskirts of an immense prairie, covered with long grass, and here and there with patches of low trees and brushwood. A river ran through this extensive tract, and toward it Sullivan directed his lagging footsteps. He was both faint and weary, not having eaten anything since the morning. On the bank of the river there were many bushes, therefore Sullivan approached with caution, having placed his rifle at half-cock, to be in readiness against any danger that might present itself. He was yet some yards from its brink, when a rustling in the underwood made him pause, and the next instant out rushed an enormous buffalo. The animals usually roam through the prairies in immense herds, sometimes amounting to many thousands in number; but occasionally they are met with singly, having been separated from the main body either by some accident, or by the Indians, who show the most wonderful dexterity in hunting these formidable creatures. The buffalo paused for a moment, and then lowering his enormous head, rushed forward toward the intruder. Sullivan took aim; but the beast was too near to enable him to do so with that calmness and certainty which would have insured success, and though

slightly wounded, it still came on with increased fury. Sullivan was a very powerful man, and though weakened by his long fast and fatiguing march, despair gave him courage and nerved his arm with strength, and with great presence of mind he seized the animal as it struck him on the side with its horn, drawing out his knife with his left hand, in the faint hope of being able to strike it into his adversary's throat. But the struggle was too unequal to be successful, and the buffalo had shaken him off, and thrown him to the ground, previous to trampling him to death when he heard the sharp crack of a rifle behind him, and in another instant the animal sprang into the air, then fell heavily close by, and indeed partly upon, the prostrate Sullivan. A dark form in the Indian garb glided by a moment after, and plunged his hunting-knife deep into the neck of the buffalo, though the shot was too true not to have taken effect, having penetrated to the brain; but the great arteries of the neck are cut, and the animal thus bled, to render the flesh more suitable for keeping a greater length of time.

The Indian then turned to Sullivan who had now drawn himself from under the buffalo, and who, with mingled feelings of hope and fear, caused by his ignorance whether the tribe to which the Indian belonged was friendly or not, begged of him to direct him to the nearest white settlement.

"If the weary hunter will rest till morning, the eagle will show him the way to the nest of his white dove," was the reply of the Indian, in that figurative style so general among his people; and then taking him by the hand he led him through the rapidly increasing darkness, until they reached a small encampment lying near the river, and under the cover of some trees which grew upon its banks. Here the Indian gave Sullivan a plentiful supply of hominy, or bruised Indian corn boiled to a paste, and some venison; then spreading some skins of animals slain in the chase, for his bed, he signed to him to occupy it, and left him to his repose.

(To Be Continued)

September 9, 1984

PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER

Matt. 20:1 For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace.

4 And he said unto them: Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,

12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

Memory Verse: Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the

Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Luke 10:2.

Central Thought: God will reward every laborer who is faithful in His cause—not according to how much is accomplished, but according to His own purpose and grace given to us in Christ Jesus.

Word Definitions: *Householder:* The head of a family. *Third hour:* 9:00 a. m. The Jewish day began at 6:00. Thus, the sixth, ninth, and eleventh hours were: 12:00 noon, 3:00 p. m., and 5:00 p. m., respectively.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It is very evident that the parable of our lesson today was given at the same time as our lesson last Sunday. Jesus had just admonished the rich young ruler and had afterward warned the disciples concerning the peril of riches. Peter then had made the statement that he and the other disciples had forsaken all and followed Jesus, desiring to know what they were to receive. Jesus emphatically assured him that everyone who forsook all to follow Him would be recompensed a hundred fold, and would inherit eternal life. He then made this statement: "But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first." Matt. 19:30; Mark 10:31. Now this saying is very important as an introduction to our lesson today. This is repeated at the closing of Christ's discourse. Our lesson deals principally with this thought. "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." God's order and favor is much different than that of men. God gauges reward and worth on far different scales than mortals do. Remember that we are dealing with eternal rewards in our lesson. We must not allow carnal ideas to cloud the precious hope that we have in Christ. Jesus assured the disciples of eternal recompense, but inserted this caution of the first being last and the last first. God looks at things differently. He sees not the greatness of the deed nor the amount of the labor. He sees rather the earnest and willing effort from the obedient and loving heart.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is our lesson today a warning and reproof against?
2. How many times did the householder go out to hire laborers?

