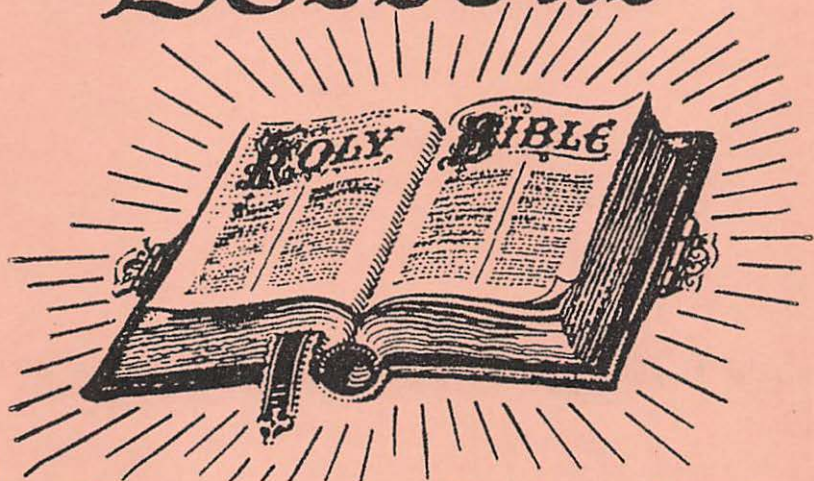


# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 36, No. 3  
July, Aug., Sept.  
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**Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People**  
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**Volume 36**

**July, Aug., Sept.**

**No. 3**

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

**Edited by Leslie C. Busbee and Willie E. Murphey**

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## **THEME FOR THIRD QUARTER, 2004**

We are inspired and feel directed of the Lord to set forth a series of simple lessons concerning the various people who came in direct contact with Jesus and received help from Him. These are sacred lessons full of encouragement and comfort for us today. We need to make contact with Christ as these people did, but to do so we must use the avenue of prayer and full assurance of faith in Him. We can go to Him for He is our great High Priest who is passed into the heavens and sits at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. His throne is a throne of grace to which we can boldly come and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16.) —Bro. Leslie Busbee



**JULY 4, 2004**

### **THE ROMAN CENTURION**

Luke 7:1b ...(Jesus) entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die (sick of the palsy, grievously tormented). (Matt. 8:6.)

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Matthew 8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 7:10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick (healed in the selfsame hour). (Matt. 8:13.)

**MEMORY VERSE:** Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:24.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** God honors and rewards simple, unwavering faith in His goodness and will meet the needs of those who come unto Him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Luke 7:2), "*centurion*": The captain of one hundred soldiers. "*dear*": valuable; esteemed of the highest degree.

(Matt. 8:6), "*sick of the palsy*": a paralytic, one who was paralyzed, unable to move. "*grievously tormented*": excessively tormented with pain.

(Luke 7:4), "*besought him instantly*": begged him earnestly. "*worthy*": suitable and deserving.

(Luke 7:6), "*worthy*": competent or fit.

(Luke 7:7), "*worthy*": entitled.

(Luke 7:8), "*I also*": Even I. "*under authority*": He was in subjection to those over him, as well as having under him those who were subject to him.

(Matt. 8:10), "*marveled*": admired.

(Matt. 8:11), "*from the east and west*": Jesus is referring to the Gentiles, people of nations round about other than the Jews. "*sit down*": to recline or lean back. This indicates safety and rest, such as we can have in the salvation of our souls in Christ, and the eternal rest we shall have in that world to come.

(Matt. 8:12), "*children of the kingdom*": The Jews, Israelites who were of the natural seed, but void of the real faith of father Abraham. "*outer darkness*": Outside of mercy and hope. Just think of it! No light, no comfort, no healing, and no hope ever of being rescued. "*gnashing of teeth*": The grating of teeth in pain and agony.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In the days of the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ to the sons of earth, the world was under the dominion of the Roman Empire. It was evident that Roman soldiers were everywhere, stationed throughout the Empire to help keep control and order. And in Capernaum, situated on the northern shore of the sea of Galilee, a band of one hundred soldiers were stationed. Their leader in keeping tab on the affairs of the city had heard about Jesus and the great works of healing that He was carrying on. His trusted and faithful servant fell ill with the dreaded paralysis of body and was in excessive pain and suffering. Although this centurion was an important man as a soldier and a benefactor to the people of Capernaum he regarded Jesus as far above him and judged himself as unworthy of going to this great Man or having Him come to him. The fact that he commissioned a group of Jewish leaders to go and entreat Christ on his behalf and for his afflicted servant shows that he had a good relationship and was on co-existent terms with them. But though he counted himself as unfit and undeserving of meeting the Master personally, the report that the elders gave to Jesus was that this centurion *was* very worthy.

These elders stated the reason for their evaluation of this centurion. 1. "He loveth our nation." This statement speaks a great matter. What was it about Israel that caused that prominent Roman to have love and esteem for it? It was no doubt for their God and what knowledge he had about Him. 2. "He hath built us a synagogue." Why would this man be willing to finance the building of a Jewish synagogue? This means that he valued and esteemed highly the worship of God. Although these things did not make this centurion feel worthy of anything from Jesus, yet those who knew him and came seeking help in his behalf counted him worthy. Proverbs 27:2 says, "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth." This humble attitude on the centurion's part was so greatly in his favor.

It was this low estimation of himself, accounting himself unworthy to come personally to Jesus or to have Him come under his roof, that helped to give rise to the great confidence that he had in what Jesus could do. "No, I am not fit or deserving for Him to come under my roof, but no matter. This need not keep Him from healing my beloved servant. Just tell Him to speak the word, and he shall be healed."

Notice what Jesus said about the Gentiles, those who would come from the east and the west, and from the north and the south. (Luke 13:29.) These would come and join with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. Then think of the fate of the Jews who had first chance at the kingdom Christ came to set up. They would be cast into outer darkness where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is a challenge and vital lesson to us today. We are exhorted in the Scriptures to "walk worthy" that we may be "accounted worthy" to obtain that world to come and to stand before the Son of man.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did the elders deem the centurion worthy of Christ's help?
2. Why did the centurion himself feel unworthy to come to Jesus?
3. What caused Christ to admire the faith of the centurion?
4. What did Jesus tell us to do concerning things we ask for in prayer?
5. Why are the children of the kingdom to be cast into outer darkness?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

In Revelation 3:4 Jesus spoke of the few in Sardis "which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Then in Revelation 16:6 it speaks of those who "have shed the blood of the saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." We are going to receive that which the Almighty God will account us worthy of. It will pay us to wisely guard and discipline our attitudes and ways of life "that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Colossians 1:10. We must not esteem ourselves as worthy, but pray always that we "may be accounted worthy." Luke 21:36. Sensing our unworthiness and helpless dependence on the mercy and unmerited favor of God is a very vital thing. The prodigal son counted himself worthy of his portion of the inheritance, but upon his returning to his father he confessed that he was "no more worthy to be called his son." (Luke 15:21.) Let us remember that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Titus 3:5.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

This Roman centurion was certainly a rare man. He was in such a powerful position of authority over his men that he could order them to their death and yet we find he had regard for his personal servant's life. He could have easily replaced his servant with another but instead he sought Jesus to heal him.

The Jews that he sent to Jesus had great esteem for this man and they eagerly told of the things he had done for them and how he loved their nation. As Jesus went toward the centurion's home he was met with friends who declared how unworthy he felt he was to have Jesus come to his house. These are all very notable things but the thing that was so rare about him was the faith he had that believed Jesus could speak the word and his servant would be healed.

Many had come to Jesus for healing and Jesus commended their faith. The woman who had the issue of blood believed that if she could only touch the hem of His garment she would be healed. When Jesus came to Mary and Martha after their brother, Lazarus, died, Martha said, "...Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." John 11:21. Their faith was great but it needed the physical presence of Jesus to believe.

The centurion's faith was able to comprehend that the word spoken by Jesus had the power to heal. This lesson should challenge us to exercise more faith in our daily lives. God's power is not diminished with time nor distance and because we do not see His physical presence we should not succumb to unbelief for His word is still causing wonderful things to occur for those who call on Him in prayer and believe in their heart.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**JULY 11, 2004**

### **SIMON, THE PHARISEE AND THE SINNER WOMAN**

Luke 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to

wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

**MEMORY VERSE:** The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Psalm 34:18

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** A brokenhearted, heavy-laden sinner who is keenly aware of the great vileness of his or her sins will put forth more effort to seek mercy and forgiveness and will have more love for the Lord than someone who does not realize how wretched and sinful they really are.



## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Luke 7:36), "*Pharisees*": The meaning of this word is "Separatists." This was a very numerous sect among the Jews so named from their separating themselves from the pollution of the Jewish national worship, also labeled *holy persons who stand apart*. They were originally very probably a pure and holy people. But in the process of time they degenerated and had only the form of godliness. Jesus said of them in Matt. 23:25, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." From Adam Clarke.

(Ver. 37), "*alabaster box*": A vase usually of white stone used to contain perfume. "*ointment*": This was myrrh, a bitter tasting yet very fragrant oil.

(Ver. 38), "*at his feet behind him*": "In taking their meals, the eastern people reclined on one side; the knees being bent to make more room, and the feet of each person were turned outwards behind him. This is the meaning of *standing behind at his feet*." Adam Clarke "*wash*": To wet or moisten.

(Ver. 41), "*creditor*": One who lends money. Jesus uses this in likeness to God. "*debtor*": One who borrows money and is required to pay it back. This is likened unto us, poor debt-laden mortals in debt to God because of the offense of our sins against Him.

(Ver. 47), "*loved much*": This woman went through great effort to show her sorrow and repentance for her many sins and to express her love, appreciation and devotion to that One whom she believed could bring her peace and forgiveness. She felt the vileness and great magnitude of her sins and she was filled with remorse and godly sorrow about it. It appears that she was weeping the whole time, unable to speak audibly. She wet His feet with her tears. She kissed His feet and anointed them with the ointment. The Pharisee had contempt for the woman and her sinfulness and for Jesus because He did not seem to be aware of what kind of woman she was. But Jesus knew the whole story. He read humility, sincerity, godly sorrow and pure love and devotion in that woman's heart. He weighed her actions and effort accurately with no mistake.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have in our lesson today two kinds of people that the Lord Jesus dealt with. These two kinds of people are still in the world today. One was a religious man who probably lived a very careful life and had many things to his credit. The other was a woman who was a sinner. She knew that she was sinful and was probably wretched and miserable with it. Sin does that to people. Sin is deceitful. It allures mankind with prospects of enjoyment of pleasure and gain. But it has a sting and it brings condemnation and guilt to the soul. The Spirit of God smites the conscience and brings deep conviction that one is lost and not ready to meet God. This is effected because of the sensitive condition and the keen awareness of sin and its destructive woe.

