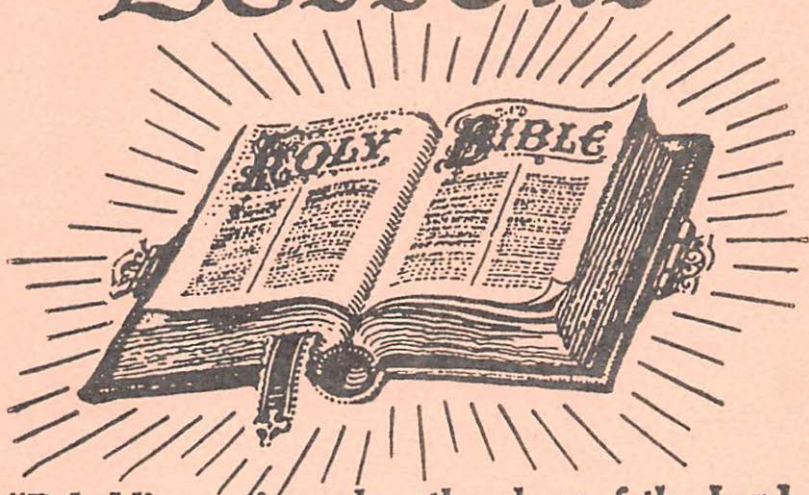


Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 25, No. 2
Apr., May, June
1993**

**Faith Pub. House
Guthrie, Okla.
73044**

Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People
(USPS054-680)

Volume 25

Apr., May, June

No. 2

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**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

**Postmaster: Please send address corrections
to above address.**

THEME FOR SECOND QUARTER, 1993

We will continue for our Bible studies this quarter with lessons from the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. The first few lessons will cover the Easter commemoration of the sufferings, death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. Along with and following these lessons we will study the Divine Commission of the spread of the gospel, what the suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ means to the godly, Christ's intercessory presence in heaven at the right hand of God for us, His promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who believe and follow Him, and Christ's prophecy of His second coming. We will take two lessons to cover Christ's teachings on stewardship. The precious truths of the role of Christ as the good Shepherd, His teachings on marriage and divorce, the parable of the sower and the seed, and, finally, Christ's views on the eternal Judgment at the end of the world will finish out this series of lessons. All of these subjects contain great spiritual values for us today. We set them forth with earnest prayer that these lessons will be a great blessing to all.

—Brother Leslie C. Busbee



APRIL 4, 1993

THE SUFFERINGS AND DEATH OF JESUS

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Matthew 27:33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

Mark 15:25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left.

28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors.

Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Matthew 27:45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

Luke 23:46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, [It is finished. John 19:30.] Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Mark 15:38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God.

MEMORY VERSE: But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isaiah 53:5.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, bore in His mortal body the punishment and judgment of Almighty

God for all the sins of mankind to bring pardon and peace to everyone.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 5), "*Chastisement of our peace*": The atonement and price paid to purchase our eternal welfare and happiness. The wounds that Christ suffered in His bruised and broken body were a price paid to purchase for us rest, peace, and security. (V. 8), "*He was taken from prison and from judgment*": The Septuagint renders this phrase even as it is recorded in Acts 8:33, "In His humiliation his judgment was taken away". (Matt. 27:34), "*When he had tasted thereof, he would not drink*": The vinegar, or sour wine, mixed with a bitter green liquid was used to give to the condemned person to help lighten their pain by stupefying them and rendering them less sensitive. But Jesus, choosing to bear the full impact of His suffering, refused to drink it. (V. 35), "*Vesture*": outer garment or cloak. John 19:23 called it a coat. (Mark 15:27), *Crudify*: to put to death by being hung upon a cross.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus had made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem just five days before He was taken to Golgotha to be executed as a criminal. On Thursday evening He had observed the Passover with His disciples, and had instituted the ordinances of foot-washing and the Lord's supper. They had then passed out into the night and had gone to the garden of Gethsemane where the mob led by Judas, the traitor, had found Him and arrested Him. He was taken before the chief priests and condemned to death. Then He was taken before Pilate who, under pressure, had given the Lord Jesus over to be crucified. The morning had progressed to the third hour (9:00 a.m.) on this Friday when He was nailed to a Roman cross between two thieves who had also been given the sentence of death. He suffered on the cross for six hours the awful agony and torment of soul and body in shame and reproach before the multitudes that watched. Let us remember as we in spirit behold this sacred scene that Christ was paying the price for the forgiveness of our sins. He was wounded, bruised, and chastised because of our sins

against God. This was the price that the Father was requiring for sin to be put away from His holy sight. Jesus suffered willingly, for the joy set before Him, and endured the cross and counted lightly the shame because He knew He was paying the ransom price to set us free. Blessed be the name of Jesus who accomplished this great work for our precious eternity-bound souls!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you think that the general public understood the real reason for the crucifixion of Christ?
2. What was the real reason for Christ's sufferings and death?
3. Do you think that Christ was treated lawfully and fairly?
4. If not, why did He not seek to defend Himself?
5. Why was He not allowed to be kept in prison until a fair and just hearing and trial?
6. What quality of life enabled Christ to bear such injustice without a cry of defense or malice?
7. Why would not Christ drink the wine mixed with gall which was to cause Him to not feel His pain so much?
8. Do you think that Jesus really felt forsaken of God?
9. What was meant in the words, "It is finished"?
10. What was the meaning of the veil being rent in two?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Years ago my uncle, Audney Davis, who was a farmer in the Guthrie, Oklahoma area, had raised and herded sheep. I can remember vividly him telling me about how sheep would behave in the shearing process and when being slaughtered. He said that when a sheep was about to be put to death it would just lay down. He said that it was so touching and heart rending that he finally had to quit the sheep business. I have also heard others tell of watching sheep being sheared of their wool, and how they would be so easily handled, not trying to escape or struggle even when the shears would cut into the flesh. It is a very striking like figure to our Saviour before the

unjust condemnation and death that He suffered for us. "He opened not His mouth". Let us seek the Lord for grace to follow His example when we are called upon to suffer reproach for His sake. When we are tempted to retaliate in defense of ourselves, may we call to mind these truths of Christ being as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before the shearers! He was unjustly arrested, accused, and condemned. "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away." He was not allowed to be kept in prison to wait for tempers to cool and malice to subside. He was denied a fair trial. He was arrested that night, taken and put through a mock trial with false witnesses, condemned, and executed the next morning. That is how they treated our dear Lord. Thank God, that is not the end of the story, but let us keep this scene of His sufferings and death always in our minds and hearts, ever willing to follow Him and bear whatever cross is given to us. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is a story about a beautiful young lady who was raised in the lap of luxury. Her father felt she had reached the age to marry and establish a home of her own, but due to the pride and pettishness that had been cultivated in her from being waited on hand and foot, she disdained all of her suitors. One well-to-do young man wanted her for a wife, but knew that in order for it to be a pleasant relationship, the girl's pride must be broken. So he contrived a scheme with the girl's father, disguised himself as a peddler, and tricked her into marriage. Then, in spite of the girl's horror and protest, they went to live in a log hovel. He first taught her how to cook over an open flame. It was very hard at first, but she soon learned to like it. He then had her peddle pottery. With time, her shame disappeared, and she found that waiting on people wasn't as bad as she had imagined. The final lesson was learned when the husband hired her out as kitchen help in his own mansion. An incident occurred in which she was humiliated in front of a whole group of sophisticated townspeople. She had learned her lessons well and took the humiliation with good grace. It was then that her husband revealed his true identity and lavished upon her the wealth that was rightfully hers.

Perhaps at some point in your life, by accident, failure, or due to uncontrollable circumstances, you have been reduced to a place of poverty and embarrassment. But no one has ever given up so much, or reached as low an estate, as Christ. He "...emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant... becoming obedient unto death." Phil 2:7, 8. We are told that He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. (Heb. 5:8.) And He learned His lessons well, for He was a perfect example in the extreme humiliation of the cross. And just to think, He learned these lessons and went through the suffering, not just for Himself; He did it for us! —Wayne Murphey



APRIL 11, 1993

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS FROM THE DEAD

Mark 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him (the body of Jesus).

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

Luke 24:5b Why seek ye the living among the dead?

Mark 16:7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Luke 24:8 And they remembered his words,

9 And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

John 20:19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou has believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

MEMORY VERSE: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death. Revelation 1:18.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, arose triumphantly from death and the grave, breaking the power of Satan and sin, to deliver us that we might be saved and victorious all the days of our life and have assurance of sharing in His glorious resurrection in the last day.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 1), "*Sweet spices to anoint him*": to embalm and help to preserve his body from the speedy decomposition of death. They were not able to comprehend Christ's promise of being risen. (V. 5), "*Sepulchre*": tomb, or grave. The Greek word from which the word "sepulchre" is translated means a memorial. The grave was to be fashioned in such a way so as to perpetuate and preserve a remembrance of the departed.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After Jesus had died, a man who had secretly believed in Jesus along with Nicodemus came and, having obtained

permission from Pilate, took the body of Jesus down from the cross and placed it in a new sepulchre hewn out of rock wherein no man had ever lain. Mary Magdalene and the other women with her watched them bury Him. The chief priests and the Pharisees made a request of Pilate that a watch of soldiers be placed to guard the tomb from the disciples whom they feared would try to rob the tomb of the body of Jesus and spread a report that He was alive. So the tomb was placed under guard. The next day was the sabbath. The disciples were in hiding, afraid that the Jews would be after them. So we see Jesus dead, the tomb guarded, and his disciples in hiding. It is very unlikely that any of the disciples were thinking of Christ's promise of being raised from the dead. Their poor minds could not comprehend such a thing. Even the women who came to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus had no thought of a resurrection, wondering just how they were going to get inside to anoint the body. Thus the resurrection of our Lord broke upon a darkened world. As the sunrise illuminates the landscape that only a few hours before was enshrouded in darkness, so the dawn of the risen life of Christ broke forth upon the sorrowing hearts of his beloved disciples and friends! Piecing together the account from all four gospels we have a wonderful report that our Lord is risen, beyond all doubt and question, yes, risen indeed to live for evermore!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Did the women who came first to the sepulchre have faith that Jesus would be risen?
2. Why was it such a hard thing for the disciples to grasp the truth of Christ being resurrected from the grave?
3. Is it possible for us today to be seeking to find the living Christ among the dead?
4. Why did the angel especially mention Peter?
5. Why did Thomas draw back from believing that Christ was risen?
6. Did Jesus deride or scold Thomas for doubting?
7. How can we today really understand the true meaning of the risen Saviour?