3. Does God need laborers in His harvest today?
4. What agreement did the man make with the laborers he hired at first in the early morning? What did he agree to give to the others?
5. Whom did he pay first?
6. Can you discern the reason why he did this?
7. Who would we think he ordinarily would have paid first?
8. What does an evil eye of unbelief cause a person to do?
9. How should we feel about our labor for the Lord concerning it meriting anything from God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

All seems to go well with things in our lesson until the end of the day when retribution is handed out. The man told his servant to give the laborers their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. Perhaps if some of us were doing this, we would have paid the first, but Jesus is bringing this out and speaking spiritual language to us. The heavenly reward will not be enjoyed as merely a wage to an individual. The glory and joyful benefit of the crowns of eternal life will be shared by all who are counted worthy. The joy and realization of one's acceptance with God in that day will be so great that the amount of one's labors in that cause will not really matter as much. This is the truth that Jesus is really driving at. Just as later He reproves the disciples for thinking of pre-eminence and ruling over others, so He is instructing them now to not be overly conscious of the laborers in His cause. The one who begins at the eleventh hour will be just as richly rewarded as anyone. The important thing is to get in the cause of Christ and be a partaker with Him. Heaven will be worth it all. "Whatever is right" He will give. The men who were taken in at the eleventh hour had lacked opportunity. They were not intentionally idle, and their service rendered dutifully and faithfully meant just as much as that which the others had rendered. It is lawful for God to do as He wills. Our eye must not be evil to scan God's work critically. Let us be willing to let Him have His way, and be willing to be counted as the last. We will not fail to be rewarded as our wise God decrees.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are living for God with our eye upon the reward at the last. Those who hire out to an employer, do so with the wage in view. Be assured that if you are faithful to the end God will be faithful to give you the reward. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." Heb. 6:10. The reward in our lesson was a penny, which certainly does not sound like much in our present society. However, the full glory of that heavenly reward cannot be comprehended by the human mind. Consider it this way. God created the beauties of nature and the universe in six days. Jesus told His disciples before He left the earth that He was going to prepare a place for them and would return to receive them. If He has been preparing that place in the 2000 years that He has been gone, it must be glorious.

God cautioned us lest we allow our eye to become evil because of supposed injustices. If we do, we will lose our reward. Perhaps you have noticed that when God is blessing a particular one, others will grumble and find fault with that individual. It is not wise to compare our earthly blessings with those of another, but rejoice with them while maintaining our faithfulness to God in striving for that heavenly prize which He has promised.

-Wayne Murphey

-----o-----
September 16, 1984

DESIRE FOR PRE-EMINENCE REBUKED

Mark 10:35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Luke 22:27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Memory Verse: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Phil. 2:3.

Central Thought: The Lordship of Jesus Christ is portrayed and executed through being the servant of all.

Word Definitions: *Minister:* One who serves others. *Ransom:* A price paid by one for the deliverance and freedom of others; a redemptive price or atonement.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Once again, Jesus renews His deliberate journey toward Jerusalem. From the place on the farther side of Jordan, Jesus began to move to the south toward Jericho. John tells us that Jesus went away again beyond Jericho to a place where John first baptized, which was Bethabara. John 1:28; 10:40. Jesus had mentioned already to them concerning the regeneration when He would sit upon the throne of His glory, and they would sit upon thrones also. Matt. 20:28. As they went along, Jesus warned them again of the upcoming events at Jerusalem when He would be betrayed and condemned. Mark tells us that the disciples were amazed and afraid. Matthew tells us that the mother of James and John was the one who approached Jesus with this fantastic idea of positions at His right and left hands. Matt. 20:20, 21. Mark said that it was