But when a person is not aware of their sinful condition there is very little effort put forth to do something about it. Simon, the Pharisee, was in that condition. He had very little sense of his need for forgiveness, for he did not feel that he had been so bad. We know that most of the world today is unaware of their true sinful and defiled condition before God. People who are sin-conscious and concerned about their spiritual condition before God are few and far between. The pleasures of sin have so many people captivated and charmed. They are not aware of their status with a holy Creator and so they go on day after day in the same rut of complacency and self-contentment. Little effort is put forth to seek the Lord for mercy and salvation. Making money and pleasing self is the rule.

But in our lesson is shown the attitude of godly sorrow for sin, the love and fervent desire for deliverance from sin, and the effort one can put forth in seeking the Saviour. This woman has manifested the way to find peace with God. We today need to remember her deep humility, earnest effort and fervent devotion for Christ and what He did for her and for what He can yet do for us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was this sinner woman doing that showed godly sorrow for sin?
2. Why did not Simon, the Pharisee, put forth any effort to seek forgiveness?
3. Why did the sinner woman show such love and devotion for Jesus?

4. What did Jesus compare these two people with?
5. How did Jesus make clear that this sinner woman was accepted?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Let us consider the great love of God which was in Christ toward this poor sinner woman and the Pharisee who also needed forgiveness but was not aware of it. The God of heaven loved both of these people and sent Jesus into their midst to show it. This woman felt the need of God's forgiveness and mercy. She came in off of the street from who knows where? She found out that Jesus was in that house and she came in to seek His help. She was weeping profusely. She was condemned and unclean and she believed that Jesus could bring healing to her sin-sick soul. She got down at His feet and worshipped Him. Jesus looked down at her with loving compassion. He knew that she was truly sorry and ready to quit the sin business. Her efforts to show her love and devotion touched Him deeply. He was happy to inform her that her sins were all forgiven and that He accepted her as one of His children.

Jesus loved the Pharisee too, but He was unable to give that poor man what He had given the sinner woman. Why? Simply because this man was totally unaware that He needed anything. Weeping and showing devotion to Christ was not in his vocabulary. He merely invited Jesus to come and eat with him. But Jesus loved him enough to tell him the truth and just how it was with him. He made it obvious that the man was not aware of the greatness of his sinful condition for his actions proved it; he made no effort to show his sorrow or devotion to the Saviour.

Let us take heed to our own hearts. Are we bringing the gift of true love to the Saviour? Can He say that we love much? How diligent are we to seek Him in prayer on a daily basis and much more? How willing are we to deny ourselves of our own pleasure that we might seek His? The Lord loves us, no doubt, but are we satisfying His desire for a return, a return of "much love" from us?

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

*"Tears are a language God understands."* There was much in this lady's heart that she longed to tell Jesus, but the words would not come, so she communicated in several significant ways. . . .

**Weeping.** "Her contrition displayed by the tears that she shed." Jesus read the sorrow she had for her sin. In weeping at His feet, she acknowledged that He was the Christ, the Savior sent from God, the One against Whom she had sinned. In their pride, the self-righteous Pharisees would not own Jesus' true identity, but she had the special privilege of having Him revealed to her.

**Washing His feet.** In those days, a householder washed the feet of his or her guests as a sign that the guest was welcomed into the family to partake of food and fellowship. It also meant that you offered yourself as a servant to your guest, to meet his needs and wishes. By this action, you expressed solicitude for your guest's comfort. Simon did not bestow this gesture of hospitality to Jesus. But the woman expressed all of these things to Jesus. She threw open the door of her heart and life and welcomed Him in. She offered to be His personal servant. She expressed great solicitude for His benefit and comfort.

**Kissing His feet.** She owned Him as Lord and benefactor. She pledged utmost obedience and service. She communicated a holy love and reverence to Him as she acknowledged Who He was.

**Anointing His feet.** She went a step further to communicate this awe and worship she had for Him. In those days, a priest was anointed, a king was anointed—she showed her belief in Jesus that He was her priest and king. She poured out the costliest thing she had, and in doing so she really poured out her life to Him in consecration and identification with His life, death and resurrection.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**JULY 18, 2004**

### **CHRIST'S MESSAGE TO NICODEMUS**

John 3:1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a **man** be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb. and be born?

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus spoke the word of truth to Nicodemus that the only way a man can understand and enter the kingdom of God is to receive a new birth in one's own heart and soul, a rebirth to spiritual life and the blessings from Heaven and God. There is no other way. We must be born from above.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(John 3:2), "Rabbi": An official title of honor, meaning "My Master."

(John 3:3), "be born again": This means to be regenerated; to receive a new birth from above, that is, from Heaven. In Galatians 4:26 Paul spoke of Jerusalem which is above, the

mother of all who are of faith. It is interesting to note that the word "above" that appears in these two texts of scripture is from the same root Greek word and means the same.

(John 3:5), "*born of water and of the Spirit*": Water here is used as a type or figure of the Word of God in its cleansing and life-giving properties. So it means that this new birth is brought about by way of the Word of God and the Spirit of God. And these are presented as the two olive trees that furnished oil for the golden candlestick in Zechariah 4, and these are also the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation 11:3-4. These make up the lifeline of the Church. The process of being born again, as Jesus said, is carried out by these two agents, the Word and the Spirit.

(John 3:8), Reading from the Greek Interlinear: "The Spirit breathes where He desires, and you hear His voice, but you know not where He comes from and where He goes."

(John 3:13), Reading from the Greek Interlinear again: "And no one has gone up into Heaven, except He having come down out of Heaven, the Son of man who is in Heaven." It is evident that our Lord is stressing here that no one of earth can ever have access to the heavenly realm except through Him, the One who came down from Heaven, and who is "in" Heaven, that is, completely filled with the pure and sinless heavenly life.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have in our lesson today a meeting of two people by night. The visitor was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader and one of authority among the Jews of that time. Since the tide of the Jewish leaders for the most part was turning against Jesus, it is obvious why this man paid his visit to this controversial Man at night under the cover of darkness. But even more obvious is the reason why he came to talk with Jesus. He expressed his firm persuasion that Jesus was a teacher sent from God worthy of respect and honor as he thus addressed Jesus as "Rabbi."

But the answer Jesus responded to Nicodemus with startled and bewildered this ruler of the Jews. He had no knowledge concerning man's need for a new birth. It makes me think of the story of John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. John Bunyan was hungry for peace for his troubled soul and was floundering in confusion and despair. But one day he passed by

a group of women sitting in the sun who were discussing the "new birth." As he listened to their talk he was fascinated and filled with wonder. The women referred him to their pastor, John Gifford, and, after a visit with him, John Bunyan knew what he needed. And he began to seek for it and finally found this wonderful birth from above. Nicodemus knew absolutely nothing about such an experience. Notice how ignorant he was, asking if a man could enter once more into his mother's womb and be born!

Jesus minced no words but got right straight to the point. This birth that He was pointing Nicodemus to was a spiritual birth, the becoming of a new creature. The Word of God and the Spirit of God were to be employed in accomplishing this great experience that has changed the lives of so many down through the ages, forming that great throng that no man can number.

This was not the last that we hear concerning Nicodemus. In John 7:50-51 Nicodemus spoke up to his fellow chief priests and Pharisees and asked them, "Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" And then in John 19:38-40 we find Nicodemus bringing a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to be placed in the linen clothes with which he and Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of Jesus for burial. It is our ardent hope that Nicodemus learned and experienced the truth about Jesus and will be in that great number "which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Revelation 7:14.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What caused Nicodemus to seek out the Master?
2. Why was he sure that Jesus was a teacher come from God?
3. Why was Nicodemus so totally ignorant of what being born again meant?
4. What kind of birth did Jesus explain that He was speaking of?
5. What are the two agents that are used to bring about the new birth?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Being born again from above and becoming a new creature in Christ Jesus are both the same identical experience. It is a

change from the old life of sin and transgression to a new life of faith and obedience to the will of God. Peter told the people in Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." To repent means to reform and change one's ways and thoughts from those of his own. He must change to those ways and thoughts that are God's. (Isaiah 55:7-9.) It is a sad thing that many who become religious and interested in serving God fail to attain to a real born from above experience. It is more than just becoming religious and talking about God. People need to be aware of their sinful condition of being lost and undone before God. They need to repent and change their ways before the Lord. Ezekiel 18:31 says: "Cast away from you all your transgressions,...and make you a new heart and a new spirit." Then the Lord promised in Ezekiel 36:26 that "a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." There is something we have to do to be born from above and there is a work that God does through His Word the Holy Spirit. We must repent and change our ways and thoughts. We must become submissive and humble and be willing and obedient. Then God can and will bring about the new birth and make us a new creature in which "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Corinthians 5:17. This being saved and delivered from the power of sin and death is what man really needs. Jesus spoke the truth when He declared to Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again!" —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The plan of salvation is so perfect. It is for every person, in every culture, of every race, in every circumstance.

This reminds me of a Sunday school lesson given to the primary class. Three cups were set before the children.

The first cup was clean on the inside but was dirty on the outside. This represented a "sin you must" spirit. While many profess a cleansing of the heart, it is never reflected to the outside. Old habits and carnal ways are never changed. There is a claim of salvation but there is never a manifestation in a new creature.

The second cup was clean on the outside but was dirty on the inside. This cup represented a "self-righteous" or "Pharisee"



spirit. While many work hard to make the exterior look good, inside they are "ravening wolves." We may fool the people, but we never fool God. He knows what is in the heart.

The third cup was clean on the inside as well as on the outside. This represented a saved life; a cleansing of the heart by the blood of Jesus manifested in a new creature. Thank the Lord for this new birth!

