

# Bible Lessons



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

**ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE**

Vol. 43, No. 4  
Oct., Nov., Dec.  
2011

Faith Pub. House  
Guthrie, OK  
73044

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

**Volume 43**

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**No. 4**

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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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**Subscription Price-\$1.50 a copy for quarter of year, or**  
**\$5.00 per year, issued quarterly.**  
**Periodical postage paid at Guthrie, Oklahoma.**

**Published Quarterly By:**  
**FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE**  
**4318 S. Division**  
**Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044**  
**Postmaster: Please send address corrections**  
**to above address.**

## **BIBLE LESSONS FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 2011**

### **THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER**

We are inspired for our Bible Studies this quarter from the precious teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He taught so many wonderful truths in His blessed ministry on earth. Beginning with His lesson on the value and importance of prayer and supplication to God we will study from other wonderful places in the four gospels. We pray the Lord to bless these lessons for the spiritual edification of all who study from them.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee



**OCTOBER 2, 2011**

### **THE VALUABLE BLESSING OF PRAYER**

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

2 And he said unto them,...

Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 11:5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The privilege of calling upon the Almighty God and communing with Him through His Holy Spirit and His beloved Son is a most wonderful and beneficial blessing that we, as His children, have. But we must heed the counsel of Jesus to know how to approach and pray to Him.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 11:1, "*pray*": To ask with earnest wish and desire; to entreat. to petition, to make request.

Matthew 6:7, "*vain repetitions*": Requests repeated over and over. "*heathen*": Other nations void of the knowledge of the true God.

Verse 8, "*your Father knoweth*": Prayer is not to inform God or make known anything to Him. It is rather to give honor and reverence to Him as the Almighty and All Wise Creator by asking, seeking and knocking.

Verse 9, *"Hallowed be thy name"*: Thy name is sanctified, holy, reverent, sacred, precious and glorified in our hearts.

Verse 10, *"Thy kingdom come"*: Let Thy wonderful kingdom of love, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit come and completely reign in our hearts and lives. This expresses complete welcome to His kingdom. *"Thy will be done"*: May Thy will and good pleasure be fully carried out in us over and above all our thoughts and desires.

Verse 11, *"our daily bread"*: What we need for body, soul and mind today.

Verse 12, *"debts"*: Faults, failures, shortcomings, trespasses and transgressions. Luke 11:4 says "sins." *"debtors"*: Others who owe us.

Verse 8, *"because he is his friend"*: Though he refuses to yield to his friend's desires, he knows it will not affect their friendship: *"yet because of his importunity"*: Because he urgently continues to entreat him, he will finally get up and come to his aid.

Verse 9, *"Ask"*: Request, beg, plead and entreat with urgency. *"seek"*: Earnestly search, desire, feel after and press diligently. *"knock"*: Rap and make loud noises to attract attention.

Verse 13, *"being evil"*: In your sinful human state. *"give the Holy Spirit"*: Matthew 7:11 puts it, "give good things." Many good things God has to give to us, but the gift of His Holy Spirit to live within the spirit of man is the greatest and best of the "good things"!

Philippians 4:6, *"Be careful for nothing"*: Do not be anxious about anything. *"supplication"*: Humble, earnest and submissive pleading and petitioning. *"with thanksgiving"*: Always accompany your prayers with much thanksgiving, gratitude and praise to God for blessings already received.

Verse 7, *"passeth all understanding"*: God's peace will reign in the heart over and beyond all desires, thoughts, ideas, requests, heartaches, problems, delays and discouraging situations. *"keep"*: Guard and preserve from fret and fear.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

For our Bible Lesson today we combine two different texts of Scripture concerning our Lord's teachings on the subject of prayer to God. Our text from Luke 11:1-13 was spoken by our

Lord as He was making His way south toward Jerusalem, knowing what was to befall Him there. Our text in Matthew 6:7-15 was part of our Lord's discourse in His sermon on the mount recorded in chapters 5 through 7. Jesus spoke of how to give alms as God would be pleased, and then He gave His counsel concerning how to pray, and after that He spoke about how to properly fast before God.

Jesus was a great example of prayer. Luke 6:12 tells how "he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." This was just before He called His disciples unto Him, and chose from them the twelve apostles. Our lesson shows the value and importance of prayer, and how we should exercise it in our lives. I love the hymn that says, "What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!" Various other songs have been written on this wonderful subject. It is a wonderful experience to the soul to seek the Lord in prayer and have His Holy Spirit bless, comfort and enlighten one's heart and mind! Prayer is communion and fellowship with our God. All worry, fret, anxiety, grief, gloom, discouragement and heavy sorrow can find relief and victory through earnest prayer and calling upon Him. How wonderful it is that our Savior set the example of a prayerful life, overcame the wicked world and was raised from the grave to ascend up to the right hand of God to make intercession for us! "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4:16.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is prayer such an important matter to a child of God?
2. Why did Jesus give us an example or pattern for prayer?
3. What in our hearts must accompany our prayers?
4. What are some of the things that will hinder our prayers?
5. What will God's answer to our prayers mean to us?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

"There's stealing o'er my peaceful, trusting soul a power that is most divinely sweet, as all my burdens on the Lord I roll, and meekly linger at His blessed feet. I kneel in sweet submission, while my pray'r ascends on wings of faith to

Father's throne; He listens while my hopeful spirit there its faltering petitions maketh known. What bliss to dwell where heaven's blessings fall until my soul, with mercy's drops bedewed, responds in answer to my Father's call with words of thankfulness and gratitude!"