James and John who requested this. We can take both accounts as correct, for there is no doubt that this desire was in the hearts of these men even though their mother may have actually made the request. At any rate it was a carnal desire that moved their hearts. The idea of ruling over others is an age-old fantasy of the fallen nature of man. Wanting to domineer and lord over others has been, and still is a blinded passion of unregenerated minds. Although the disciples felt that they were able to drink of the cup of suffering and death, they were in no spiritual condition to comprehend what that would mean. The reaction of the other disciples is another clear indication that their desire and request was flesh-born. It is a true miracle that Jesus was able to fashion these men into His apostles while wading through the flooded errors of their understanding!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was in the hearts of these disciples that caused them to desire and request what they did?
2. Do you think that they were capable of understanding what the cup and baptism of Christ would mean to them?
3. According to what Jesus said, do you think that such positions at His right and left hands are available?
4. What caused the other ten disciples to be displeased?
5. What did Jesus have against the desire to lord over others?
6. How was it to be in His disciples?
7. How did Jesus demonstrate the position of being a servant?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

This concept of being a servant is easily overlooked. The disciples seemed not to realize this at all in their vain desire for pre-eminence. Jesus declared that the manner of people exercising lordship over others was a way of the world. Jesus said, "I am among you as He that serveth." He rendered His greatest service by giving His life as an atonement for the sins of the entire world. Oh, can we not behold Him by the grace of God tasting death for every man! He was ministering to us. He was offered upon the sacrifice and service of our faith. By His death He rendered service to us, and now He calls us all to follow Him and be a partaker of His Spirit and attitude. Oh, that we would have the mind of Christ in everything! The desire for pre-eminence must be quenched by the Spirit of

Christ. There is a tendency in humanity to want to be domineering over others. This must be controlled by wisdom and the fear of God. Christ set the perfect example, that, even though He was Master and Lord, He humbled Himself to the form of a servant. How cheap and vain seems the two disciples' desire for those lofty positions! Yes, there is a throne, but before the throne must come the cross, and before the exaltation must come the humiliation. Before the King reigns, He must serve. Oh, may God help us all to be willing servants of the Lord and one another! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus spoke the words, "I am among you as he that serveth," and He proved it by His actions. Many people praise their own virtues, but when it comes to proving them, it is a different story. Not only did Jesus serve His own people but He served the Gentiles, a race who was despised by the Jews. There are many instances recorded in the Bible in which Jesus gazed with compassion upon those around Him and helped them. There are surely many things which He did which are not recorded. John wrote, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." John 21:25. Jesus was truly a servant in every sense of the word.

I believe that it is because of the carnal attitudes which the disciples sometimes displayed that Jesus instituted the ordinance of feet washing. To wash someone's feet with malice, envy, jealousy, or pre-eminence in your heart is a humbling experience. Can you imagine an earthly king presiding on his throne, humbling himself to the task of washing the feet of his servants? How can one rule with authority when he has humbled himself so? Yet we find the very Son of God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, washing the feet of His disciples, who were men from the lowest ranks of society. The very fact that Jesus did not exempt anyone from the command to wash one another's feet, lets us know that no one is of more importance than another in the Church that He instituted.

--Wayne Murphey

September 23, 1984

COVETOUSNESS REBUKED

Luke 12:13 And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; and provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Memory Verse: Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. Heb. 13:5.

Central Thought: We are to guard against covetousness and the desire for earthly gain, for all these things will perish and are not worthy of our affection. We ought rather to lay up treasures in heaven and keep our hearts on them.

Word Definition: *Covetousness:* Greed, selfish desire for money and gain. Covetousness is an inordinate and unholy desire. It can never really be satisfied, for as soon as such a heart grasps one treasure, it is reaching out for another.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We will return to Luke's writing now. Jesus is still journeying toward Jerusalem. Great crowds are following Him. It is an innumerable multitude who tread upon one another in their excitement to see Him. After a discourse of warning against the practices of the Pharisees and of the coming judgment, Jesus is approached by one of the company. It seems that the man's brother is taking advantage of him, as greedy people often do today. It could have been that this man's brother was doing this as a token of his hatred because of Jesus. As at other times, Jesus offers no solution to the problem in a financial way. He refuses to assume any interest or responsibility for this man's request. As we study and survey this subject of wealth and riches, our hearts are stirred and warned to heed the warning Christ gives us now in our lesson. "Beware of covetousness." The person who makes it his goal and aim to be rich, who strives and pinches and strains in that direction is just putting himself in for a big let down. Solomon made many observations of the vanity of wealthy, among which is this one found in Prov. 23:4, 5: "Labour not be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches do certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven." There is an expression in one of the books of the Apocrypha (Eccl. 11:18-21), which says, "There is that waxeth rich by his weariness and pinching. . . . He saith, I have found rest, and now will eat continually of my goods; and yet he knoweth not what time shall come upon him, and that he must leave these things to others and die. . . . Marvel not at the works of sinners; but trust in the Lord, and abide in thy labour: for it is an easy thing in the sight of the Lord, on the sudden to make a poor man rich." —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Jesus' response to the man's request concerning his inheritance?
2. Why did Jesus show no concern for this man's request?
3. Who was at fault: this man, or his brother?
4. What did Jesus tell us to beware of?
5. What was the real fault with this rich man?
6. What would have been a wiser plan for him?
7. Why is a treasure always connected with our hearts?
8. Why are our hearts so important to God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