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**JULY 25, 2004**

### **JESUS OFFERS THE GIFT OF THE WATER OF LIFE**

John 4:6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

17 The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband.

18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

**MEMORY VERSE:** Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. John 4:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In His salvation Jesus Christ offers for us to drink of living waters. This is not literal water, but spiritual life working within us through the Word of God and the Holy Spirit of God. By these we can have fellowship with God and can worship Him effectively.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(John 4:9), "*have no dealings*": do not associate with.

(John 4:14), "*shall be in him*": shall become within his heart and soul. "*springing up*": gushing.

(John 4:23), "*in spirit and in truth*": These are parallel expressions with what Christ said in John 3:5 about being born of the water (the Word) and of the Spirit.

(John 4:25), "*Messias, called Christ*": The Hebrew word "Messias" (or Messiah) and the Greek Word "Kristos" (Christ) have the same meaning, which is The Anointed One.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus had been in Judea for some time and His disciples had baptized other people. John had not yet been cast into prison. The report had gotten out to the Pharisees that Jesus had made and had baptized more disciples than John. Some of John's disciples had asked John about Jesus, and he made it clear that he was not the Christ nor the heavenly bridegroom. He was as a friend or an attendant of the bridegroom and rejoiced to hear the bridegroom's voice. Now he must fade out of the picture. He said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." So Jesus with His disciples were on their way back to Galilee again, and had stopped in the city of Sychar (Shechem in the Hebrew), a city of Samaria. While the disciples were gone away to buy food, Jesus fell into a conversation with a Samaritan woman who had come to the well to draw water.

In this conversation we find two vital ingredients in Christ's message to the world. The first is about the water of life that we all need. Now this living water is spiritual substance, but a good look at literal water can help us see how vitally important it is to our souls. The human body is made up of about two thirds water. Water covers more than 70 per cent of the earth's surface. Every living thing—plants, animals and man—must have water to live. Water taken into man must be pure and free from contamination. So water is a very good type of the Word and the Spirit of God. This is the water of life, and God has planned that such should dwell within the heart of man, and it would be like a gushing fountain flowing from his life.

It is interesting to study about this woman. Though her moral life was not very good, yet she had some knowledge about God and the promise that had come down through the ages of the coming Messiah who would "tell us all things." She was quite startled when Jesus let her know that He knew everything about her. This attracted her attention and desire. She did not know what this water of life consisted of, but she was persuaded that she had come in contact with the Son of God, the Savior of the world. And it was through her testimony that Jesus reaped a harvest of souls in that place. This woman came to the well to get water and found another well that made her hurry back to tell about it, and left her waterpot sitting on the well. Oh, how concerned and interested we need to be about us being a partaker of the Lord and to actually drink of the fountain of the water of life!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was this living water that Jesus spoke to the woman about?
2. What was there about this woman that plainly showed her need of living water?
3. What awakened her curiosity and wonder about the Man at the well?
4. What showed that she had some knowledge about God?
5. What kind of worship does God seek from man?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The fountain of the water of life is previously mentioned several times in the Scriptures. Psalm 36:8-9 says, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." Proverbs 14:27 says, "The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." Jeremiah 2:13 speaks about people who have forsaken the LORD as the fountain of living waters, "and hewed them out cisterns (reservoirs), broken cisterns, that can hold no water." In John 7:37-39 it says that Jesus stood and cried, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (innermost being) shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.) In Ezekiel 47 we are told of the vision the prophet had of living waters coming out from the temple. Revelation 22:1 pictures the river of water of life proceeding out from the throne of God and of the Lamb (Christ). And in verse 17 He said, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

It means so much for us to really drink of the water of life today! So much is being gulped down into people's lives that are a detriment to their souls' welfare. Think of the world of pleasure and fleshly enjoyment that the multitudes are going after in sports, recreation, passions and the many thrills of the flesh. Consider how much of man's energies and efforts go after financial gain and prosperity. Think of the thirst for worldly knowledge and wisdom that are of no real lasting value. All the time they are neglecting the real source of the river of life. Hidden in the Holy Scriptures and out of their carnal sight is a source of living water that everyone so badly needs! Study and hearing

of the Word of God preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit is a great opening for the water of life to gush up in our souls. Prayer and communion with God hold great blessings for us to drink of the living waters. Oh, let us not neglect this golden chance to drink of the water that will really satisfy our souls and assure us of eternal life at the end of this short earthly life!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

This is a wonderful and vitally important truth for us to receive and remember. "Whosoever drinketh of this (earthly) water shall thirst again." Many folks today are endeavoring to draw happiness, peace and joy from earthly wells. Earthly wells bring only temporary happiness; then you search again. They fail to really quench the deep thirst of the human soul.

This truth is also important to remember for those endeavoring to labor in the Lord's vineyard. At times we fail to share the living water because people on the surface appear to be satisfied by these earthly wells. This Scripture teaches us they are not really deeply satisfied and this understanding of thirst in people's souls encourages us to look beyond the surface of their life and to recognize their souls' thirst.

The Lord didn't simply tell us that earthly wells don't satisfy and leave us there. He mentioned that in Himself we could drink and be satisfied. Those who drink of the water of life recognize that it quenches a deep thirst that other wells will not quench. One brother had engraved on his tombstone the words, "Jesus satisfied my soul." It is encouraging also to note that Jesus met this woman at the well she was drawing at. I believe the Lord does the same thing today. When earthly wells run dry there will always be a spring of living water that we can be refreshed in.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**AUGUST 1, 2004**

### **JESUS HEALS THE MAN DISEASED FOR THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS**

John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked thy him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

**MEMORY VERSE:** God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with Him. Acts 10:38.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** As the Son of God by the power given to Him by God, His Father, Jesus brought healing to a man with a long-standing case of disease and caused him to be able to rise up whole and walk.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 5:2), "sheep market": The word market here is an added word. In the Greek it refers to the sheep gate through which sheep were led into the city to be sacrificed in the temple.

(John 5:3), "*impotent*": feeble, diseased and infirm. "*halt*": crippled and lame. "*withered*": people with limbs or parts of the body shriveled and shrunken as if they were dried up. "*moving*": stirring.

(John 5:4), "*troubled*": agitated or disturbed.

(John 5:6), "*Wilt thou be made whole?*": Adam Clarke makes a striking comment here: "Christ, by asking this question, designed to excite in this person faith, hope and a greater desire of being healed. He wished him to reflect on his miserable state that he might be the better prepared to receive a cure and to value it when it came. Addresses of this kind are always proper from the preachers of the Gospel, that the hearts, as well of hardened as of desponding sinners, may be stirred up to desire and expect salvation. Do you wish to be healed?" And we could add, "Do you wish to be saved?"

(John 5:14), "*in the temple*": How fitting and good that this man was found in the temple after he was healed! I would think that he went there to give thanks to God for his healing. After 38 years and now to be able to walk about was certainly a cause for offering the sacrifice of praise. "*Sin no more*": What wise counsel the Savior gives to him! "Henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. 6:6 "That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." I Peter 4:2 We must quit the sin business. "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore." Psalm 37:27 "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." I John 2:1.

(John 5:17), "*hitherto*": until now. The Almighty God, the Father of Jesus, had worked from eternity and now Jesus was working with Him. Of ourselves we can do nothing, but if we will work with God, we can be a blessing to others for Him.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

In times past God had worked in various ways to bless and help poor and afflicted souls. Here in Jerusalem was a place that had proven to be a blessing to the diseased and infirm. No doubt it had been witnessed that healings had taken place here. For

this reason five porches had been constructed to accommodate those who ventured to seek for healing. People had been healed, and people sought to be healed. In these porches lay a great multitude of afflicted people, waiting. Waiting for what? They were waiting for the waters to become agitated. Then it was a scramble to be the first one in the water. Here was competition and strife. Thus God permitted it to be.

But there was one man who was there that was not able to get to the waters ahead of the others. Jesus took note of him, and He knew all about this man. His compassion reached out to him. Jesus needed no angel to trouble the waters. He had the healing that the man wanted. Here was a helpless man, not able to compete and strive to outdo others. Jesus spoke: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk!" Immediately the man received healing to his disease ridden body. He was able to get up and pick up his mattress or whatever he was lying on and walk away.

Jesus withdrew from sight for a little while. But later in the temple Jesus found the man and gave him a responsibility to go along with his healing. "Sin no more." With healing and the blessings of God comes responsibility. To Adam and Eve: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Genesis 2:17. To Cain: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." Genesis 4:7. To Noah: "The end of all flesh is come before me....Make thee an ark of gopher wood." To Abraham: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." And the list goes on. We are responsible creatures. Do not take God's blessings for granted, but be diligent to keep His way. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What makes us know that healing was possible at the pool of Bethesda?
2. What hindered this diseased man of thirty-eight years from being healed?
3. For what reasons did Jesus have compassion on him?
4. What responsibility did Jesus place upon the man who was healed?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"?



## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

God anointed Jesus with power and the Holy Spirit and He went about doing good and healing the sick and oppressed of the devil. And He still is healing today. He can heal the broken heart and deliver the captive soul from the prison house of sin. If people will give up their unrighteous thoughts and wicked ways and return to the Lord and His holy ways and thoughts of righteousness, He will have mercy upon them and abundantly pardon. Jesus is still a great physician today. He can and does heal all manner of sickness and disease. We must go to Him at the throne of grace and pray earnestly to Him. We know not what we should pray for as we ought, but His Holy Spirit will help our infirmities and make intercession to God for us. The people that we read about, who Jesus healed, were people in great and sore need. His compassion was moved for them in their troubles. And yet today Jesus, through His Holy Spirit, is reaching out to help us poor humans. Let us have faith in Him and sow to His Holy Spirit. Let us cultivate love and joy and peace in our hearts and lives. We must put away all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and all evil speaking, with all malice: and be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us. Let us shun the love of money that is staining our society. Let us not be high minded nor trust in uncertain riches but in the living God who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let us do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for us a good foundation against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life. We must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, flee covetousness and pride, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness and fight the good fight of faith. We are responsible people before God. We must not only quit the sin business, but we must go into business with God and seek those things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It was a heart-touching scene that greeted the eyes of our Saviour when He saw the multitude of people wanting to be healed and waiting for the angel to trouble the water of the pool called Bethesda. They were waiting, watching and hoping that

they could be the first to step into the pool and be healed of their disease.

Somehow the Lord noticed one poor man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years. How hopeless his situation seemed to be. Others who were more able to get around always stepped in ahead of him and yet he had not given up hope that someday he would have the opportunity to be first and receive the blessing of healing in his body.