8. By what means can we today truly believe in the risen Son of God?

9. What would be the condition of our hearts and lives if we had no real faith or assurance in Christ being alive?

10. Can we be truly saved if we do not believe that Jesus is alive today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, what a joyful blessing to know that Jesus has risen from the dead and is alive for evermore! We see Him as Conqueror of sin, death, and the grave. We see Him as ever triumphant over all the powers of the devil. By His death and resurrection He broke the bands of sin and death. We do not have to live in the bonds of sin any longer. By His risen life He gives us the victory. He is a Captain that is leading us all on to certain victory in every conflict here below and over the power of death and the grave. All who love, trust, serve, and obey Him in this present life will partake of His risen life by being born again and being led by the Spirit of God, and will share in the glorious resurrection from the dead when He comes again! Oh, what a glorious hope is this! Without Christ and the assurance of His resurrection life becomes a mere existence, a fleeting journey toward outer darkness and despair. But we do not have to be thus. We can believe in our hearts that God has raised up Christ again, and that, as the eternal Son of God, He will give us that same power to reign triumphant over every foe we face. Let us be strong and valiant for His truth. He will never leave us. He lives forever! He died to sin and is alive unto God. We can be dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God, also. We can be risen with Him, and can find treasures above that will never pass away. Our Saviour lives, ever lives to make intercession for us. Let us turn our gaze toward the heavens where Christ eternally dwells!

—Leslie C. Busbee

I thought...(it was the midnight of my soul,

Dead midnight) that I stood on Calvary:

I found the cross, but not the Christ. The whole

Of heaven was dark: and I went bitterly

Weeping, because I found him not. I thought
 I stood before the sepulchre of Christ:
 The sepulchre was vacant, void of aught
 (It was the twilight of the dawn and mist)
 Saving the cere-clothes of the grave, which were
 Upfolden straight and empty: bitterly
 Weeping I stood, because not even there
 I found Him. Then a voice spake unto me,
 "Whom seekest thou? Why is thy heart dismayed?
 Jesus of Nazareth, he is not here:
 Approach, behold the place where He was laid.
 Behold, the Lord is risen. Be of cheer."
 And while he spake, the sunrise smote the world.
 "Go forth, and tell thy brethren," spake the voice:
 "The Lord is risen." Suddenly unfurled,
 The whole unclouded Orient did rejoice
 In glory. Wherefore should I mourn that here
 My heart feels vacant of what most it needs?
 What wrapped him lying in this sepulchre:
 Christ is arisen!...the cere-clothes and the weeds
 Of earth, he hath abandoned; being gone
 Back into heaven, where we too must turn
 Our gaze to find Him. Pour, O risen Son
 Of Righteousness, the light for which I yearn
 Upon the darkness of this mortal hour,
 Behold the night is now far spent. The morn
 Breaks, breaking from afar through a night shower:
 This tract of night in which I walk forlorn.

—Robert Lytton



APRIL 18, 1993

**THE DIVINE COMMISSION
AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST**

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

45 Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.

46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things;

Matthew 28 :18b All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

Mark 16:15b Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

Luke 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Luke 24: 50 And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, [while they beheld, Acts 1:9] he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

Acts 1:9b He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

MEMORY VERSE: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. Mark 16:15,16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: After giving His disciples the commission to preach the gospel to all the world, Christ instructed them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit, for they needed His guidance and strength for success in the great work of promoting the Kingdom of God.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (V. 46), *"It behoved Christ to suffer"*: It was necessary. (V. 47), *"Repentance and remission of sins"*: The word repentance means compunction for guilt and reformation of life and conduct. Compunction is defined as a pricking of the conscience, a sharp feeling of uneasiness brought on by a sense of guilt. Remission of sins simply means the forgiveness and pardon for sins committed. (Matt. 28:18b), *"All power is given unto me"*: The word "power" here means authority or control, or jurisdiction. (Mark 16:16), *"Damned"*: condemned and sentenced to eternal torment and doom. (V. 17), *"New tongues"*: new languages. (Acts 1:8), *"Ye shall receive power"*: This word "power" is translated from the Greek word "dunamis" from which comes the word "dynamite". It refers to miraculous and supernatural power that the indwelling Spirit will exert to accompany the witness of the gospel.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus showed Himself alive to His disciples after His suffering, death, and resurrection by many infallible and

undeniable proofs, and was seen of them for forty days, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3.) Using the scriptures and the prophecies that had gone before concerning Him and His great work, He explained to them that He was soon to be taken up into the Heavens where He would intercede for them to the Father, and would send the Holy Spirit to guide and comfort them in His stead. Their comprehension of the things He spoke of was no doubt limited, but later through the inspiration and the anointing of the Holy Spirit they were made plain. He gave them the commission to preach the good news of His salvation to all the world, but admonished them to tarry in Jerusalem in prayer and supplication for the Holy Spirit to be poured upon them from on high. And then when all was said and done by the gracious Master that the Father had bidden Him, we see the glorious scene unfold in our lesson of Christ ascending into the heavens beyond mortal sight. It is a most touching scene filled with joy and inspiration. Spreading out His loving hands in blessing He began to rise from the earth, perhaps slowly at first, but surely. All eyes were fastened on Him and followed Him as He rose upward until at last a cloud took him beyond their sight. The everlasting doors swung open to receive the King of glory and He entered into the presence of God to remain as our great High Priest until the end of time.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is so important about having our understanding opened so we can understand the scriptures?
2. What three sections of the scriptures did Christ mention of having things written concerning Him?
3. What was the substance of what the scriptures had foretold concerning Him?
4. For what purpose did Christ tell His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem?
5. Why were they to wait for the Holy Spirit before proceeding with His work?
6. What authority and power did Christ promise His apostles to have?

7. What determines whether a person will believe or not believe?

8. Does Christ's promise of protection from deadly poisons and serpents give us license to deliberately take up these things to prove Him or to prove that we are His followers?

9. To what position did Christ go when He ascended up?

10. What was the glorious promise that the two angels gave to the brethren after Jesus had disappeared into the heavens?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Perhaps an eye-witness of the ascension of Christ would have described that glorious event in this way: "I am going to my Father's House," He said. "There thou shalt one day dwell with me in mansions not made with hands. Follow me now, and thou shalt know the way thither! Through temptation I have first trodden it, through suffering, through death, and through resurrection from the dead. So also must thou and all who love me follow me. To my friends, the gate of the tomb opens into the world of life eternal."

Thus speaking, He walked slowly onward towards the hill of Bethany. We all followed, each of us expecting, from His words and manner, some new and great event to take place, or to hear more glorious revelations from His lips of the life beyond this. Each moment as He ascended the hill, His countenance grew more glorious. We all hung back with adoring fear, and alone He proceeded onward, a wide space being left between ourselves and Him. Yet there was no terror in the glory which surrounded and shined out from Him; but rather a holy radiance, that seemed to be the very light of holiness and peace. He soon stood at the top of the hill alone. It was a scene impressive beyond expression. The blue sky spread out above the hills with but a single cloud. At the foot of the hill toward the Holy City were the gardens of Gethsemane. Jerusalem with its towers, pinnacles, palaces, and beautiful temple glittered in the distance, with memories of the conflicts with the Jews, the hill of Calvary and the tomb where He had lain in death surrounding it. Jesus seemed for a moment to survey these scenes of His suffering and of His death with the look of a divine Conqueror.

Turning to us, He said: "Ye have been with me in my sorrows, and you shall now behold my glory and the reward which my Father doth give me. Today I take leave of you, and ascend to my Father and your Father. Remember all things which I have taught you concerning my kingdom. Go forth and teach the glad tidings of salvation to all men, and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Thus speaking, in a voice that thrilled every bosom with emotions indescribable, He extended His hands above our heads in blessing while we all fell upon our faces. He then lifted up his eyes to the calm blue depths of heaven, and said, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was!" As He spoke, we raised up our faces from the ground, to behold Him leaving the earth, rising from the hilltop into the air, with a slow and majestic ascension; His hands out-spread over us who were beneath, as if shedding blessings upon us all. The burst of surprise which rose from our voices at seeing Him soar into the atmosphere, was followed by a profound and awful silence, as we watched Him rise and still rise, ascending and still ascending into the upper air, His whole form growing lighter and brighter, as the distance widened between His feet and the earth. Upon our knees, in speechless amazement, we followed His ascent with our amazed eyes, not a word being spoken by any soul. Finally the clouds gathered about Him and He was lost to our human sight. Some one spoke softly, "He's gone!" Yes, He was gone, but, oh, the joy and hope we have that someday He will come again and receive us unto Himself!

—From J. H. Ingraham's, *Prince of the House of David*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8. Christ called the disciples to be witnesses, and the call is the same to Christians today. Let us

consider some things that we shouldn't be, so that we can better understand the definition of what we are to be.