John Bunyan truly stated in *The Pilgrim's Progress*: "Earthly things, when they are with power on men's minds, quite carry their hearts away from God." It is the love of earthly commodities and riches that dims the eye of the soul of man and hinders him from sensing the value of heavenly things. Almost everyone is caught in the current of this foaming river of greed at one time or another. A person does not have to be very old to be affected by the allurements of money. Little children pick this frame of mind up very early in life. If it is not curbed and controlled through wise and godly restraint, this becomes a dominating passion that will grow and grow through the years. It will blind and delude the soul, hindering and crippling any effort made toward God. When Jesus said, "Beware!" He knew the danger that riches and wealth would present to a person. We have already seen what riches and the love thereof can do in keeping a person out of the kingdom of God. The rich man in this parable was a little farther down the road than the rich young ruler. It is not likely that these two men were the same person, but it is true that they traveled the same road. How much better would it have been for this man if he had considered his poorer brethren in the use of his goods! Then to think that he never got to enjoy it after all! His plans were misty thoughts of his heart. They faded before the solemn approach of death. How will it be with you, dear reader, when your soul is taken account of in that day?

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Money is one of two things. It can be your servant or it can be your master. You can possess it or it can possess you. When greed rules an individual he lives as though the world was made entirely for his benefit instead of him for the world's.

The rich man in our lesson decided that he would take his ease, and eat, drink, and be merry. God called his life into judgment that night, but had He not, I still doubt that the rich man could have fulfilled his desire to live in ease. The covetous man heaps up wealth, not to enjoy, but just to possess it. He starves in the midst of plenty. Someone wrote that covetousness was like a man in water up to his chin and still thirsty. If we labour with our hands, as God has ordained that we should, and improve our role in life, it is something to

enjoy. However, there is little real pleasure if we slave only to hoard.

Covetousness is visible even in small children. This characteristic which is a trait of the devil, can follow them all the way to the grave. Simply for the empty boast of dying rich, many have spent their best years chasing that which would satisfy their greed and forfeiting their happiness, health, and often their integrity in the process.

--Wayne Murphey

PITY THE POOR RICH GLORY IN THE RICH POOR

Few who reach to golden splendor
Know the joys that deeply please,
Know the pleasures sweet and homey
'Neath the humble cotter's trees.

High and mighty, strutting onward,
Boastful of their sodden gain;
Knowing not that earthly treasures
Selfly centered are but vain.

Love unlawful, so alluring,
Tempts the glutton's soul away,
Perfect havoc, there uprooting
Trees of promise every day.

When the harvest time approaches
And the evening shadows come,
Sheaves regretful and all barren,
These make up the total sum.

But the lowly man with virtue,
Sitting at his cabin door,
With his soul all rich with knowledge,
Brightened outlook on before;

Loved by true and noble neighbors,
With the kindly clasp of hand,
And surrounded by his children,
Making up a happy band;

Helped by loving wife and comrade
All his simple life adores,

Pure devotion all unselfish,
At his feet she gladly pours.

Thoughts as rich as many a scholar
And his heart all full of rhyme
Feels the throb of life eternal,
Wakes to rapture all sublime.

At the time of Sunday worship,
With the humble he retires,
And his songs ascend to heaven,
For to glory he aspires.

Days of toil with honest setting,
Heart at ease; 'tis ne'er distress
For the evening shadows bring him
Peaceful slumber, only rest.