This man obviously had the good qualities of patience and determination which caused the Lord to notice him, but it seemed He was moved with mercy and compassion when He asked him "Wilt thou be made whole?" and his pitiful story was told. He didn't realize then that he had found the fountain prophesied about in Zechariah 13:1, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

Many today are also in a hopeless condition. Their sins have a stronghold in their life and their binding, choking influence is preventing them from truly living the victorious life of a Christian. But if they will have as much patience and manifest the same determination the man in our lesson had in seeking to be healed, the Holy Spirit will visit them and ask them "Wilt thou be made whole?" If they will take advantage of the opportunity offered to them they also can be washed heavenly pure and from that day forward their life will never be the same

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**AUGUST 8, 2004**

### **JESUS AND THE MAN WITH THE LEGION OF DEVILS**

Luke 8:26 And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

Mark 5:4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

Luke 8:28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

Mark 5:8 For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

Luke 8:30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

32a And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them.

Mark 5:13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

Luke 8:34 When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

37a Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear.

Mark 5:18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel.

**MEMORY VERSE:** The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. Psalm 126:3.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had power and authority over evil, unclean spirits that possessed so many people in His day. With His Word He delivered a man who had many devils and made him a great witness of the power and goodness of God. Our Savior, Jesus, is still able to deliver souls oppressed by the devil today.

## WORD DEFINITIONS

(Mark 5:4), "*fetters*": shackles for the feet. "*plucked asunder*": severed or pulled in pieces. "*tame*": subdue; bring unto submission.

(Luke 8:30), "*Legion*": A great multitude or host. The Roman Legion had from three to six thousand soldiers.

(Luke 8:32), "*swine*": pigs or hogs.

(Mark 5:13), "*choked*": drowned.

(Mark 5:20), "*publish*": to herald or proclaim. "*Decapolis*": A region of ten cities.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

The country of the Gadarenes is generally believed to have been about five miles south and east of the sea of Galilee. Jesus surely knew that there was a man in that area who was really in need of help. Matthew 8:28 called it the country of the Gergesenes, which was the Hebrew name for that area. He also said there were two men possessed with devils and were exceeding fierce so that no man might pass by that way.

The world was held in bondage under satan's dismal sway. Here was a man who had been overtaken and possessed by the devil in a dreadful way. He had been in that condition for a long time. Think of the awful torment and suffering he bore under that woeful bondage! But Jesus came to set him free. Let us be encouraged to look to Jesus for deliverance from whatever bondage we might find ourselves in. It is said that these evil spirits caused a person to want to be among the tombs to breathe in the awful odor of the dead bodies. Jesus commanded the devils to come out of the man. We see the man with the unclean spirit coming and falling down prostrate before Jesus. This shows an attitude of submission and willingness to be delivered.

After the devils were gone we see a different picture. The people who came out to investigate saw this man, who had been a terror before, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. Oh, how relieved and blessed he must have felt. It was no wonder that he wanted to tarry and be with the One who had rescued him! But Jesus wanted him to glorify God and told him to go home and tell his friends and acquaintance what great things the Lord had done for him. It is wonderful that this man responded in obedience to the Master's counsel. He went and

broadcasted the good news of his freedom in that ten-city area. The Lord surely wants us to tell others what great things He does for us. It is good to share with others how the Lord has blessed and answered your prayers. He is thereby glorified and it can be a real blessing to all who hear. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What condition was this man of the Gadarenes?
2. Were the people in that area aware of this man's condition?
3. How did the man react to Jesus when the devils were rebuked?
4. What did Jesus tell the man to do after he was delivered from the devils?
5. Is Jesus still able to deliver people from the power of the devil today?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Just how this poor man of the country of the Gadarenes had come to be in this miserable and wretched condition is not told in our lesson. We do know from the Scriptures that we must not give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:27.) In this world of darkness and ignorance are many pitfalls and snares of satan, the archenemy of God. His special place of working is ignorance and spiritual blindness. He keeps people under the veil of error and ignorance. He fills their hearts and minds with lies and misconceptions. This kind of condition gives room for more and more evil to take hold. Over a period of time the works of the devil gain and increase. This man was in a pitiful condition. I would be inclined to believe that deep down inside that man there was a longing and desire to be delivered and set free. Think of him always crying and cutting himself with stones! Surely he had a hungering and thirsting for mercy and help from God. Jesus knew all about this man and for this reason our blessed Savior came to this country.

Jesus came to set the captives free. For those in the prison house of satan and sin He has a special mission. He needs consecrated vessels to work through. There are many who are in this horrible pit. Are they pining and longing for freedom? If they are, we know that Jesus will bring them to a place where they can be saved. In our world of ease and fleshly gratification the devil

is hiding and making folks feel contented even in their miserable state. Through the years we have had testimonies of people who were under the yoke of satan and through the prayers of the saints were set free as Heaven. But there must be a longing and a desire to be delivered.

There was some responsibility awaiting this soul who was rescued from the awful bondage of the devil. Jesus would not allow him to stay near Him, but sent him forth on a mission. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." I am sure that this man was so happy to be a free and normal person that he was glad to tell others about it. And he went throughout that ten-city area and told the glad tidings of his deliverance. So the Lord is pleased for us to tell others what great things He has done for us in saving our souls from the lowest hell.

Our Memory Verse comes from the 126<sup>th</sup> Psalm. "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." Has the Lord done great things for you? Are you a new creature in Christ Jesus? Has Jesus delivered you from this present evil world to a life of happiness and peace in Him? Are you living triumphant over sin and the evil of this world? Speak and testify for the Lord when a door opens. Ever be thankful and glorify God for His great salvation!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

As I read this week's lesson, it came over me how much "Legion" is like many people today. In fact, some of his characteristics are so common that we may miss the fact that the people we meet in everyday life, in the workplace and at school, in the nursing homes and hospitals, in our families and homes, are actually possessed by the devil.

One of the characteristics so prevalent in our society today, and promoted by the music and entertainment industry, is nakedness. There is an agenda being pushed toward complete nudity being accepted and protected by law. Have we ever thought about this being the work of satan as he is ruling and possessing people? How much would he like to make inroads

among God's people in promoting his agenda of undress? He already has much of the so-called Christian world saying that what we look like on the outside doesn't matter to God. Evidently it matters to satan. We'd better stand up and fight against this onslaught. Silence on the issue is complicity with the devil.

Legion stayed night and day in the tombs with the dead. Have you ever noticed the preoccupation with death in today's society? Halloween, haunted houses, mystery novels, horror movies, violent and gruesome computer and video games, rock, rap and country music, suicide, abortion, infanticide, euthanasia—these are all indications of satan's possession of people.

Legion was crying and cutting himself with stones. Depression and self-violence are at an all-time high among children and teenagers today. Drug and alcohol abuse, anorexia, tattooing, piercing and violent games are among some of the ways in which satan is manifesting himself in the lives of men, women, boys and girls.

Legion couldn't be tamed. Our country today is becoming populated with people who cannot be controlled. The prisons and behavioral rehabilitation centers are full. Even children are so violent and hyperactive that they are relying on drugs to control them.

Truly the fields are white unto harvest. Satan would like us to become so used to these symptoms that we are oblivious to the true needs of people. He would also like us to be so involved with the things of this world that we have no time for the true business of life—delivering these people from the power of satan. Let's wake up to action before it is too late. —Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**AUGUST 15, 2004**

### **JESUS WITH MARY AND MARTHA**

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

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

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

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

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

Luke 8: 14 That which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at anytime 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.

I Timothy 4:13 Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

15 Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all.

16 Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

**MEMORY VERSE:** But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:25.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To listen attentively and take diligent heed to obey the Word of God, given to us through the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, is really the most important activity of our days on earth.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Luke 10:38), "*received him into her house*": The Greek expression says that Martha kindly welcomed Christ to the comfort and convenience of her home in a loving and friendly manner. This is the kind of welcome that Christ yearns to find in every heart.

(Luke 10:40), "*cumbered*": In the Greek it means to be "drawn out," that is being attracted and allured by prospects and



desires from every direction. There are so many enticements and drawing cards offered to us here in the flesh, and it is wise to be very careful not to be overly influenced by their attractions.

(Luke 10:41), "*many things*": There is a great tendency for us to be overloaded with "things." We do not mean to do wrong and many times we innocently become over-burdened with earthly "goodies." But it would be wise for us to take a good look at our situation and ask ourselves, "Are these things really *needful*?" They are all going to perish with the using, and the fire of God's wrath in the last day will consume them.

(Luke 10:42), "*one thing is needful*": The things that we often get involved with are not really all that important and beneficial. It is just the fulfillment of our fancies and personal desires. We may be permitted to have a certain amount of liberty to have things that we enjoy, but let us keep them in proper focus and do not mourn if they are suddenly taken away. Remember the admonition of the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 7:30-31 where he counseled that they that buy should be "as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing (using it to the full, or overusing it) it: for the fashion of this world passeth away." Adam Clarke comments on this: "Take heed that ye be not rendered insecure by an improper use of lawful things. Do not make this earth your portion. Expect its destruction, and prepare to meet your God."

(Luke 21:34), "*overcharged*": The Greek says, "loaded down." "*surfeiting*": Overeating and overindulgence of anything. This kind of conduct brings pains and difficulties that make it almost impossible for us to effectively keep a victorious spiritual life for God. "*drunkenness*": Intoxication. This takes in not only consumption of liquor and alcoholic beverages, but it also takes in being excited and carried away by the fascinations and pleasures of the world in any manner.

(Luke 21:36), "*pray always*": Beg, petition and make request to God continually for help and grace to keep prepared to meet that last great day. "*accounted worthy*": We may never be actually qualified, fit, or worthy to be a part of that final resurrection as far as justice and real worth is concerned, but by the help of the Lord and our being faithful to Him He will *account us worthy*. Jesus spoke in Luke 20:35 of those "which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead."