God has not called us to be a defendant. The early church could easily have fallen into the mind-set of a defendant. Christ had just suffered an ignoble death, one that was foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews, but they didn't cower under this stigma. Paul said, "For we preach Christ crucified..." I Cor. 1:22. When we have experienced something as positive as salvation, then we can tell what we saw and feel with confidence. Others may not understand it, but that doesn't take away from the reality of it.

God has not called us to be lawyers. Some people seem to delight in arguing scriptures. This mind-set and mode of operation is generally counter-productive and of little interest to others. There are several different religious publications that we receive here at the Print Shop, and one in particular is almost totally comprised of technical dissertations on the scriptures. One thing I have noticed, which sets the *Faith & Victory* apart from other publications, is the testimonies that the saints write in. There are some beautiful truths about the Church of God that need to be told, but let's do it as witnesses and not as lawyers.

God forbid that we should ever think we are called to be judges, but there are some who seem to think this way. Scripture after scripture admonishes us not to judge others. The witness of our lives may bring light and reveal the shortcomings of another, but we are referring to the spirit in which we operate.

May God help us all to be productive Christians, and tell others about salvation because we have experienced its transformation in our hearts and lives. —Wayne Murphey



APRIL 25, 1993

WHAT THE DEATH, RESURRECTION, AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST MEANS TO THE GODLY

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I Peter 1:21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

Ephesians 1:18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those

things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

MEMORY VERSE: Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:16.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: By means of Christ's death we can die to sin; by means of Christ's resurrection we can be made alive spiritually to walk in newness of life and holiness; and by means of His presence at the right hand of God we have access to the Father and the fulness of His grace and blessings.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Romans 6:3), "*Baptize*": to dip or immerse, to completely overwhelm or submerge. (V. 6), "*The body of sin*": the root, essence, and very principle of sin. (V. 11), "*Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin*": Count and deem it so that you have severed all involvement with every form of disobedience to God. (Ephesians 2:5), "*Quickened*": made alive.

LESSON BACKGROUND

After the Lord Jesus had gone back to the Father to reign in glory, and had sent the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the apostles and saints, the real meaning and purpose of their Saviour's life and labors began to unfold to them. Being filled with the Spirit of God, they were given understanding of what Christ's death would do for them. They saw that Christ had died so that they could die to sin. They began to understand how the risen life of Christ could bring about a resurrection in their very souls. The scriptures and prophecies became alive with the truths of Christ, being now ratified and made firm through their fulfillment. They had seen the Lord ascend up before their very eyes, and had experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit that had come from the presence of the Lord. This

wrought great assurance and understanding for them. They knew what Christ was doing up there in His office as our Great High Priest. They were ever fully conscious of His presence before God on their behalf. By their risen lives from the dead state of sin they were able to witness the life of Christ in reality. These things still mean the same glorious joy and hope in the truly righteous and godly people today who have given up the world and have taken up their cross to follow Him. We can die to sin. We do not have to live any longer therein. We can know that Christ will live within us as we hold fast our faith and keep submitted to Him. No matter what happens, we have a glorious privilege to come boldly to the throne of grace that we might get help in the times of need. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the things that we have to give up and die to to be a partaker of Christ's death?
2. Is it possible to live in the Spirit with Christ if we fail to die to sin and self?
3. What does the "old man" consist of?
4. If the root of sin is destroyed do we have to continue sinning?
5. What kind of life are we resurrected to live?
6. Do we have to be dominated and ruled by the lusts of our body?
7. What does the hope of Christ's calling consist of?
8. In what way can we sit in heavenly places with Christ now?
9. If we are risen with Christ what are we to interest ourselves with?
10. In what way is our life hid with Christ?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

It is one thing to believe in Christ, and it is quite another thing to experience the realities of His death, resurrection, and Spirit-filled life in our own souls. Christ not only died as a sacrifice for the pardon of our sins, but He also died to make it possible for us to die to sin, that we need no longer to live

under sin's dominion and rule. Let us not be like the vain and heedless throng who believe in Christ with no knowledge or discipline to move them to quit the sin-business. We want to live with Christ, but we cannot live with Him if we do not die with Him to sin and all its influence. Sin and iniquity are so bad. These wicked ways and practices are harmful and destructive. We need to die to them. Ignorance and blindness of Satan helps keep a soul ensnared in their woeful trap. But light has come! The light of knowledge and wisdom in the gospel shows up their vanity and harm. We are able to renounce sin and its woeful bondage, and find in Christ deliverance. We do not need to be proud, vain, dishonest, lustful, filthy, foolish, and selfish. We see the evil and folly of these things and we cry unto the Saviour for mercy and freedom from these evils. We turn away and flee from these things. We mortify and kill their influence from our lives. We set our affections on eternal things above where our loving Lord is. We have found the joy of God and the realities of the Spirit. Thus we can sit with Him in spiritual fellowship. In the services with our fellow-brethren or in our homes or wherever we are we sit with Him in the heavenly places. Oh, how blessed to be dead with Christ, alive with Him, and to have fellowship with Him now and forever! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This chapter, [Romans 6] explains the death and life character of the Christian. The beginning, the cause, and effect of both are clearly stated. To the unspiritual this statement is full of inexplicable riddles. And even to many who know Christ, it is full of mysteries. To those who are taught of the Spirit, it is an exact portrait of the birth and life of the new inner man.

"Crucified with Him." Our first connection with Christ is with His death. Our first dealings with God must be as a sinner. Life for God implies the death of self. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." The question of sin must be settled first. It is settled for us in our identity with His death.

"Therefore we are buried with Him." When a man is buried he is supposed to be out of sight, and on the way soon to be

beyond all possibility of identification. If the death has not been real, the burial will not take place. We don't bury as long as there is a spark of life remaining. So the old man will not be put out of sight as long as he lives. You might try to hide him and conceal his working, but if he is not dead, he will be seen or heard somehow.

"Like as Christ was raised from the dead so we also." Resurrection can only follow where death has taken place. The power of the old life must go before the new can come; and this new life is wholly from God. It is a being born from above; a new creation. As surely as we have been dead and buried, so surely are we risen. "Passed from death unto life." John 5:24.

"We shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection." This resurrection likeness is the result of being planted in the likeness of His death. If we have not felt the pangs of crucifixion we cannot have the resurrection image, any more than we can have day without night. This is the Divine likeness, the likeness of a conqueror, one endued with power.

—Taken from, *Handfuls on Purpose*



MAY 2, 1993

CHRIST APPEARING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US

Acts 7:55 But he (Stephen), being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

Ephesians 4:8 Wherefor he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Hebrews 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace,

that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Hebrews 7:24 This man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.

Hebrews 8:1b We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.

Psalms 110:1 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.

Hebrews 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

MEMORY VERSE: For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. Hebrews 9:24.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died for our sins and rose again from the dead, has ascended up on high and is at this very moment in a position of power and intercession with God for us at His right hand.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Ephesians 4:8), "*He led captivity captive*": Christ captured, subdued, and brought into subjection the power of Satan that had brought us under the bondage of sin. (Hebrews 4:14), "*Hold fast our profession*": firmly maintain our testimony concerning His grace and truth. (V. 15), "*Touched with the feeling of our infirmities*": to sympathize with our human weaknesses and needs. (V. 16), "*Let us come boldly*": Let us draw near with confidence. (Hebrews 7:25), "*He is able to save to the uttermost*": The Greek text says, "He is able to save to perfection. (V. 26), "*Such an high priest became us*": He was qualified and fitting for us, suitable. (Hebrews 8:2), "*A minister of the sanctuary*": One who attends to the holy things that pertain to our salvation and eternal welfare.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Stephen was one of the seven men who had been divinely appointed to serve in the pressing needs of the early Church. He became a fearless preacher of righteousness and the forces of evil in the Jews rose up against him and brought him before the council. In response to his bold confession of faith and denunciation of the Jews in their hypocrisy he was sentenced to death. While their anger was being enraged Stephen looked up and with the eye of the Spirit of God beheld His risen Lord not sitting, but standing on the right hand of God. Oh, what a strength that was to him in that trying hour! It has been a strength to the holy saints all down through the ages and a stabilizing force through all the twists and turns of this mortal life to know that our Redeemer lives and ever pleads for us in heaven itself at the right hand of God! While the world shifts and changes, churns and rages, we who know our Saviour are anchored in that within the veil, beyond this mortal sight to Him who lives forever! The book of Hebrews has so much to say about this subject of our lesson today; in fact, this truth of Christ being at the right hand of God is the main theme throughout the entire writing. Paul quoted from David's most sublime 68th Psalm and verse 18 in writing to the Ephesians concerning the body of Christ and its various gifts and members. Our citizens of the various states send representa-

tives to the capital cities of government to represent them and to plead their causes. How much more and how much better it is that we here in this world of sorrow and trouble have One who represents us and pleads our cause with great effect before the throne of eternal glory and Majesty in the heavens!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is He that is even now at the right hand of God the same Jesus that was once here among men?
2. For what purpose did He go up there and what is He doing up there?
3. Can you explain why we need Christ to be in that position at the right hand of God?
4. Why is His position there called "the throne of grace"?
5. How close is Jesus to every one of His children as their Intercessor?
6. How can Jesus be touched with our sorrows?
7. What is Jesus able to do for everyone who comes to God through Him?
8. In what way does Christ minister to us?
9. What two Old Testament scriptures do we have mentioned in our lesson that declare that Christ is ascended to the right hand of God?
10. When will Jesus leave His throne of intercession?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To think of having such a mighty One living in Heaven at the right hand of the Father on our behalf is a great consolation and comfort to our hearts! He never sleeps. He is available for our needs all around the clock in any kind of weather or season. He hears the faintest cry and beholds the most trifling need of His children. His eye is on them all the time. Sometimes even before they pray He is moving things for them. He can answer 1000 prayers at once and no one has to stand in line. He sends the Holy Spirit upon His praying children to comfort, inspire, lead, enlighten, teach, strengthen, and help! He lives forever! He is looking forward to that day when His

intercessory role will be finished and He can be eternally united with His beloved saints. A day with Him, however, is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. He inhabits eternity, but is closely associated with time. He knows everyone who loves and serves Him, and He keeps track of everyone who does not serve Him. He is going to be our final Judge in that last great day. Oh, how we need to call upon Him and give our selves whole-heartedly to Him. He is the great Shepherd of the sheep, our Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lover of our souls, the Captain of our salvation, our King, Bishop of our souls, our Protector, our all in all! Let us hold fast to our profession of Him, and seek His help and grace constantly as we tarry in this world. He will remain there in the heavens until that great day when God will bring an end to time and life here. Lord, help us to be accounted worthy to stand before Him accepted in that day!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In the Old Testament ceremonies, on the day of the yearly sacrifice, the High Priest made three appearances. The first appearance was made to the people early in the morning. This was to assure the people that he was there and was doing his job to make an atonement for their sins. Next he went into the Holy of Holies and made an appearance in the presence of God. Then, when all had been completed, he appeared again before the people to pronounce a blessing upon them.