Then:
Covet not the gold that glitters,
Hasten not for worldly pelf;
Choose the rather, heavenly riches,
And the simpler, grander self. --D. C. D.

September 30, 1984

GOD'S FOURTH-DEGREE MERCY

Luke 13:1 There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things?

3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold,

these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

8 And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9 And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Eccl. 9:12 For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

Memory Verse: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Heb. 10:24, 25.

Central Thought: God will show great mercy to mankind, but there comes the time when mercy will run out. We are living today in the last days, in the fourth and final degree of God's mercy.

LESSON BACKGROUND

History informs us that the Galileans (who were under the jurisdiction of Herod) were the most seditious people in that Palestine area, and that on some occasions they incurred the wrath of Pilate (the governor of Judea) who was in those days an enemy of Herod. Just think what awful bloody scenes erupted! Think of the souls who were hurled into eternity when Pilate's soldiers fell on them in the temple. There were disasters and scenes of tragedy in those days just as there are now. Incidents such as these two mentioned here and such as we hear about in our day are not indicative of any special outpouring of God's wrath. These people mentioned in our lesson were not sinners any worse than anyone else. But it is that the laws of nature and the disposition of evil in the blinded hearts of men arrange the snares that men are suddenly taken in. The young person who innocently goes for a swim in the river and is sucked under by the current to drown could have been living today had he or she not decided to go swimming. The laws that God put in order are not to be ignored. Life is full of danger and peril. If you escape from the foreign battle field unharmed you can easily become a casualty on the highways at home. God's mercy gives man a chance to get

right. He has allowed us space to repent of our sins and prepare to meet Him. He will continue to deal with us time and again, but the hour, the fatal hour, comes when His mercy runs out. There are many various applications of this parable of the fruitless fig tree, but the main thing He wants us to see is the greatness of His mercy and the sureness of the end of His mercy if we refuse to heed His dealings.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Were the Galileans especially wicked that Pilate slew?
2. Can you think of a number of tragedies that could happen to you right now?
3. Do you think that sincerely following Christ and obeying His law could mean a safer and longer time in this world?
4. What is God looking for in our lives?
5. What does God think when opportunity is given to us to bear fruit and we do not respond?
6. What will happen to the soul who continues to resist the call of God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Pick up your newspaper or read the disaster list in an encyclopedia year book and you will see the numbers of disasters still rung up on the scroll of time. Earthquakes, tornadoes, fires, plane crashes, epidemics, and many other scenes of tragedy occur every year. These things are to awaken and warn others, but so often the warning goes unheeded. Perhaps, like the people did in our lesson, we might think that God just especially directed things to happen to punish sinners, but God is displeased with all sinners, and His wrath cannot be fully carried out in the mere destruction of human life. If you are in a jet airliner and that invention of man malfunctions and hurtles to the ground, you will be caught in that snare. A part of the engine goes bad or wears out. There are things that cause that. If you are speeding down the highway at seventy miles per hour and your left tire blows out, you will be caught in that snare, also. God did not particularly cause those things. They are the result of normal patterns of cause and effect, the consequences of fact and failure. It happens to the righteous as well as to the wicked. What we need to do is to prepare to meet God. We need to seek

His mercy and turn from all sin. We can be in His favor and be ready for whatever life unfolds to us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The rainbow is an emblem of God's mercy. There was a time when human iniquity caused God to repent that He had ever created man and He destroyed all except Noah and his family. Imagine the destruction of the flood. It would have been horrible to see every living thing drowning, calling for help, and totally hopeless! As God looked upon this He was grieved and vowed that He would never destroy the earth in such a manner again. To seal this promise of mercy to mankind He placed a rainbow in the sky. However, just as a rainbow will not shine in the night, there is coming a time when the day of time will cease and God's mercy will end.

There is no human mercy comparable to the divine mercy of God. His mercy will reach the vilest case that sinful mankind can produce. Because of His mercy we may share the sentiment of the Psalmist David who was perplexed that the wicked flourished and prospered. When David entered the sanctuary of God his perspective was renewed and he realized that God was extending mercy and withholding judgment from such evildoers. It has been said that nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy. Remember that a God who is *all* mercy would be an unjust God. God's unsurpassed mercy will one day turn into righteous judgment.