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

It is generally believed that Martha was a widow with whom her brother Lazarus and sister Mary resided. They lived at Bethany. (John 11:1.) These two women, Martha and Mary, portray a very important and beneficial lesson to us. With Martha, we see the effect of being too fussy and energetic to have so many things to do with. With Mary we see the benefit and reward of sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear what gracious words He has to say to us. To take time to sit at the feet of Jesus we must let certain other things go. Martha was trying hard to make things convenient and comfortable for the Master in a fleshly sense. But Mary wanted to hear what Jesus wanted to say to her. This caused a conflict that Martha fervently presented to Jesus. Jesus quickly informed her that He was not about to ask Mary to give up what she had chosen to participate in. What she had chosen was the needful and most vital thing. Better is a crust of bread and a cup of water with the blessing of the Lord than a lavish meal with trouble and strife.

This introduces the thought of the threat and danger of the cares of this life. We have chosen some scriptures about this. Jesus spoke about the various kinds of fields in the hearts of men that the Word of God is sowed in. One kind was that among thorns, and He labeled the thorns as the cares and riches and pleasures of this life. He said that these things will choke the Word of God and keep it from bringing forth fruit to perfection.

Then we have Christ's warning that we can take concerning His second coming. He mentions the cares of life that we must strive to keep from overburdening us. It is true that the cares of this present life pose a danger and a threat to our eternal safety. Just the ordinary toil for the supply of basic needs can be an intrusion into our walk with the Lord if we are not careful. Jesus said to take heed to ourselves about this. We should make it a matter of our prayers for God to help us to attend to the affairs of this life in a way that will not hinder our acceptance with Him.

We have included a few words from Paul's counsel to Timothy. "Give attendance." Give attendance to what? So many things people are giving attendance to today! The television soaks up so much of people's time and attention. Making money is a paramount interest and time-consuming endeavor. Then there is pleasure, travel, education, physical exercise and having fun. Where and when will people find time to attend unto the

Lord and the welfare of their souls? It is a responsibility we must all be concerned about. And the serious thing is that it has to do with our eternal welfare.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is there about the cares of life that are a threat to us?
2. What must we do about this threat?
3. Why are the cares of this life not so important?
4. Why did Jesus not go along with Martha's request for Mary's help?
5. What is the one thing that is needful?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past: And only what's done for Christ will last." What true words that we should all remember and take heed to! All of this material world around us will melt away in that last great day. "The things which are seen are temporal." II Corinthians 4:18. The choice is ours. We must be wise and strive to keep a proper sense of values. The physical and earthly realm is so real to the majority of humanity. In fact, to most folks that is all there is. Spiritual things are practically non-existent. Prayer, the Word of God, and the worship of God have no appeal to the carnal minded throng. Oh, what can be done to awaken our society to the reality of the eternal treasures and pleasures of Christ? Let us be diligent to make those things which are of eternal value our priority. Everything else will pass away.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

This lesson is really all about priorities. Mary did have her priorities in the proper place. She recognized that having the Son of God in her own home was a rare opportunity to listen to His words of truth.

Yet, it is so easy to be a "Martha." We have many time saving conveniences only to be tied down by more and more obligations. How many times do you kneel down to pray only to be interrupted in your thoughts by the duties of the day? How many times has the telephone rang during family worship? How many times have you fallen asleep in your own private devotions? We see just how easy it is to be a "Martha."

When the woman anointed Jesus' feet, there was a question as to why the ointment could not have been sold and the proceeds given to the poor. Jesus said then, "For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always." There will always be responsibilities to fill, obligations to keep and duties to perform. But let us each one choose that "good part." For this part is the eternal part.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



AUGUST 22, 2004

### JESUS AND THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Although we are guilty before God and in danger of eternal damnation, we have One who offers mercy and forgiveness for us if we will believe and faithfully follow Him. He is the light of the world, and we need no longer to walk in darkness and sin against God but can have the light of life to triumphantly live above all sin.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(John 8:6), "*tempting*": putting Jesus to the test.

(John 8:9), "*convicted*": admonished and convinced in their own mind. "*conscience*": From the Greek word the definition is: consciousness, awareness and moral conviction. Webster defines it as sense or consciousness of right or wrong, of moral goodness or badness of one's own conduct, intentions, or character, together with a feeling of obligation to do or to be that which is recognized as good—often with special reference to feelings of guilt or remorse for ill-doing.

(John 8:10-11), "*condemn*": To judge against and pass sentence of punishment.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In the last verse of the previous chapter (John 7:53) it said that every man went unto his own house. Our lesson begins by saying that Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. We wonder whether Jesus had a bed for the night. He said in one place, "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head." So while everyone else went to his own house, Jesus withdrew to the mount of Olives. It gives us quite a sad and serious thought. There is a well-known painting of Jesus sitting in the moonlight looking over the city of Jerusalem. One time I was studying that picture and pondering about Jerusalem and their rejection of the Son of God. As I meditated upon that scene, a wonderful blessing was poured out on my soul. I saw in the Spirit another Jerusalem, a new and heavenly society of lowly and faithful men and women who truly receive and follow Jesus wheresoever He goeth. Jesus suffered many privations and sorrows that we have no record of.

But He was not discouraged or deterred from fulfilling the wonderful purpose for which He came into the world. And the next morning while He was sitting teaching in the temple, the opportunity came to help and to lift up the condemned and downtrodden.

It is said that adultery, fornication and other gross immoral sins were very prevalent in those times. This woman had been caught in a snare that could have been the cause of a lustful man. We do not know all about the background of this incident. But the wicked Jews, always looking for a chance to trip up the Master, used this to present a snare for Jesus. Would He back up the law of Moses?

But Jesus wisely handled the situation that not only brought mercy to the guilty soul but brought reproof to those who were just as guilty and yet were the accusers. And He did it quietly but straightforward enough. He did not accuse but laid before those accusers the real evidence. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This He said intermittent with His writing on the ground. He needed not to say anything else. Conscience took care of the rest.

The Bible speaks of the conscience in various places from a seared and defiled conscience to a purged and good conscience. A man's sense of what is right and proper before God is the thing that guides his decisions and moves that he makes, even when his conscience is warped, hardened and out of balance. Even peoples of the most remote habitations are affected by this inward voice. As Paul said in Romans 2:14-15, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." This is a serious matter and on it hangs our destiny, our eternal destiny. A good conscience is a wonderful thing to really possess, but we must beware of the enemy of all righteousness who will manipulate a man's sense of values very easily. We need the Lord to work with us in this great and important matter. In one sense it is not wise to let your conscience be your guide, but a good conscience is a valuable safeguard to help us through the trials and temptations of life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did the Jews bring this accused woman to Jesus?
2. What did His answer to them cause to work in their hearts?
3. Why is a good conscience so important to have?
4. How can we obtain a pure conscience before God?
5. What was Christ's message to this woman?

## **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The Creator of mankind has so constructed our being so as to include a deep inward sense of right and wrong. This inward voice needs much help and understanding to keep it on the right path. This is the conscience, that monitor in our being that guides our moves and decisions of life. But we must be aware that there is an enemy that works on the conscience, to seek to cloud, mislead, warp, misconstrue, unbalance and do many other things to render it incapable of being a reliable guide for us to count on. The conscience needs to be instructed, enlightened, disciplined and trained. The Word of God is the key means of accomplishing this important feature. Adam and Eve had the Word of their Creator concerning their activities, privileges and limitations. They knew that they were not to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But the voice of the enemy of God, satan, speaking through the serpent, warped their conscience and caused them to partake of the forbidden tree and feel justified about doing so.

A look across the history of mankind provides ample enough information of how the devil influences the minds and the consciences of humanity. Jesus said "the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2. We look on our sin-cursed world today and we see how the devil has defiled and seared the conscience of humanity. People excuse themselves for what they are doing. They soothe their conscience into thinking it is right to abort their offspring and murder their babies. Adultery and double marriage are rampant in the land. The conscience of our society is so warped and out of shape that man can do about anything and not feel guilty or condemned. How can this ever be righted? It can never be righted as long as man is not willing to acknowledge his wrong. God gave us His law and His Son Jesus Christ to enlighten our minds as to what is right or wrong. But regardless of how much God has given us, it will never accomplish His desired effect until we

humble ourselves and confess our true need. We must come to grips with the truth that we are wrong and guilty before God. Our conscience must be convicted of our own true need and lost condition. Then, with the conscience broken and yielded to God, we can find deliverance and salvation from sin and can experience a new heart and a quickened conscience to the good things of our Creator.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

From Luke 7:34 we understand that Jesus' accusers were unknowingly highly complimenting our Savior as "a friend of publicans and sinners." That was Jesus' desire—to be a friend to sinners as displayed in this touching scriptural account. Jesus' goal was not to condemn but to save. Mankind was and is already condemned, "he that believeth not is condemned already.... This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Jesus said, "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone." All were condemned and left. Jesus had no sin. He could throw stones, right? No! His deep love and compassion said, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more." Can you imagine the tears of gratitude that this woman probably felt as God spoke mercy to her soul?

The law brought the knowledge and recognition of sin (which brings guilt and condemnation) but was weak though the flesh because that was all it did. It left you and I stuck and spinning our wheels in the mud of sin. Jesus brought even greater knowledge and accountability however He also along with it brought forgiveness, mercy, hope and power for getting us unstuck and onto the "Highway of holiness." Our lives can bring reproof and condemnation to those walking in darkness, but let our spirit, manner and words bring forgiveness, hope and mercy.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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**AUGUST 29, 2004**

**JESUS AND THE DISTRESSED MOTHER**

Matthew 15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

Mark 7:24b And (He) entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet.

Matthew 15:22b Saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

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

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

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

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

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

28a Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

Mark 7:29b For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

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

Matthew 15:28b And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

**MEMORY VERSE:** And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me. Luke 7:23.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** This burdened woman, in anguish for her young daughter, refused to be offended at the Lord Jesus but humbled herself and was willing to be termed as a dog that she might receive the healing and deliverance that she was seeking for.

**WORD DEFINITIONS**

(Matthew 15:23), "*not a word*": This was the first response of Jesus to this seeking soul. There was a wise reason for this.

Many people take offense if their inquiry or petition is not immediately responded to. It is often this way in our prayers. Because nothing seems to come of our prayers we give up. This we should never do. But if the burden is heavy enough and if the need is great enough, we will not be so quick to quit. *This is the first occasion for this woman to be offended!*

(Matthew 15:23), *"Send her away; for she crieth after us"*: The disciples of the Master were very solicitous of His protection from undue bother. And here they expressed their concern for Him and their indignation toward this (seemingly to them) intruding woman. It is very likely that she heard their words to Jesus about her. *This is the second occasion for this woman to be offended!*

(Matthew 15:24), *"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel"*: In other words, "I have not come to help a Gentile like you." *Here is the third occasion for this woman to be offended!*

(Matthew 15:25), *"worshipped"*: This means that she prostrated herself before Jesus. This is the general meaning of the word worship: to crouch, bow down, and lay one's self low in adoration or homage. Despite being at first seemingly ignored, and being treated as a bothersome person, and then being told that what He has is not for her anyway, she still does not turn away in anger. She comes and prostrates herself before Him.