Christ also makes three appearances. The first was when He was born into this world as a baby, and grew up performing a ministry of assuring the people that the plan of salvation was being put in motion. Now He is in the presence of God making intercession for us. Later He will appear again in the clouds to pronounce a blessing upon all those who have been faithful.

An important aspect to consider in this is that it was required for the priests to be of the tribe of Levi. The Levites were a tribe taken from the Israelites and sanctified for this particular purpose. Consider how things would have gone if a Philistine had appeared as the high priest before the people on the day of atonement. There would have been a lot of uneasy feelings. There would have been no assurance that this

stranger would have their best interest at heart and perform the duties conscientiously. And what incentive would God have to listen to a stranger who appeared before Him? At the close of the day, the Israelites would have no certainty that their sins were forgiven. Before Moses died, he told the children of Israel, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken." Deut. 18:15. Christ became one of us. He came to this earth and walked with man, and experienced what we experience. Surely we can be assured that He has our best interest at heart. And in His office work of intercession He has the credentials of being God's son, so we know He has a favorable audience before God. He is the best High Priest that it is possible to have. —Wayne Murphey



MAY 9, 1993

CHRIST'S PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

John 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the

Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.

John 16:7 ...It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

MEMORY VERSE: But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It was the purpose of God foretold in prophecy that Christ Jesus was to ascend into the heavens to reign as King of kings. Through Jesus, God sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of those who believed and obeyed the gospel of Christ. As a Comforter and Guide, the Holy Spirit would be the vital link between the Church and Jesus.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (John 7:38), "*Out of his belly*": from the very depth of his innermost being. (John 14:16), "*Comforter*": One who comforts, consoles, and intercedes in our behalf. (John 16:8), "*Reprove the world*

of sin, etc.": convict or admonish men concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The first three scriptures of our lesson are from the account of Jesus going up to the Jews' Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus would not go up to the feast at first when His brethren tried to get Him to go up. But after they had gone, then Jesus went up in secret. It was while He was there at the feast that Jesus made this special appeal to the people and spoke of the Holy Spirit being like rivers of living water flowing out from a man's inner-most being. This corresponds with Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well when He spoke of the living water springing up within a man unto eternal life. The writer added that Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit. The rest of our lesson is from Christ's own words spoken that evening of the feet washing and the Lord's supper. It was His last gathering with His disciples before His arrest that night. He speaks about His departure from them, not only of being taken from them in death, but in the coming ascension to the right hand of God. In this discourse He gives the comforting promise several times concerning the Holy Spirit, whom He called the Comforter. He pictures the Holy Spirit as taking His place when He would be taken from them. But He also shows how that He Himself would be manifest in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would come through Him from God, bearing the power and majesty of the Father along with the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was Christ referring to when He spoke of living waters?
2. Who is it that should receive the Holy Spirit?
3. Why cannot the world see or know the Holy Spirit?
4. How did the disciples of Jesus know the Holy Spirit?
5. With the information supplied in our lesson can you name the things that the Holy Spirit supplies to us?

6. Does every one recognize the Holy Spirit when He works?
7. Is it possible that a person not realize the Holy Spirit is dealing with him?
8. Do we have any better chance of perceiving the truth through the Holy Spirit than if Jesus were still here in person?
9. Who are the ones who are eligible to receive the Holy Spirit?
10. How much desire and effort and sacrifice should we have to be able to receive the Holy Spirit today?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Holy Spirit can do much much more in the world with the hearts of men than what Jesus in the flesh could do. There were things that Jesus had to accomplish that no one else could do. He had to have a mortal body that must be offered as a sacrifice for sin. The Holy Spirit could not do that. But after Christ's work was finished, He was taken up into Heaven to sit on the right hand of God. God sent the Holy Spirit through Christ. By means of the blood of the sacrifice of Christ's body and through the personage of Christ in His tenderness, gentleness, kindness, mercy, patience, strength, courage, and every other good quality that Christ showed, the Holy Spirit of God descended upon mankind. He comes only to hearts that have been washed from sin through repentance and faith in the blood of the Saviour. He comes to meek, lowly, consecrated and yielded hearts. He comes to believing, trusting hearts. He comes to forgiving hearts. He comes to hearts who are willing to conform to the image of Christ, because that is what the Spirit of God will do, that is, restore the image of God in the soul. The Holy Spirit comes to comfort, cheer, guide, teach, enlighten, help, give power and grace, and strengthen man for life and its responsibilities. The greatest joy and the richest experience a man can ever have will be his when the Holy Spirit comes to abide within. It is an experience that every heart should desire supremely. It is the promise of the Father, and the highest fulfillment of joy, satisfaction, and happiness that one can ever know in this life. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Why did the coming of the Comforter depend on Christ's going away? We may say, for one thing, that the Comforter could not come until the great offering for sin had been made. The Father sent the Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the world. Without shedding of blood there could be no remission of sins. There was, therefore, no redemption to be offered and applied until Jesus had made His great sacrifice. It was necessary, therefore, that He should go away before the Comforter could come. The precious alabaster box of Christ's humanity must be broken open in order that the sacred ointment of His most blessed life might be poured out on the dead world.

"It was necessary, also, that Christ should return to the Father as the Son of Man, the representative of humanity, and be received into the Father's bosom as such. 'Humanity was to ascend to heaven before the Spirit could be sent to humanity on earth.' Christ also says that He will send the Comforter. He could not do this until He had returned to His glory and been exalted, in His humanity, to His throne of power.

"These are hints of the reasons why Jesus had to go away before the Comforter could come. We live now under the blessed reign of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes we wish we had lived in the time of Christ's human presence in this world, and look back on the period of the Incarnation as earth's brightest and most glorious days; but really we have far richer privileges than had those who knew Christ in the flesh. We have the same blessed Presence that they had, only without the limitations of flesh. Christ is now to millions everywhere even far more than He was then to a few favored ones."

—Taken from, *Come Ye Apart*.



Notice: If your subscription expired with this quarter, please send your renewal at once. It is necessary that your subscription for the third quarter of 1993 be in this office by June 1.

MAY 16, 1993

CHRIST FORETELLS HIS SECOND COMING

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

MEMORY VERSE: Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. Mark 13:35,36.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus Christ, the Son of God, will appear the second time in power and glory to destroy this present evil world, to punish all who have refused to love and obey Him, and to give eternal reward to all who have been faithful to Him. He is waiting on His Father's word as to when this will all take place.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Matthew 24:7), "*Pestilences*": diseases and plagues. "*Divers places*": various spots around the globe. (Mark 13:32), "*Neither the Son*": I have pondered on this phrase that states that the Son does not know the day nor the hour. How can the Son who is one with the Father, and at His right Hand be without this knowledge of when the end of time will be? Adam Clarke, in his commentary ponders and questions the same thing. But here is a thought that will help us at this point: The Father is the One who will decide when the end of this world will be. The Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour, is at His right hand waiting and eagerly anticipating that glorious day when He will be united with His holy bride in glory forever. But He is submissive to the decision of the Father as to when that day will be when all things will be made subject unto Him. What knowledge the Son may have is all under the direct jurisdiction of the will of the Father. (Luke 21:25), "*Distress of nations*": anxiety of nations in perplexity (quandary, at a loss to know what to do) of sound, of sea, and of surf. This is the rendering of the Greek text. This is true in a literal sense with all the hurricanes and tidal waves, but it is true in a spiritual sense also, and perhaps in a much greater way with all the confusion and tossing to and fro of peoples in strikes, disputes, and war. (V. 26), "*Powers of heaven*": the spiritual powers in the realm of the children of God and the souls of men. (V. 28), "*Your redemption*": your salvation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God in the final resurrection. See Romans 8:21. (V. 34), "*Overcharged*": loaded down. "*Sur-*

feeling": the effects of overeating and overindulgence in the fleshly appetites. (V. 36), "*Pray always*": This word "pray" here in the Greek means to beg or petition.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 we have recorded our Saviour's discourse with His disciples concerning two main things. One of them was the destruction of Jerusalem which took place in A.D. 70 by the Romans. The other was the second coming of Christ. There is a very important relation between the two. The destruction of Jerusalem was the judgment of God upon the Jewish nation for their rejection of His Son, Jesus Christ. It was the end of their national pride and glory. The Jews were dispersed and scattered among the nations. Jesus was warning His people of that awful event. Jesus is also in these chapters pointing toward and warning concerning His second coming. This second coming will bring about the destruction of the world and the judgment upon mankind in general for their rejection of Him. In our lesson today we are mainly studying the promised second coming of Christ. The destruction of the city of Jerusalem did take place exactly as Christ foretold. But the years have fled and the ages have passed. The Jewish state was reborn in these latter times and has taken a place among the wicked nations of the world, all of whom will soon stand before God at the coming of Christ. It is a truth that we would all do well to take seriously and be diligent in our preparation for that day of wrath.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the things that Jesus mentioned in these scriptures that are taking place in our day?
2. Who alone will decide when that great day will be?
3. What are the things that we as Christians must especially be on our guard against?
4. Is there distress and perplexity among the nations today?
5. Are God's people to expect great and hard trials in the last days?