—Wayne Murphey

THE INDIAN'S REVENGE

(Continued from page 44)

The light of dawn had not yet appeared in the east when the Indian awoke Sullivan; and after a slight repast, they both started for the settlement of the whites. The Indian kept in advance of his companion, and threaded his way through the still darkened forest with a precision and a rapidity which showed him to be well acquainted with its paths and secret recesses. As he took the most direct way, without fear of losing his course, being guided by signs unknown to any save some of the oldest and most experienced hunters, they traversed the forest far more quickly than Sullivan had done, and before the golden sun had sunk behind the summits of the far-off mountains, Sullivan once more stood within view of his beloved home. There it lay in calm repose, and at a sight so dear he could not restrain a cry of joy; then turning toward the Indian, he poured forth his heartfelt thanks for the service he had rendered him.

The warrior, who, till then, had not allowed his face to be seen by Sullivan, except in the imperfect light of his wigwam, now fronted him, allowing the sun's rays to fall upon his person, and revealed to the astonished young man the features of the very same Indian whom, five months before, he had so cruelly repulsed. An expression of dignified yet mild rebuke was exhibited in his face as he gazed upon the abashed Sullivan; but his voice was gentle and low as he said: "Five moons ago, when I was faint and weary, you called me 'Indian dog,' and drove me from your door. I might last night have been revenged; but the white dove fed me, and for her sake I spared her mate. Carcoochee bids you to go home, and when hereafter you see a red man in need of kindness, do to him as you have been done by. Farewell."

He waved his hand, and turned to depart, but Sullivan sprang before him, and so earnestly entreated him to go with him, as a proof that he had indeed forgiven his brutal treatment, that he at last consented, and the humbled farmer led him to his cottage. There his gentle wife's surprise at seeing him so soon was only equaled by her thankfulness at his wonderful escape from the dangers which had surrounded him, and by her gratitude to the noble savage who had thus repaid her act of kindness, forgetful of the provocation he had received from her husband. Carcoochee was treated not only

as an honored guest, but as a brother; and such in time he became to them both.

Many were the visits he paid to the cottage of the once prejudiced and churlish Sullivan, now no longer so, for the practical lessons of kindness he had learned from the untutored Indian was not lost upon him. It was made the means of bringing him to a knowledge of his own sinfulness in the sight of God, and his deficiencies in duty toward his fellow men. He was led by the Holy Spirit to feel his need of Christ's atoning blood; and ere many months passed, Mary Sullivan and her husband both gave satisfactory evidence that they had indeed "passed from death unto life."

Carcoochee's kindness was repaid to him indeed a hundred fold. A long time elapsed before any vital change of heart was visible in him; but at length it pleased the Lord to bless the unwearied teaching of his white friends to his spiritual good, and to give an answer to the prayer of faith. The Indian was the first native convert baptized by the American missionary, who came about two years after to a station some few miles distant from Sullivan's cottage. After a lengthened course of instruction and trial the warrior, who once had wielded the tomahawk in mortal strife against both whites and redskins, went forth, armed with a far different weapon, "even the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," to make known to his heathen countrymen "the glad tidings of great joy," that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He told them that "whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," whether they be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, white or red, for "we are all one in Christ." Many years he thus labored, until, worn out with toil and age, he returned to his white friend's home, where in a few months he fell asleep in Jesus, giving to his friends the certain hope of a joyful meeting hereafter at the resurrection of the just.

Many years have passed since then. There is no trace now of the cottage of the Sullivans, who both rest in the same forest churchyard, where lie the bones of Carcoochee; but their descendants still dwell in the same township. Often does the gray-haired grandsire tell this little history to his rosy grandchildren, while seated under the stately magnolia which shades the graves of the quiet sleepers of whom he speaks. And the lesson which he teaches to his youthful hearers, is one which all would do well to bear in mind, and act upon:

namely, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do
ye even so to them."

—Selected

-----o-----

Subscription Order

Please send _____ copies of the *Bible Lessons* quarterly to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Subscription rate: 50¢ per copy per quarter; or \$2.00 per copy for one year (issued quarterly).

Please find enclosed payment in the amount of \$_____

Mail to:
FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE
P. O. Box 518
Guthrie, Okla. 73044