(Mark 7:27), *"the children's bread cast to the dogs"*: It sounds as if Jesus is referring to the woman in comparison to a dog. *But here is the fourth and most crucial occasion for this woman to be offended!* Most people would be ready to give up at this point. "Call me a dog, will he? Well, I'll just leave that fellow alone!" This is how one would react if offended. But, no, this woman had a need. Her feelings and purpose were: "This Man can help me and no matter what, even if He calls me a dog, I am going to stay right here until I get the help I need."

(Mark 7:29), *"For this saying"*: This response from the woman about her being like a dog, yet having the privilege of eating the crumbs that fell from the Master's table, touched the deep of the Master's soul and the great heart of the heavenly Father. *"For this saying"*: or because of her humble attitude and poverty of spirit and not taking offence at the Master, the request of her heart for her darling daughter was granted.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We want to consider this wonderful and valuable lesson contained in the meeting of Jesus with the poor, distressed mother of the daughter who was grievously vexed with an unclean devil. Jesus and His disciples had left Galilee and journeyed north and west up around the realm of Phoenicia which had two coastal cities named Tyre and Sidon. As this was a good ways out of His usual area of ministry toward the Jews, Jesus probably sought to keep from being known about. But word got out that He was in the area, and a certain woman, hearing about Him, came and fell at His feet. Matthew called her a woman of Canaan, but Mark labeled her as a Greek (or Gentile), a Syrophenician by nation. At least she was not an Israelite.

Let us consider this. Paul said in Romans 1:16 that the gospel of Christ "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." It is the general tenor of the Scriptures that the Jews were to be given first chance to receive the grace of the gospel of Jesus. In Acts 13 we see Paul and Barnabas in Antioch in Pisidia preaching the gospel in the synagogue to the Jews. "But when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath," Verse 42. "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God." Verse 44. When the Jews saw this they were filled with envy and spoke against what Paul had preached. Then Paul and Barnabas declared that since the Jews were rejecting the truth, they were turning to the Gentiles. "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Verse 48. The Gentiles were held back and deprived. The Jews had the reputation among the nations as being the nation of the almighty God. But now in Christ all nations are given the same chance that the Jews had.

Jesus used this hold off to the Gentiles in testing the woman in our lesson. He momentarily held her at a distance from His help, but when she humbled herself, refusing to be offended, this proved that she was worthy and the daughter was healed right away. Mark 4:17 speaks of those who are like those on stony ground who endure but for a time, but afterward when affliction and persecution ariseth for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended.

This is why we have chosen for our Memory Verse Luke 7:23. This was part of His answer to send back to John the Baptist who had sent through his disciples an inquiry about Jesus. John the Baptist was in prison. Why was he having any doubt about Jesus? After all that God had manifested to John through Jesus, why was he in a quandary about Him? Could it be that John was suffering in mind and spirit, being tempted to be offended? It is something we all have to guard against. Jesus said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." There is and there always will be an occasion to be offended at the way God deals. Let us humble ourselves and press over every hurt and occasion to be offended. We will reap great blessings and benefits if we do.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What four different occasions for being offended was given this woman?
2. What attitude did she take that enabled her to overcome each offense?
3. Why does God allow an occasion for us to be offended in Him?
4. What is there in man that causes him to be offended?
5. What will come to us if we humble ourselves and take no offense?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

There is and always will be an occasion to be offended against God. We see Jacob in great need before God, alone in prayer, and visited by the angel with whom he wrestled till the break of day. But before Jacob got the blessing he was wounded by the angel and had his thigh thrown out of joint. Elisha refused to be offended at Elijah's effort to remain while he went on further. He was watchful and attentive to see Elijah go up in the whirlwind. He received a double portion of Elijah's spirit. All along the way in the history of man we see this principle working. If you want the blessing from the Lord, be humble to take anything and bear it bravely, taking no offense. If you take offense at God, and you turn away from Him in anger, you will forfeit all He wills to bless you with.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We are going to find in our Christian experience that there will be hard things come our way. It would seem easy at times to throw up our hands and say we are not going to take anymore and indeed some do that. But if we desire to make heaven our home, we must humbly submit to the will of the Lord and cling to Him in spite of feelings and what others do and say. The Lord will allow trials to come that will reveal things that are in the depths of our heart and show us, and sometimes others, attitudes and ideas we may not have realized were there.

This woman was willing to suffer humiliation from the One she knew could help her and because she was unwilling to be offended and go away she received deliverance for her daughter. Her perseverance, faith and humility touched the heart of the Lord and were also a testimony against those Jesus came to minister to. It clearly revealed their lack of those key virtues.

Pride will cause one to miss the blessings God has in store for them. Jesus said in Matthew 11:25, "...I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." This mother found the delivering power of Jesus that was concealed from many others who had a high profession of religion and claimed to be Abraham's seed. She was wonderfully rewarded for seeking help from the Son of God.

Let every barrier that would separate us from the Lord and His blessings be broken down. And let us enter into His presence where there is fullness of joy. (Psalms 16:11.)

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**SEPTEMBER 5, 2004**

### **JESUS AND THE BLIND MAN**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8 The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: other said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

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

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

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

30b Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.

39 And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world,

that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind. John 9:39.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus wrought a great work when He opened the eyes of the man blind from birth. But there is a greater work to be done in the hearts and minds of people. Men and women are spiritually blind but are unaware of it. As long as they think that they can understand and see, they will remain in their sinful condition. But when they will confess their true condition of spiritual blindness, then their spiritual eyes can be opened and they can find a cleansing from their sinful state.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(John 9:2), "*who did sin*": It was a common belief in that day that physical disorders existed on account of the existence of sin in the person's life or in their parent's life. There also were some who believed and taught that it was on account of sin committed in a previous existence in another body.

(John 9:3), "*Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents*": Jesus is declaring that this man's blindness was not on account of sin which he had committed nor of his parents. It was rather for an occasion that the works of God should be shown forth.

(John 9:4), "*while it is day*": While Jesus was here in the world with opportunity to help humanity.

(John 9:6), "*anointed the eyes with the clay*": There was no virtue nor healing in the clay. But to obey and go and wash it off gave the blind man an action to be carried out in obedience that would establish his faith.

(John 9:7), "*by interpretation, Sent*": The Hebrew word Siloam comes from the word Shilach which means "to send."

(John 9:39), "*that they which see not might see*": This is a spiritual thought. They which see not refers to people who realize that they cannot see and are willing to confess it and acknowl-

edge their need. These kind of people can be enlightened for they are aware of their darkness. *"that they which see might be made blind"*: People who see, that is, who *think* that they see and will not acknowledge their blindness will never receive the light of Christ, because they are blind to their true condition. They need to be made aware of their blindness before Christ can be revealed to them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## LESSON BACKGROUND

Our Lord Jesus counted this encounter with the man blind from birth as an opportunity to work the works of God. The miraculous healing of this blind man caused quite a commotion among his family, his neighbors and the Jewish leaders, the Pharisees. Those who were his close neighbors, after making sure that he was the man who had been blind, took him with his story to the Pharisees. Perhaps there would have been no difficulty except for the fact that it was on the sabbath day that this miracle had occurred. Regardless of how wonderful a miracle had been performed upon such a needy person, because of it being on the sabbath day it was wrong, and made the person who had performed it wrong, that is, in the sight of the blinded Pharisees. In order to make sure that he was the man who had been blind, they inquired of his parents. His parents were careful not to acknowledge Jesus as the healer lest they would be put out of the synagogue. So they referred the Pharisees back to the man himself. But the former blind man put up a good testimony of what Jesus had done and stood up for Him. Because of this he was excommunicated by the Pharisees. And when Jesus heard this He personally made Himself known to the blind man as the Son of God. The blind man was convinced and testified of his faith and worshipped the Master.

Let us not overlook the final conclusion of our lesson. Jesus dealt with spiritual blindness, a condition far more serious than literal blindness. Jesus declares that He came to help people who could not see to be enlightened and those who counted themselves as being able to see to be aware of their blindness. The Pharisees counted themselves as being able to see, but in reality they were spiritually blind. Thus their sin remained because they could not confess their true condition. It is the same today. Only people who honestly acknowledge their



wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked condition can get help for their souls. (Revelation 3:17.) —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why was this man in our lesson born blind?
2. What did Jesus tell the blind man to do and why?
3. Why did the Pharisees condemn the healing as not of God?
4. What was the greatest blessing that the former blind man received?
5. What was the spiritual lesson that Christ brought forth out of this incident?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

What a wonderful experience for a man who had never had eyesight to suddenly see and behold things! To see his parents and kin for the first time was a wonderful blessing. How blessed to be healed by the Son of God! What light and understanding came to his heart and mind! The blinded Pharisees would not acknowledge Jesus as being the Son of God and they tried to reason with the former blind man about it. But He was firm in his conviction that Jesus was of God or He could not have done such a marvelous work. Jesus made a special visitation to him and opened his spiritual eyes to believe and worship Him. Oh, there is a greater vision that we need to receive! The apostle Paul's prayer is expressed in Ephesians 1:17-18 like this: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 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." Our spiritual eyes need to be opened and that is the greatest miracle of all.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It has long interested me to read of Jesus' dealings with people. Why did He so directly reveal Who He was to some individuals but seem to leave others in doubt? And more importantly, how can I know Him? How can I help my children,

and others to whom I witness, know and believe in Him for Who He really is?

This blind man demonstrated first an humble and submissive attitude toward Jesus, because he allowed Jesus to anoint his eyes with dirt and saliva. A proud person might have indignantly protested this humiliating gesture.

Next, he willingly and immediately obeyed when Jesus sent him to wash. His reward for this willing obedience was that he "came seeing."