6. How does the true child of God feel when all these signs point to the Lord's soon coming?
7. What must we do so that day will not come upon us as a snare?
8. Should it be a part of our prayers that we be ready and accounted worthy to stand before Him in that day?
9. How can we keep from becoming too heavily laden with the cares of life?
10. What kind of sleep does the Lord warn us about?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Everything we see in the world points to the fact that the coming of the Lord is near. People are rocking and reeling in financial turmoil and strife. Nations are fighting and pay no attention to truce or cease-fire agreements. The morals are gone, the economy is wrecked, the governments are corrupt and continually in an upheaval. People are sick, while new and strange diseases fall upon the masses. The air is polluted, the water is polluted, and the soil is so worn out that it requires much artificial fertilizer and chemicals to produce crops each year. And yet people try to tell themselves that things are getting better. We know that things are not getting better. People are crying, "Peace and safety!" But we know that there is no peace and safety anywhere except in Christ. We are nearing the end of this fleeting age. The Bridegroom is returning soon to claim His holy Bride, the Church of God. Oh, how we need to be praying every day for the Lord's mercy upon us that He will spare us from the destruction of this present world. We need to pray that we will be accepted of Him in that awful day of wrath. We need to seek meekness, seek righteousness, and live close to God so we can be hid in the day of His anger. (Zephaniah 2:3.) Surely it will pay us to live careful lives and stay ready to meet the Lord. He will come as a snare, as a thief in the night. Let us be watchful and prayerful, soberly living and holding fast the hope of the gospel. He will come in a twinkling of an eye and every eye shall see Him.

In a lonely monastic cell about the year 1250 the following poem was written by Thomas of Celano. It was written from private devotion. It is the expression of a prayer that should be

in every heart concerning the coming of the day of wrath. It is regarded by critics as the most sublime poem ever written. It was originally written in Latin, but the translation into English we have here was by Henry Alford in 1845. Several other poets have translated it, including Charles Wesley. I would like to insert it here along with our lesson on the coming of the Lord. Everyone would do well to take this poem and read it slowly and with prayer.

—Leslie C. Busbee

THAT DAY OF WRATH

Day of anger, that dread day
Shall the sign in heaven display,
And the earth in ashes lay.

Oh, what trembling shall appear,
When His coming shall be near,
Who shall all things strictly clear!

When the trumpet shall command
Through the tombs of every land
All before the throne to stand.

Death shall shrink and nature quake,
When all creatures shall awake,
Answer to their God to make.

See the book divinely penned,
In which all is found contained,
Whence the world shall be arraigned!

When the Judge is on His throne,
All that's bidden shall be shown,
Nought unpunished or unknown.

What shall I before Him say?
How shall I be safe that day
When the righteous scarcely may?

King of awful majesty,
Saving sinners graciously,
Fount of mercy, save thou me!

Leave me not, my Saviour, one
For whose soul thy course was run,
Lest I be that day undone.

Thou didst toil my soul to gain;
Didst redeem me with thy pain:
Be such labor not in vain!

Thou just Judge of wrath severe,
Grant my sins remission here
Ere thy reckoning day appear.

My transgressions grievous are;
Scarce look up for shame I dare;
Lord, thy guilty creature spare!

Thou didst heal the sinner's grief,
And didst hear the dying thief:
Even I may hope relief.

All unworthy is my prayer;
Make my soul thy mercy's care,
And from fire eternal spare!

Place me with thy sheep, that band
Who shall separated stand
From the goats, at thy right hand!

When thy voice in wrath shall say,
"Cursed ones, depart away!"
Call me with the blest, I pray!

Lord, thine ear in mercy bow!
Broken is my spirit now:
Guard of my last end be thou!

In that day, that mournful day,
When to judgment wakes our clay,
Show me mercy, Lord, I pray!

MAY 23, 1993

**CHRIST'S TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE,
AND ADULTERY**

Matthew 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Matthew 19:3 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 her 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.

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

MEMORY VERSE And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery. Mark 10:11, 12.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: It is gross sin to violate and abuse the holy ordinance of God concerning the union of a man and his wife in marriage. Only death can dissolve the marriage relation in the sight of God. To put away one's companion and be married to another is the sin of adultery.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Matthew 5:27), "*Adultery*": Sexual unfaithfulness of a married person; unlawful relations of a person with someone other than his or her lawful husband or wife. (V. 32), "*Fornication*": unlawful sexual relations between unmarried persons. "*Divorce*": a separation. "*Saving for the cause of fornication*": The Greek phrase reads: "apart from a matter of fornication". (Matthew 19:3), "*For every cause*": for any cause. (V. 9), "*Except it be for fornication*": The Greek text here reads, "if not for fornication." Much speculation and disputing has arisen with regard to what Jesus meant here. (V. 10), "*If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry*": The Greek text reads: If thus is the case

of the man with the wife, it is not for the best advantage to marry. Jesus had just mentioned that whosoever marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery. The disciples response was, "If thus is the case of the man with the wife, (that is, if this is the way it is with a man and the woman he wants,) it is not good or wise to marry. It is never wise or profitable to marry someone who has another living husband or wife. To do this is to commit adultery. (Matthew 19:12), "*Eunuch*": a person who is not able or permitted to partake of the marriage relationship; an impotent or unmarried person. Jesus mentioned the three kinds of eunuchs: 1. Those who are physically unable from birth, 2. Those who are thus through the surgical process by man, and 3. Those who for the kingdom of God's sake restrain and deny themselves of sexual relations and the husband or wife status. As He said, "All men cannot receive (make room for, Greek) this saying." In other words, very few people are willing to deny themselves of being married for their soul's welfare's sake. (Hebrews 13:4), "*Whoremonger*": the Greek word means "fornicator".

LESSON BACKGROUND

Of all the teachings of Jesus Christ, no subject is more plainly and pointedly spoken of than that of marriage and adultery. And yet in our society no sin is more rampant and widely spread. Note the question that the Pharisees put to Jesus: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause? Is it right for a man to put away his wife?" Jesus referred to the divine ordinance of God established in the beginning when man was first created. Jesus added to that, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." What Jesus said here is as important or authoritative as what God said. Note the second question: "Why did Moses command to give her a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" Jesus gave the right answer. Because of the hardened and sinful disposition of a carnal, unregenerate heart Moses made this provision. An ungodly man when forced to maintain a marriage relationship would heap sorrow and suffering upon his wife. Man, in his depraved and lustful condition of heart knew so little about love, true and pure love. Thus he was permitted in the law of Moses

to put away his wife. But Jesus quickly and clearly stated that from the beginning it was not so. The inserted phrase, "saving for the cause of fornication", (Matt. 5:32) and the phrase, "Except it be for fornication", (Matt. 19:9) cannot scripturally be used as an excuse for separating from one's companion to marry someone else, as is done so much. Man is very gullible and easily deceived when it comes to this matter. The desire for sexual fulfillment and physical gratification searches for any plausible excuse to justify one's actions. The disciples' question is often misunderstood, also. What they are saying is, "If the woman that a man wants to marry has been married before and her former companion is still living, it is not advisable to marry; and, as Christ said, not many are able to receive the answer He gave to that. It takes a person who loves God supremely who will be a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake, that is, to deny themselves of marriage on account of their convictions of what the word of God teaches.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Where lies the real root of adultery?
2. Do people today as a general rule understand what adultery is and why it is wrong in the sight of God?
3. How did Jesus explain the conflict between what God established in the beginning and what was provided in the law of Moses?
4. What is the real safeguard that will keep us from the adultery trap?
5. Did Christ say enough to make it plain as to what adultery is?
6. What danger do we put ourselves into when we trifle with the ordinances of God?
7. What are some of the conditions that prevail in our society that promote adultery and fornication?
8. What effect will there be in the heart of a person who does not understand the sin of adultery?
9. Do we need the wisdom of the Holy Spirit along with the teachings of the Bible in dealing with souls caught in this evil snare?
10. What is going to happen to adulterers and whoremongers?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, the sin and evil of adultery, and the awful sorrow that it brings to hearts and lives! There are comparatively few families world-wide who are not affected by this sin. It is a story that so often is told. A young man and young woman are attracted to each other. After going together for a time, plans are made for a wedding. Fancy frills and adornments attend the event with a show somewhat of religion. Thus the newly-weds start on their way. But after a time the fleshly relationship breaks down and a separation comes and then the divorce. Then after awhile each is attracted to another person and there is double marriage. So many times little children are involved. The sorrow continues on. Before it is over, sometimes there are four or five more companions. Jesus talked to one woman who had been with five husbands and her present one was not her husband. There is a prevention for this and a cure. Bible salvation and being born of the Spirit of God will keep a person from entering such marriages and will make a way for those who are already ensnared therein. Oh that young people would give their all to Jesus and let His Spirit lead them in the matter of choosing a companion! It will keep them from the sorrows of adultery and broken marriages. And when a godly couple enters upon the married life, much prayer, humility, and godly carefulness must be employed to maintain a marriage that God is pleased with.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The marriage of husband and wife is a beautiful and simple institution, but sin has diminished the luster and made it a complicated, confusing and technical doctrine.