Another characteristic of this man is revealed in what he expressed about Jesus. He accepted the miracle that had been done for him, and gave the credit to Jesus, candidly and simply, without embellishing the story to make himself look good. He concluded by saying, "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." He realized man's helpless, fallen condition and properly recognized what it would take for God to accept him: man must worship or bow before Him, and do His will.

It never takes long for a seeking soul and a seeking Savior to find each other. This man was totally ready for the next step: Who is the Son of God? And Jesus was ready to tell Him. As soon as he knew, he believed and worshipped.

Are you ready to believe and worship Jesus?

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**SEPTEMBER 12, 2004**

### **JESUS AND THE MAN OF LITTLE STATURE**

Luke 19:1 And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

2 And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

3 And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

**MEMORYVERSE:** He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Proverbs 28:13.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Zacchaeus had a great desire to see Jesus and did not allow anything to hinder him from getting where he could behold Him. He became willing to straighten up his life and give up his riches to please the Lord. Therefore salvation came to him that day.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Luke 19:2), "*chief among the publicans*": chief tax collector.

(Luke 19:3), "*sought*": This denotes curiosity, desire and interest put into action. "*who He was*": The Greek more properly puts it, "who He is."

(Luke 19:4), "*ran before*": ran ahead of the pressing crowd. "*climbed up*": got above the crowd. "*to see Him*": to behold and study Him out.

(Luke 19:6), "*received him joyfully*": The Hebrew says, "welcomed Him, rejoicing."

(Luke 19:9), "*salvation*": Being saved from sin to a place of safety in Christ. "*son of Abraham*": Because of his faith in Jesus, his repentance and giving up of his worldly riches he showed the real traits and character of Abraham, thus making him a true Israelite, one inwardly, "of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Romans 2:29. The Scriptures are very plain that it is not the literal seed of Abraham who will inherit the promises of God, but all who are of faith will be blessed with faithful Abraham. (Galatians 3:9.)

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

Today we want to look into this story that we enjoyed as a child and helped sing the song about. Jesus had been on His final journey from Galilee through Samaria and was passing through the city of Jericho. As He was approaching Jericho, just outside the city, He encountered a blind man who, upon learning that it was Jesus who was coming, put up an earnest plea for mercy and healing. Those around him rebuked and told him to hold his peace, but he cried out so much the more for Jesus to have mercy upon him. And precious Jesus granted him his desire and immediately the blind was made to see. He followed Jesus on into the city, glorifying God with all the people who saw it. He was no doubt in the crowd when Jesus met up with Zacchaeus.

Let us look at this Zacchaeus. His position was chief tax collector. He was just about at the top of that rank of people that the populace so despised and hated. And he was rich, which means he had padded his purse very well. But there was something about Zacchaeus that is true with every person wealthy in this world's riches, although very few are willing to acknowledge it. Zacchaeus had an empty place in his life, and he knew and felt it. He had enough knowledge, no doubt, to know, as most all Israelites did, that the Messiah would come one day. And he had heard about this Jesus who claimed to be the Messiah and that He was coming through his town that day. He wanted to see this Man of Galilee for himself. How about us? Have we experienced the emptiness of sin and the vanity of the riches of this life to where we are seeking for something better? Do we want to see Jesus, who He is?

What did Zacchaeus do about his longing to meet the Master? He was at a disadvantage because of him being so short. Well, we see that this did not deter him from his purpose. He would not let the press stop him. He was in the rank with the woman with an issue of blood who pressed through to touch the hem of Christ's garment. (Mark 5:27.) He was also with the men who did not let the press stop them from getting their friend to Jesus even though they had to tear a hole in the roof to get him there. (Mark 2:4.) How about us? Do we allow the pressing cares, attractions and oppositions of this vain life hinder us from getting through to the Saviour and High Priest of our salvation? He ran ahead of the press and climbed up above it. It took effort and perhaps was

very difficult. But he made it and was there waiting to see the King of kings and Lord of lords.

Let us remember that when there is a soul who is earnestly seeking for Jesus, that same Jesus is seeking for him. Jesus knew there was an ardent soul who was going to cross His path that day. And He was ready for Him. When Zacchaeus heard Jesus' words, he obeyed and came down from the tree in a hurry. With rejoicing he accepted Jesus and His offer to come to his house. Then he made a very important statement. In this statement he showed that he was willing to give up his earthly wealth and to make restitution for his past wrongs. Both of these decisive moves were vital for his soul's salvation. How about us? Are we willing, like Paul, to count all things but dung that we may gain Christ? (Philippians 3:8.) Or are we like the rich young ruler who held on to his riches and forfeited his chance to live forever?

Yes, Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost, but not everyone will give up their riches and truly change their way of living to be able to receive His salvation.—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. For what reason did Zacchaeus desire to see Jesus?
2. What efforts did he have to put forth to be able to see Him?
3. What are some of the things in the press today that we have to overcome?
4. What two things did Zacchaeus say in his statement that he willed to do?
5. Why did Jesus say that Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It has been reported that the tax collectors in Jesus' time were corrupt and exacted more than they were appointed to. John the Baptist told the publicans, who came to him upon their inquiry, what they should do: "Exact no more than that which is appointed you." Luke 3:13. It is very evident that Zacchaeus had yielded to the temptation to make himself rich at the expense of the people. And he was rich. But I believe that this man had come to a place where he realized that earthly wealth does not satisfy. I am sure that he had pondered the paths of his feet considerably. He also had some fear of God still lodging in his heart, perhaps from godly parents. This old world and its

attractions have allured many souls into its net. Sin has an attraction and it beguiles the heart of man so easily. Wealth, pleasure, popularity and power has a way of ensnaring humanity. Many of our day are caught up in its seductive snare.

But Jesus was coming to town. Here was his chance, yes, Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, to see this wonderful Healer and Teacher. Nothing was going to keep him from seeing Jesus. Oh, that people would want, more than anything else, to see Jesus—who He is! Who is He? He is the Anointed Son of the living God! He was God manifest in a human body, and is now ascended up on high as our great High Priest, appearing now in the presence of God for us! He is the great Physician, still able and willing to heal and deliver from sickness and the powers of Satan as He ever was. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords! He will one day descend from heaven with a shout, and raise the dead and bring the world to judgment, destroying this present earth and heavens and take His own with Him to a new heaven and earth wherein dwelleth righteousness never to pass away! He is worth every effort one can put forth to see Him, find Him and possess Him now and forever! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

There are three phrases that personifies this little incident: "ran before," "respector of persons" and "response of heart."

Zacchaeus "ran before" the throng and climbed up into a tree to see above the people. Many times we too have to rise above humanity to see Jesus. We can't see because the person in front of us is in the way. We must look above the faults, failures, deceptions, hypocrisies and weaknesses of others in order to focus on our Lord.

Aren't we glad that our Saviour is not a "respector of persons?" Man looked on Zacchaeus and saw a crafty, slick, deceitful, crooked little government man. Jesus looked on Zacchaeus and saw a hungry soul needing salvation. Zacchaeus had such a proper "response of heart." He responded gladly to the invitation of Jesus and made Him feel welcome in his home. He then was willing to repay and recompense his wrongdoing. Salvation came to his house.

May we each one have a desire to be a Zacchaeus: to

persevere till we see Jesus, to accept the invitation of our Lord gladly and be willing to pay recompense. It is then that salvation will come to our house.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**SEPTEMBER 19, 2004**

## **JESUS AND YOU AND ME**

Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

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

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

John 10:9 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.

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.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

**MEMORY VERSE:** He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. Revelation 3:5.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** We find in Christ Jesus the answer to every need we have in life. While the world labors and strains for the riches and pleasures of the flesh, we have found rest for our souls in being united with Christ. Though there is a cross for everyone to bear, there is a Heaven of glory for us to share.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

(Matthew 16:24), "*deny himself*": To bring one's self into total subjection to Christ and the perfect holiness of His Spirit. This means to give up sinful pleasures and activities that are not pleasing to Him and being willing to endure the sufferings that accompany a life of godliness. "*his cross*": This refers to each one's own individual responsibilities and share of the reproaches which our Saviour bore while He was in the flesh. These are things that "cross" our likes and dislikes that we must suffer and allow to continue for us to bear.

(Matthew 16:26), "*lose his own soul*": The experience of detriment, injury and destruction of his spiritual being. This truly is the greatest loss that a man could ever suffer. Far better it would be to lose friends, favor, possessions, health and life itself than to miss the obtaining of true spiritual fellowship and a part with Christ.

(Matthew 11:28), "*labor and are heavy laden*": This means working hard and being loaded down with the strain of toil and strenuous effort to lay hold of the riches and pleasures of this world. People wear themselves out for fleshly gratification of the vanities of their foolish desires. In Christ we understand that those commodities are not of such great value, and we relinquish them, and experience the satisfaction of spiritual realities without the strain and care of this world.

(Matthew 11:29), "*yoke*": A yoke signifies a joining, or coupling, that is, being harnessed up in a union with Christ and His sweet humble Spirit. True, there are many things we have to let go of in being united with Christ, but what we find in Him is so much more satisfying and enjoyable. Instead of being proud and vain, we endeavor to be meek and lowly in heart. Instead of being bitter and hateful, we seek to love, forgive and render good



for evil. Instead of seeking to be outwardly beautiful, we seek that inward beauty that Christ has. Instead of hording up earth's riches, we are content with what the Lord provides and blesses, little it be or much. All of this brings soul rest and happiness.

(Matthew 11:30), "*easy*": pleasant and delightful.

(John 10:9), "*go in and out*": This means we enter in through Christ, the Door, and then we can go out into the realm of His pastures of love and spiritual blessings.

(John 10:10), "*steal, kill, and destroy*": Satan's tactics. He pilfers and steals in the little seemingly unimportant things, like prayer time, Bible study attentiveness, hasty words, conscientious carefulness, etc. His aim in depriving the soul of these things is to ultimately accomplish spiritual death. And then he would keep that soul in the state of spiritual death until the day comes when he will drag that soul down to eternal damnation.

(John 10:27), "*my sheep*": He just had answered some of the Jews who asked Him to tell them plainly if He was the Christ, that He had already told them, but they believed not because they were not of His sheep. When He said, "My sheep," He referred to those who truly, from the heart, believed with love and faithfulness to Him. "*know*": to recognize and acknowledge.

(John 17:26), "*declared*": made known. "*will declare it*": This means that He will continue to make known and reveal Himself to His own.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our previous lessons we have considered the accounts of various ones whom Christ met up and dealt with while He was here in the flesh. Today we want to survey some truths about His dealings with us now and in this present age. What Jesus offered to the people back then is for us to partake of today. He is not here in the flesh, but He is so sweetly here in the Spirit, and we can all find a real relationship with Him.

We are to include in our lesson the blessings we can find in Him and the things that are required on our part if we would be in Him. There is the cross and self-denial that everyone must bear if we would follow the Master. There is the laying aside of the yoke of the world and its covetousness and pride and the taking on of Christ's yoke, which is far easier and will bring rest to our souls.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are the sheep of His

pasture. He laid His life down for us, and we want to enter in through Him and enjoy the protection and provision of His fold of love.

Our hearts have been directed to John 17 and Christ's prayer to the Father after His final meeting with the disciples before He was arrested and crucified. What He prayed for His Father to do for Peter and John and the others, He included us to receive also. How wonderful that we can have a part with Jesus, to share in His cross and humiliation, and then to share in His eternal glory in that last great day! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What must we bear if we would share in Christ's eternal glory?
2. Why is the yoke of Christ much easier and enjoyable than the yoke of sin?
3. What must we do to be Christ's own true sheep?"
4. What do we find in Christ as the Good Shepherd?
5. What do we have to look forward to if we are faithful to Jesus to the end?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus, the anointed Son of God, has passed into the Heavens and sits at the right hand of God Almighty, His Father. He visited and helped people while He was here on earth, and He is still able to visit and help us today. But He works through His Holy Spirit and the Word of God. He can be real to us, even more real than He would be in the flesh. And the things that He spoke while here on earth are still true and can be fulfilled in our lives even today. Everyone must deny himself and take up his cross daily. We must take His yoke upon us and conform ourselves to His holy and lowly ways. We can be His sheep, follow Him, and feed and lie down in His green pastures. We can be safe in His love no matter what comes our way in this world. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our future is bright. Someday He will come and receive us to Himself that with all the bloodwashed of the ages we might be with Him for the ages of the ages! Let us not be foolish to forfeit our soul's salvation for anything of this vain and frivolous earth.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

David, as a shepherd under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote the 23rd Psalm, which has been the means of bringing much comfort to the people of God. The sacred words are much more than just a fitting verse on funeral programs. I believe David's soul was deeply moved when the realization dawned that his relationship with God was similar in nature to his and his sheep. "The Lord is my shepherd."

Sheep are defenseless creatures that need protection from wild beasts, green pastures for nourishment and growth, good water for sustenance and rest in order to survive. Sheep are excellent representations of us humans that need these vital elements for survival. We are very dependent upon the care of our Shepherd. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want (lack)." We find our emotional, physical, temporal and spiritual needs are met in Him. II Corinthians 9:8 says, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

The shepherd boy, David, was a good shepherd and representative of the Great Shepherd of the sheep. This is clearly seen as he put his life on the line in facing a bear and lion that was endeavoring to enter the sheepfold for a prey. Our Great Shepherd was also willing to die on Calvary's cross, bearing your sins and mine to defeat the enemy of our souls. A quote from Jesus explains—"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 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. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine....and I lay down my life for the sheep." Let us lift up our hearts in firmly believing in the care of our Great Shepherd. —Bro. Bob Wilson

**SEPTEMBER 26, 2004**

### **CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, HIS CHOSEN BRIDE**

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of

God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

Isaiah 54:1 Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

Isaiah 62:4 Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the LORD delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5 For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

Hosea 2: 19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.

II Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

**MEMORY VERSE:** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Ephesians 5:23.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** All who are saved from sin and this present evil world make up the bride, the wife of Jesus Christ, who gave His life for us that we might be sanctified, a glorious spotless wife, whom He will love and cherish forever.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

(John 6:45), "*heard and learned of the Father*": The Greek says, "hearing from the Father and learning." This is a vitally important matter. This is why the coming of Christ was preceded by so many years of the workings of the Almighty in the patriarchs, Israel and the prophets. All who lived during those times had a solemn responsibility to give a listening ear, and gain knowledge and understanding of Jehovah, so as to prepare them for to receive the Christ when He would appear.

(Isaiah 54:5), "*Redeemer*": The Hebrew word refers to the next of kin, to buy back a relative's property and to marry his widow. Christ is our near Kinsman, One who conquered death to redeem our fallen estate and to marry us to His embrace forever.

(Isaiah 62:4), "*Hephzibah*": My delight is in her. "*Beulah*": Married.

(Hosea 2:19-20), "*betroth*": To promise for and be engaged for marriage. "*faithfulness*": trustworthiness, security, firmness, moral fidelity.

(II Cor. 11:12). "*espoused*": joined together.

(Eph. 5:26), "*washing of water by the word*": "Word" here is compared to a flowing stream of water for washing, as the utterance and forceful authoritative proclaiming of the gospel affects men and women to conviction and obedience.

(Eph. 5:27), "*glorious*": beautiful and bright. "*spot*": stain or soil from uncleanness of sin and iniquity. "*wrinkle*": A drawing together of the skin caused by the aging process. Without wrinkle denotes youthful beauty, young and fresh. "*blemish*": a flaw or blot.

(Eph. 5:29), "*nourisheth*": rears or brings to maturity and perfection. "*cherisheth*": To brood, foster, care, protect, shelter, keep in tender love and esteem.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our final lesson for this series of studies about those who Jesus saved and healed we want to have a study of the wonderful

marriage of Jesus with all who really believe and follow Him. They are pictured in the Scriptures and compared to a beautiful bride that Christ is wedded to forever.

John 6:44-45. This is part of Christ's reply to the Jews when they murmured at Him saying that He had come down from heaven. Jesus affirms here that His Father, the Almighty God, draws people to Him, but the only ones whom He draws are those who have a listening heart and a willingness to learn of the Father. This makes them fit and qualified to be introduced to the Christ and to be engaged to Him. He quotes from Isaiah 54:13 about all the children (or members) of the Church being taught of God.

Isaiah 54. This is one of the distinct prophecies of the Church as being like a wife to Christ. Verse 1 of this chapter is quoted by Paul in Galatians 4:27 when he spoke of Jerusalem above, the free woman, who is the mother of all who are saved in Christ.

Isaiah 62. These are more prophetic echoes pointing forward to the Church of God as the wife of the Saviour. It is wonderful that the thought of our spiritual land or inheritance in Christ is labeled as Beulah, which means to be married. Several songs have been inspired and written concerning this, one of which is No. 300 in *the Evening Light Songs*, "Is Not This The Land of Beulah?" One line says, "The Spirit led unerring to the land I hold today."

Hosea 2:19-20. This is from the prophet's plea for his alien wife to be returned, and the Holy Spirit applies it to the Church as being betrothed to Christ in being bought back from sin.

II Corinthians 11:2. Paul is speaking to those who have believed in Christ, reminding them of their union with Christ, and for them to take heed that they be the chaste virgin that the Lord is pleased with. Ephesians 5:25-30 is a beautiful expression of Christ as husband and the Church as His purchased bride. And Revelation 19:7-9 echoes the same message, labeling the wedding garments of the Church, the bride, as the righteousness of saints.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Who did Jesus say are the ones who are drawn to Him by the Father?

2. What does Christ, our Redeemer and near Kinsman, redeem us from?

3. What kind of Church did Christ die to have presented to Himself?

4. What all does Christ as Husband do for His holy bride?

5. With what garments are we to be presented in to Christ?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

It means so much to be a part of the true bride of Christ! He is not accepting anything or anyone as His bride who is not what He is pleased with. His bride is a pure and spotless wife, unstained and separate from this present evil world. One aspect of pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is "to keep himself unspotted from the world" James 1:27. Jesus gave His life to purchase for Himself a spotless bride, and He will accept nothing short of that. We must live a careful and prayerful life. The just shall live by faith, and it is not our righteousness that will avail but that which is through the faith of Christ. We must love and worship Him alone and above all else. We must keep our affections on things above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. It means much to keep a true vision of what God is calling us, as the Church, to be. We must be spiritually minded, filled with the fruits of righteousness and the Spirit, i.e. love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, patience, mercy and the very nature and disposition of Christ Himself. Oh, we need to be clean and be arrayed in that fine linen, the righteousness of the saints! Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but He that doeth the will of the Father in Heaven. (Matthew 7:21.) We must overcome the world in all of its lust, pride, hatred, bitterness, wrath and every other evil in the sight of God. May we examine ourselves and seek earnestly to be qualified and fit to be a part of the holy Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, King of kings, and Lord of lords! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The verse in our lesson, Isaiah 54:6, says that the Lord has called to people who were forsaken, grieved and refused. It is a bad feeling to be in any of these three conditions and yet there

are many people today who are suffering from some or all of them. Many times it is the person's own fault. They are so full of selfishness and sin that no one wants to be around them. They may not even be able to stand themselves they are so bad. Other times it may be through no fault of their own that they fall into situations where they lose a loved one and are filled with grief or circumstances cause them to be refused or forsaken.

These three conditions were also experienced by our Savior when He was betrayed by one of His own disciples and even all of His disciples forsook Him. He was grieved by the sin of the people and His offered mercy and power to heal and deliver was refused by wicked men. They stripped Him of all of the physical possessions He had and torturously put Him to death. His life was given to atone for the sins of the world, and after His sacrifice was complete, and satan had done all that he could to torment and afflict His body the power of God raised Him back to life and gave Him a glorified body that will never suffer those torments again.

Now God is calling to you who may be forsaken, grieved and refused. Do you realize how close to the Lord you are when you come to those places in life? He is calling you now before your life is gone. His love and mercy is reaching out to you. He wants you to be a part of His Bride. He wants your sins to be forgiven and for you to walk in newness of life. He is asking you to marry Him! It is a dream come true—You standing side by side with Jesus Christ dressed in sparkling white. You promise to follow Him through life for there is no death to separate this marriage—life goes on eternally. You promise to love and cherish Him above all else and yes, the word “Obey” is in these vows, but you are not afraid to make that promise because you know that He will never demand more of you than what you can ably bear. The virtues of Jesus Christ are yours to share and His riches are yours to enjoy. You are His and He is yours. Your eyes will be sparkling and your heart will be filled with unspeakable joy when you realize the reality of this invitation. Surely you won't refuse His proposal! Say yes! Give Him your hand today!

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey





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