Undoubtedly, the reason for so many divorces in our land is because people are not taught how closely the joining together of husband and wife is. God ordained and gave an example of this close relationship in the creation of Adam and Eve. Eve was actually a part of Adam in every sense of the word. The divine institution of marriage joins a husband and wife in a relationship closer and more binding than the one between parent and child. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife." Genesis 2:24. Marriage

is so unifying that the man and woman cease to be two and become one flesh. Jesus declared this in our lesson. (Matt. 19:6.) Scripture plainly teaches the duality of husband and wife, and makes this duality the unit of home life, treating husband and wife never as individuals but as one unit. The duality of husband and wife makes a living organism of which Paul says the husband is the head. (I Cor. 11:3.)

To "un-marry" this union is to destroy this living organism. The words Christ used in describing this is "put asunder." When you stop and think of it, that is a rather suggestive word, and not in a very pretty sense. The early Christians were "sawn asunder," and that is what the divorce courts are doing to the homes of our land.

—Wayne Murphey



MAY 30, 1993

THE SOWER AND THE SEED

(Our Scripture text for today's lesson will be a combination of three accounts of Christ's parable of the sower and the seed found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke.)

Matthew 13:2, Luke 8:4 And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he went into a ship and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Matthew 13:3, Mark 4:2 And he spake many things unto them in parables, and said unto them in his doctrine:

Mark 4:3, Luke 8:5 Hearken; Behold, a sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

Matthew 13:5, Mark 4:5, Luke 8:6 Some fell upon a rock and in stony places where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

Matthew 13:6, Mark 4:6, Luke 8:6 But when the sun was up, and as soon as it was sprung up, it was scorched and withered away because it had no root, and lacked moisture.

Matthew 13:7, Mark 4:7, Luke 8:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it and it yielded no fruit.

Matthew 13:8, Mark 4:8, Luke 8:8 But other fell into good

ground, and it did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth, some thirty fold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundred fold.

Matthew 13:9, Mark 4:9 And Jesus said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Luke 8:11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

Matthew 13:19, Mark 4:15, Luke 8:12 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one (Satan, the devil) immediately, and catcheth away the word that was sown in their hearts lest they should believe and be saved.

Matthew 13:20,21, Mark 4:16,17, Luke 8:13 They on the rock and in stoney places are they, which, when they hear, receive the word immediately with gladness and joy; yet, they have no root, and so they believe and endure for a while; and then when tribulation, affliction, temptation, or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, they are offended immediately, and fall away.

Matthew 13:22, Mark 4:18,19, Luke 8:14 They which are sown among thorns hear the word, and go forth, but the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life, and the lust of other things choke the word, and they become unfruitful, bringing forth no fruit to perfection.

Matthew 13:23, Mark 4:20, Luke 8:15 But they on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, hear the word, understand, receive, and keep it; and bring forth fruit with patience, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some an hundredfold.

Mark 4:24, Luke 8:18 Take heed therefore how ye hear, and what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

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

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Jesus described four different kinds

of hearts that His gospel will be preached to in this world. In this parable is revealed the principle things that hinder a man from being saved, and from attaining to full growth and perfection in the Christian life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: "*Parable*": a similitude or narrative of common life that conveys a moral or lesson; showing the truth of one condition by comparing it to another. "*Doctrine*": teaching or instruction. "*Take heed how ye hear*", and "*what ye hear*": These two words, "how" and "what" are very important words. They concern the hearing of the gospel, the vital link between Christ and the soul of man. A man's life is largely made up of what he hears and how he hears it. You can hear and give heed to the wrong thing and it will bring misfortune and trouble. You can hear the right thing, and yet not hear it in the right way, misunderstanding it, and you are in trouble again. There are a lot of things to hear in this life, but we must be very careful what we lend a listening ear to. And then, when we hear the gospel of Christ, we must be careful to hear it in the right way with the proper attitude of heart, so that we get the right view and understanding. "*To him that hath shall be given*": This is a statement Jesus made several times in His teachings. He makes it here in this lesson, and we shall see it again in our future studies concerning stewardship and spiritual economy. "*To him that hath*": to him that hath what? What must a person have to be able to receive light and knowledge from God?

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today is one of Christ's greatest and most important parables. It has to do with the Word of God in its relationship to people. It shows how so many people are kept from receiving the grace of God, and names out the hindrances. It is very interesting to note that Jesus gave this lesson as secret enclosed in a similitude or likeness. He spoke it first in its raw and unexplained form to the multitudes at the sea side. He did not explain its deep and important meaning to them, but rather opened the door for any who would inquire by saying, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." His disciples asked Him later why He spoke to the multitudes as He did, that is, in parables.

Jesus explained that to the general run of society (the multitudes) it was not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. These things were to be spiritually discerned, and to be revealed only to those who qualify by coming and being willing to follow the Master. That was why He told His disciples that it was given to them to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. He explained to them the meaning of the parable of the sower, and for us who follow the Master today, this explains why the gospel is received by some and rejected by so many. It will help us to not be dismayed or discouraged when people turn away from the truth.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is it that is right close by a person who is hearing the gospel?
2. What are some of the things about the Word of God that makes it unattractive to the carnal mind?
3. Is there any way that a person can keep from being shallow-minded and not receptive to the gospel?
4. What factors in a person's life contribute to the state of mind and condition of heart?
5. How responsible are we to seek earnestly to be that good ground?
6. Which one of these conditions of heart will be true of the majority of people today?
7. Is there any thing that can be done to keep us from being hung up in the thorn trap?
8. Is this parable still true today?
9. Why is our hearing such an important thing with regard to the gospel of Christ?
10. What are some of the things that we must have if we are to be able to hear and believe the gospel?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Four different kinds of hearts there are who hear the word of God:

Each one of us are one of these while here on earth we trod.
Some hear the gospel of the Lord, not knowing what they hear;

They've not been taught or disciplined Almighty God to fear.
Just idle words it seems to them, and passes o'er their heads;

They do not understand its worth, ignoring it instead.
Thus Satan grabs this woeful chance and makes them unaware
Of the great calling of the Lord and what He wills to share.

And then there're those who seem to hear, responding right away,
With gladdened joy accepting Christ and what He has to say.
Enduring for awhile when skies are fair and sunny bright,
They seem to lift the Saviour up and stand for truth and right.
But then when deeper knowledge comes, and problems do arise
That bring affliction and reproach, they turn from Him their
eyes.

They have no root nor depth of heart to brave adversity,
Offended, thus they fall away and cease no more to be.

Some hear the gospel, make a start; they seem so glad and free;
They'll testify and church attend and faithful want to be.
But, oh, the lusts of other things, earth's cares and riches vain,
Begin to choke the precious word and all the ground they
gain.

Neglecting service, praise, and prayer, too busy they become,
While o'er their soul a callous cold their spirits do benumb.
Like many who have come and gone, their presence is no more,
The place of worship they once loved they darken not its door.

Thank God! There are a few who with an honest heart
And steadfast purpose hear the word, and make an eager
start.

They understand and seek to know the deeper things and more,
Receiving with an open mind His precepts to adore.
Obeying, keeping, bringing forth with patience precious fruit,
Down in their deep and loving hearts strikes deep the
heavenly root.

Some thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold, they do their best
To serve their God and ent'ring in, they find the promised rest!
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Take heed therefore how ye hear, and what ye hear...."
There are many instructions on homiletics, or preaching, but
much of Christ's teaching centers around the hearing. The art
of hearing should be a prerequisite of preaching. That way, the

minister will have the ability to hear God and give out that which is beneficial.

We should hear with discrimination, thereby shunning false doctrine. Eve listened and got into trouble. When the devil tempted Christ, He said "Get thee behind me." (Luke 4:8.)

We should hear with attention, endeavoring to retain the truth. The story is told of a lady who decided that she should become more refined, so she decided to go to a musical concert. She went and sat in the seat, and while the musicians played, she knitted. As she knitted, she began thinking about all the different ways there were to fix eggs. After a while, those seated around her heard her say, "Personally, I like mine fried in butter best." The lady left the concert no more refined than when she went. We too can be this way. We can read the Word, listen to the Word, and be the same person as we were before we did so.

We have the promise that, "...unto you that hear shall more be given." If we hear as we should, we will find that we have more of a desire to hear. We will progressively gain understanding of what we hear; become more convinced of the truth we hear, and possess more of the blessings of that which we hear.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 6, 1993

JESUS CHRIST, THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP

John 10:1 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

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

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

MEMORY VERSE: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Isaiah 40:11.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: In His love and tender care for the

souls of mankind, Jesus assumes the role of a good Shepherd who guards, feeds, shelters, provides for, nurses, and leads them to eternal life.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (John 10:2), "*Shepherd*": one who supervises the control and care of a flock of sheep. (V. 3), "*Porter*": a watcher, gate or door keeper. (V. 4), "*Putteth forth*": turns out from the sheepfold to go into pasture. (V. 10), "*Abundantly*": excessive, superior, superabundant. (V. 12), "*Hireling*": one who merely works for wages

LESSON BACKGROUND

In great fulfillment of the Shepherds Psalm, Psalm 23, Jesus has come to be the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. (I Peter 2:25.) "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:6." He bore our iniquity by dying for us on the cross of Calvary. Oh, He is the good Shepherd! He feeds our souls with the Bread of Life! He rescues and restores us from wandering astray. As we follow Him and listen to His voice speaking to our hearts we are kept in the way to heaven. Jesus had just healed the blind man who had been blind from birth. After the blind man had found Jesus and worshipped him, Jesus spoke these words: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." Some of the Pharisees answered and said unto him, "Are we blind also? And then Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth." It seems that this is what introduced the Lord's thought concerning Him being the good Shepherd of the sheep. These Pharisees did not realize that they were blind and needing help. Therefore they did not sense their need of what Christ was or had. Thus they were not His sheep. It is the same today. Only those who are aware of their need of being saved will heed the Saviour's voice. But those who realize their poverty and need can find the joy of living for Jesus and experiencing His blessed care. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Are there other influences and powers in the world that

would rob us of our relationship with our Shepherd?

2. Is it of great importance for everyone to learn the voice of Jesus?

3. What can we do if we will enter in through Christ and be saved?

4. Is Satan still seeking to destroy our souls?

5. Can Satan steal from us?

6. Does Jesus have under-shepherds?

7. Has there ever been hirelings in the work of the Lord?

8. Is it God's plan and pleasure for His sheep to be scattered?

9. Can we each one say, "The Lord is MY Shepherd?"

10. What all has the great Shepherd promised to do for us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

The Lord Jesus knows His sheep and they know Him. They know His voice and they follow Him carefully every day. He is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. He feeds us with the manna from heaven. He watches over us and when He beholds our souls in danger and adversity, He sends help and aid our way so faithfully. Oh, how sweet it has been having the Lord as our Shepherd through the years! He truly has guarded and fed our souls with His goodness and love. Satan would like to steal from us. He would like to steal our joy, peace, soul rest, and courage. He would like to drown our spiritual life with confusion, fear, worry, hurt feelings, problems and other pressures in the world around us. And he would like to bring us to eternal ruin in the lake of fire. Such is our enemy, the thief and robber Satan, who ever lurks out there in the darkness scheming to try to take us. But our Shepherd helps us to be aware and not ignorant of his devices. Jesus cares for our souls and refreshes our spirits when we are weary. He is constantly renewing our inward man, restoring and preserving our soul. It is so sweet to let Him lead us to green pastures and living fountains of waters. He feeds us with the hidden manna. (Rev. 2: 17.) He showers us with comfort and peace every day. He is the great Shepherd of the sheep. I remember many years ago when I was a young Christian struggling against the pressures of the enemy. I came into the service one night with a heavy heart. A dear minister led out in

prayer and he mentioned in prayer that the Lord was the great Shepherd of the sheep. Oh, how those words comforted me! He is greater than any problem the Church will ever face. Let us be of good courage and keep close to our beloved Shepherd.
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“...He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom...” There are several reasons why God carries the lambs in His bosom. Perhaps the foremost reason is for the benefit of the lamb. A newborn lamb is very vulnerable. It is weak and unable to navigate on its thin legs; likewise the young saint. The Christian life is new to those who have lived in sin. They need some special care. Sometimes they need to be led to the milk, and they need a dry, warm shelter. Christ’s bosom is all of this to those new in the faith.

Christ also carries the lambs in His bosom for the ewe’s benefit. It is said that when a shepherd comes to a stream and wants to get the sheep across, he takes a lamb and carries it so the mother is sure to follow. The church is the mother of those born into the kingdom, and God can lead the church by working through the new saints. It is healthy for a congregation to have lambs that are being carried in God’s arms. Have you seen God pour a special blessing upon someone new, and how it isn’t long until some of the older saints start wanting that same fresh testimony? The apostle Paul realized this when he wrote, “For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.” Rom. 11:13,14.

I heard someone say once, “Things just aren’t like they used to be when I was first saved.” After so long, God will take us out of His bosom and let us walk. But He still doesn’t forsake us. There will be times when He picks us up and carries us on His shoulders. This also is a good place to be, for it is close to His ear and we can tell Him all our troubles.

Christ has all the instincts of a good shepherd, and we can rest safely in His care.

—Wayne Murphey



JUNE 13, 1993

**CHRIST'S TEACHINGS AND EXAMPLE OF
FAITH IN GOD**

Matthew 8:23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

Mark 4:37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?

Mark 9:23 ...If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

Mark 11:12 ...When they were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of the figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And the disciples heard it.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.

23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

John 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

MEMORY VERSE: Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Hebrews 11:6.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Christ counted God, His Father, faithful to care for Him and to be concerned with the smallest detail of His needs. In this He set an example for us to follow in believing that God is likewise concerned about us in all of our needs.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Mark 4:38), "*Hinder part of the ship*": the stern, or the end of the ship where the rudder or steering apparatus was located. "*Faith and believing*": these two words mean practically the same thing being translated from the Greek word which means persuasion, confidence, assurance, and the firm reliance upon another for help or success. (Mark 11:24), "*Therefore I say unto you*": Jesus had just made a statement that He knew would be almost beyond what a mortal man could take in. He had said that if we would not doubt, but believe that whatsoever we would say would come to pass, we would have whatsoever we would say. So He restated it in this 24th verse, bringing it down to a simpler level and made it to apply to our needs. (John 20:27), "*Be not faithless, but believing*": The Greek text reads, "Become not unbelieving, but believing". When we are faced with light, responsibility, burdens, and needs of life we can become unbelieving. We can draw back in doubts and fears. Or we can heed the Master's counsel to Thomas and become believing.

Just as Abraham and Sarah both laughed when it was presented to them concerning the birth of a son in their old age, and then recovered their faith by steadfastly believing what God had said, so can we overcome all tendencies to doubt and unbelief and steadfastly believe also to the saving of our souls.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In our lesson today we have taken different instances where Christ reproved doubts and unbelief and encouraged perfect faith and confidence in God. Not only did He teach faith, but He set an example of believing and trusting fully in God. In the 9th chapter of Mark a man had brought his afflicted son to Jesus. He had said, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Jesus helped the man to see his responsibility in the matter. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Believing and trusting in God is not just a privilege and an opportunity, but it is a personal responsibility and requirement. God is not interested in helping people who refuse to believe His word and trust His faithfulness. The man with the afflicted son cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." And the Lord did help him. Thomas was another example of hesitancy in believing. He just could not take it in that his Lord was truly risen. But the Lord helped him and we are sure that after that he was doubting Thomas no more. Oh, may the Holy Spirit so warm and fill our hearts with His sweet assurance that we can triumph forever over everything, believing in God!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did the disciples question whether the Master cared if they perished?
2. Will it seem at times to us that the Master is not caring for us?
3. Was there any way that those disciples could have perished with Jesus on board their ship?
4. Is it always easy to believe? What do we have to press against to maintain faith in God?
5. Is faith an option that we can take it or leave it, and it not have any bearing on our soul?

6. Did Christ curse the fig tree mainly in retaliation for there being no fruit thereon?
7. What was His real purpose in cursing the fig tree?
8. Can we expect to get anything from God if we allow ourselves to be doubtful of His help?
9. Can we pray and ask God to help us to have the faith that we ought to have?
10. Do we have to "work at it" every day if we are to have faith in God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

To have living faith in God that pleases him is a quest worthy of all the heart's devotion and endeavor! Jesus set us a very good example in this way. His was a perfect faith in the Father. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. This was His faith. He did it in confidence that God would bring Him back from death and the grave to an eternal life in glory with Him. His faith covered every aspect of His life. He sought no wealth or fame in this world. He trusted God for His necessities, even telling Peter to go down to the sea and find the needed money in the mouth of the first fish that he caught! Oh, to have the faith that Jesus had! As one poet said, "Oh, for a faith that will not shrink, though pressed by every foe, that will not tremble on the brink of any earthly woe!" This kind of faith can be ours and it must be ours. Jesus had it, and we can have it by His help and strength. We must desire it and pray to Him for it. It is vital and we cannot afford to do or be without it. In the list of those who will have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, the fearful and unbelieving heads the list. (Rev. 21:8.) It is not an option. People say, "Well, I just don't have the faith I should", and act like it is not a serious matter. But it is a serious matter. Doubts and unbelief grieve the Lord. Let us press forward and seek to have the kind of faith that Jesus had. It is for us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In striving to have faith it is easy for the young and zealous to fall into a state of condemnation and to do things which have the potential of causing more harm than bringing glory to the cause of God. Probably everyone who is saved has at one time

or another labored under a burden for there to be more faith for certain situations. And there is a need for more of God's power to be manifested.

On the day of Pentecost it is recorded that Jesus had said to the disciples, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:..." Acts 1:8. This is something that comes naturally and is a heritage of the children of God. It is easy to fall into a feeling that we must make something happen, and sometimes we pray as if we are trying to overcome God's reluctance to answer. Take note of the miracles that are recorded in the New Testament. They all came naturally. There was no advance planning by Christ, or the disciples, but God worked out the circumstances and they were simply the vessels used. This doesn't preclude us, or shouldn't discourage us, from coveting the best gifts, (1 Cor. 12:31.) but we shouldn't try to create them.

Our part is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We are to believe in God with our whole hearts, live a pleasing life before Him, and let Him use us, rather than us try to use Him. We are to believe that God knows about the needs that we have, and that He is concerned about us. With that attitude we can come before Him with comfort, confidence and faith. —Wayne Murphey



JUNE 20, 1993

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON STEWARDSHIP, PART 1

Luke 16:1 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3 Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9 And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

I Timothy 6:17 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

18 That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate;

19 Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

MEMORY VERSE: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. Luke 6:38.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: We are to use the money and financial wealth that we have in this short life not for our selfish satisfaction, but rather to give to the poor and to help others. In this way we will make friends in heaven who will welcome us to eternal dwellings when we are put out of this life by the hand of death.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Luke 16:1), "*Steward*": The Greek word "oikonomos" means a housemanager, overseer, agent, or treasurer. It is generally defined as one who has charge or the responsibility of another person's goods. (V. 2), "*Stewardship*": The Greek word is "oikonomia", which means the administration of a household or estate. It is interesting to note that from this word, "oikonomia" comes our English word, "economy". Wherever you see the word "dispensation" in the New Testament, it is a translation from this same word, "oikonomia". This term "stewardship" is a very serious and important thing that has to do with every one of us in a financial or material way and in a spiritual way, as well. (V. 5), "*His lord's debtors*": those who owed his lord. (V. 6), "*Sit down quickly*": Knowing that it was but a matter of time before he would lose the power and authority he had over his lord's money, he wanted to employ that time in making friends with that money so that they would welcome him into their homes in gratitude for his favor unto them. (V. 9), "*Mammon*": money, wealth, riches. (I Timothy 6:18), "*Ready to distribute*": ready to impart to others. "*Willing to communicate*": liberal and generous.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Today's lesson is one of the most important truths that Christ taught. One reason it is so important is because it has to do with one of man's greatest temptations, and that is money. We can find in this lesson some hidden causes to the world's great woes and problems today. The economy of the nations of the world is in a serious condition. The use of the resources and the management of the natural wealth has been so greatly abused that man is reaping great sorrow untold. Covetousness gives place for corruption, and mismanagement of funds and fraud is everywhere. And the saddest thing about it is what it is doing to people's souls and their future. Jesus gives the key in our lesson today to eternal life. Can you see it? We also quote from Paul's writings to Timothy concerning laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come that we may lay hold of eternal life. This is a serious lesson today worthy of our utmost heed.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was about to happen to the steward?
2. What was being put out of the stewardship going to mean to him?
3. What did he do to his lord's debtors?
4. What did he think that cutting their bill down would bring him?
5. Was this action a wise one?
6. What are we going to be put out of soon?
7. What kind of friends do we need when we are put out of this life?
8. How can we use our material wealth to make friends?
9. Is there any hope for a person who uses their money unwisely and selfishly?
10. What can we do to lay up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come so that we can lay hold of eternal life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We are all in a stewardship that we are going to be put out of. The hand of death will come some day and end all of our earthly endeavor. We will be put out of this earthly house. We will pass out into the great beyond. This is a solemn thought. How vain and shallow is the mind that refuses to think of eternity! Our long home, the house of our eternity has very little place in so many hearts and minds! Now is the time to prepare for that great change. We need to have our sins forgiven and washed away in the blood of the Lamb. We need to be sanctified wholly and filled with the Holy Spirit. We need to follow the blessed doctrines of our Lord and Saviour faithfully. And in our lesson today we find one of His important doctrines. With the mammon of unrighteousness, the money that comes to us in our pay checks, pensions, and revenues from business and labor we need to make friends. The friends we need to make are those who can receive or welcome us into everlasting dwellings not made with hands. They are the saints who have gone on before, the angels, the Lord Jesus, and the heavenly Father. We can make friends with them by using our means to help the poor and the needy saints, and the work of the Lord. By giving and denying this worldly and lustful spirit in the world we can help to bring a spirit of love and humility into our lives, a love that

will be close kin to Him who died on the tree. We want to be able to lay hold on eternal life. But we will not be able to lay hold on eternal life if we have been selfish and covetous. If we have wasted and misused the money that came into our hands the Lord will not impart to us the riches of eternal life. We will pass out into the darkness of eternity with no welcome from that city built above. What sorrow will be ours to feel ourselves thrust out into outer darkness with no warm welcome offered to us!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The key point in the story of the steward is that he made a change. It was a change in which he quit wasting his master's goods and started to put them to good use. It was a change in which he stopped defrauding others, and started helping them. One commentary says, "Was he deducting over-charges when the steward bade his master's debtors to reduce the accounts owing? That is how many Eastern people view it. The fifty measures of oil, and the eighty measures of wheat to which the steward reduced the amounts formed the actual debts, the rest being simply over-charges with which the steward himself had cruelly and fraudulently burdened them. In that case the expedient to which he resorted in the emergency was not an act of trickery and dishonesty, but the first signs of real repentance, and an act of justice."

Notice the condition he found himself in by following a path of wrong. When he was summarily dismissed, he debated what he should do. Evidently his life of deceit and wrong-doing hadn't benefited him with a nest egg, or provided him anything to depend on in the future. This is very typical of sin, financially and spiritually. The prodigal son proved this. The steward sadly reflected, "I cannot dig." It would seem that his intemperance had weakened his body. Take a look around at those who have indulged in the deceits and pleasures of sin, and see how many of them are able to give a good day's labor. "To beg, I am ashamed." Now here is a real paradox, but one that is played over and over again. It didn't seem to bother him one bit to defraud others or be deceitful to his master, but he suddenly starts feeling pangs of remorse to have to beg. What hypocritical

pride! But the parable ends well. When the reality of his situation was forcibly brought before him, he made a conscientious decision to change. He began by planning for his future and righting his wrongs. Then he received the commendation of his lord. What a blessing it is to serve God faithfully and openly and have His blessings upon us. —Wayne Murphey



JUNE 27, 1993

CHRIST'S TEACHING ON STEWARDSHIP, PART 2

Matthew 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country (to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Luke 19:12.), who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability (and said unto them, Occupy till I come. Luke 19:13.); and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Luke 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

Matthew 25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto them, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him (Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, Luke 19:22), Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

MEMORY VERSE: As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. I Peter 4:10.

CENTRAL THOUGHT: Christ has gone to the right hand of God to remain until the last great day. He has given gifts and workings to His saints for them to work with until He comes again. We must use our gifts and callings to increase the wealth of Christ's kingdom in other souls. We will have to give an account to God how we have handled the gifts that He gave us.

WORD DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS: (Matthew 25:15), "*Several ability*": each one's own individual ability.

(Luke 19:13), "*Occupy*": to busy one's self with; to trade and communicate with others. (Luke 19:15), "*Trading*": the Greek word here means thoroughly occupying one's self, making increase in business. (Matthew 25:27), "*Exchangers*": The account in Luke 19 used the term "bank". Both of these words in the Greek refer to a money broker or banker. "*Usury*": interest. (Matthew 25:30), "*Gnashing of teeth*": grating of the teeth in pain or rage.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Matthew 25 contains three different aspects of Christ's second coming. The second part that we have in our lesson today is concerning the stewardship of the grace of God that is given to us in the Church. This parable is told in a somewhat different form in Luke 19:12-27. We have inserted various parts of the account in Luke along with our text from Matthew 25, as some of the expressions in Luke help to explain and illustrate the thought better. Paul spoke of stewardship in his writings to the Corinthians, and we have included that along with what Peter said about it in his epistle. As are all the teachings of Christ, this lesson is of utmost importance to us. This involves the children of God who are born again. As we press close to Him and consecrate our all to be filled with His Spirit, He gives us gifts and callings to occupy ourselves in. It is so important for us to employ our time and energies in fulfilling the ministry that He gives to each one of us individually. He will reckon with us about it when He comes again. We will be called to give an account of our labors. In our previous lesson we learned that stewardship means economy. The economy of the grace of God is by far the greatest economy in the world, because it deals with the greatest potentials and commodities, that is, the power of Christ and the souls of men. Prayer and earnest submission and obedience to God must be employed in fulfilling our stewardship in Him.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of wealth has Christ left with His people to work with today?
2. How can we hide our "talent" in the earth?

3. What are some of the things we can do in order to bring an increase in our spiritual blessings?
4. What would you think that that servant who hid his talent in the earth did with his time while his lord was gone?
5. What keeps many people today from being industrious in working for Jesus?
6. What are we supposed to do with what we receive from the Lord?
7. Look at Matthew 25:29. Why is more given to him that has, while the one who has not will lose what he has?
8. Is this a general rule in earthly economy?
9. What will be for the faithful servant who diligently works with the Saviour's goods?
10. What will be done with the unprofitable soul who neglects the spiritual side of life?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What the Lord bestows upon us in salvation and spiritual blessings He wants us to share with others. It is a very simple operation and it must be kept simple. What we have is not ours, but it is the Lord's "goods". He wants it increased, and we can make it to increase when we share it with other souls along the way. By ministering the gifts that we receive from Jesus to others we will, according to Peter, be good stewards of the manifold grace of God. According to Paul in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 the gifts are varied and different. But as we share and minister to one another of what the Lord has given to us, it brings an increase in the riches of Christ. Paul felt that it was his responsibility to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. (Ephesians 3:8.) He said in I Cor. 9:17 that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him. This word "dispensation" is from the same Greek word as "stewardship". It means an economy. Paul sought all of his life to be active in the Christian economy, preaching, praying, visiting, helping, comforting, encouraging, and exhorting people by the gospel. I am sure that he helped the economy of the grace of Jesus very much in his lifetime. We who are still here in this world must needs be diligent to work with what the Lord gives us. Let us do our best for Him. Let us be faithful all the way. It will mean everything if we can hear the Lord say, "Well done,

thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some people may feel that they have no talents. However, God places members in His body for a reason. He has given everyone something that can be used for Him. As you discover that talent, strive to use it well and in a profitable manner.

The good Samaritan is a prime example of one who put to use all he possessed for good. When he discovered the man who had fallen among thieves, he made use of what he had on hand to render aid. He applied oil to the wounded man's battered body, nourished him, placed him upon his donkey, and carried him to a place of safety where he supplied the means necessary for the injured man to recover. If we are alert and looking for opportunity, surely the means we have on hand will fill someone's need.

Some people try to fashion their gifts or talents after those of someone else, but this won't succeed. If you endeavor to copy another person, the result will be dissatisfaction. You won't be yourself and there is no way you can effectively be someone else. When David went forth to battle Goliath, Saul offered the use of his armor to David. David rejected the offer and fought the battle his own way. God had dealt with David in the past and he confidently committed himself into the hands of the Lord for Him to work through as He pleased. —Wayne Murphey