—Clara M. Brooks, *Evening Light Songs*, No. 274

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We have probably all seen the wall motto that says, "Prayer changes things." This is a nice reminder to take our burdens to the Lord in prayer, and by faith know that He will work things out for us, even if it requires a miracle. Often when we think of "change" in this sense, we are thinking of problems, financial needs, afflictions or other people. However, when we consider the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray, if it is prayed in sincerity, it will bring about a miraculous change in us—in our attitude toward Him and our fellow man.

The Lord's prayer opens with the precious thought of God being our great heavenly Father. This understanding will make a great change in us as we realize how needy we are before God and how awesome and powerful He is. There is a natural tendency in man to elevate himself to the level of God, to consider himself self-sufficient and able to be master of his own life, and others too if he has the opportunity.

Consider what a change it would make in people's lives if they really revered the name of God. It would not only cause them to be more respectful with their words, it would cause them to also view the laws of God and His principles of holiness in a totally different manner.

If we, as a nation, would pray for the Lord's will to be done in earth as it is in heaven, we would see a dramatic change all around us. God's blessings would shower upon our lives and our country. And, if we would pray for God to forgive our sins and we forgave others their transgressions, we would see some happy people, freed from the slavery of bitterness, malice and ill will. Old grudges would vanish like magic. Love and a brotherly, caring attitude would prevail in each of our dealings with our fellow man.

There are so many things that could be brought out in this lesson Jesus taught on prayer. If this prayer was comprehended and prayed from the heart by a hard hearted sinner,

it would totally transform their heart and life into a precious Saint of God, and keep them pure and free from the evil influences of satan. —Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**OCTOBER 9, 2011**

### **THE VARIOUS RECEPTIONS OF THE GOSPEL**

Matthew 13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, (it was trodden down Luke 8:5) and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth (lacked moisture Luke 8:6):

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them (it yielded no fruit Mark 4:7):

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, (Satan cometh immediately Mark 4:15) and catcheth away that which is sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth (believeth Luke 8:13) for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by (immediately Mark 4:17) he is offended (in time of temptation fall away Luke 8:13).



22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches (and the lusts of other things entering in Mark 4:19), (and pleasures of *this* life Luke 8:14), choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful (brings no fruit to perfection Luke 8:14).

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word (in an honest and good heart Luke 8:15), and understandeth it (keep it Luke 8:15); (receive it Mark 4:20), which also beareth fruit (with patience Luke 8:15), and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

**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:** Not everyone who hears the preaching of the Gospel of Christ is blessed and benefited by it. The condition and attitude of the heart and mind, and the influences of people, along with the temptations of the flesh and the world, work greatly in hindering a person from receiving the blessing of salvation that Christ has made available. But it can be obtained by the willing and obedient soul.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 13:3, "*parable*": A similitude or fiction narrative of common life that conveys a moral or lesson.

Verse 5, "*forthwith*": Immediately.

Verse 9, "*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear*": Whoever is eager and really interested in knowing what this parable is pointing to, let him come to have it explained.

Verse 19, "*the word of the kingdom*": The message of God's kingdom that Christ came to establish. "*understandeth it not*": Does not take in as light and knowledge of what it is all about. "*catcheth away*": Keeps the person from giving it any thought or consideration.

Verse 20, "*anon with joy*": Quickly with gladness.

Verse 21, "*hath he not root in himself*": Is not really convicted in his heart. "*dureth for a while*": Keeps it in mind for only a short time. "*by and by he is offended*": In a short time he stumbles.

James 1:25, "*doer of the work*": Puts in true practice what is commanded in the Word of God.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In the Scripture text of our lesson I have included with Matthew's word the corresponding expressions from the other two gospels, Mark and Luke, in their account of the same.

The parable that Jesus put before the people in our lesson portrays a very serious situation that comes to pass in all the souls of men who have had the truth of the kingdom of God presented to them down through the ages. Jesus presented the parable to the multitude without any explanation of what it meant or pointed to, except to give anyone a chance to really hear it if they were interested. In verses 10 to 17 Christ explained why He spoke to the multitude in such parables. He quotes from Isaiah 6:9-10, stating that the multitude seeing did not see, and hearing they did not hear, neither did they understand. There was hidden truth in the parable and it is only to be received by a person who is truly desirous and interested. And, really that is the condition of humanity as a whole. It takes deep concern and fervent desire to be able to take in the depths of the meaning of God's Word.

Now the disciples were accounted by Jesus as worthy of having the parable opened up, and He explained its true meaning. So He set forth in verse 18 to explain to them just what the parable was all about.

Christ speaks about four different kinds of people. Basically this proves to be true of humanity all down through the ages. The first group is the class of people who have no concern or interest, taken up with flesh and the world. They hear, but they do not hear in truth. Satan sees to it that they do not take the Word seriously, and they are not moved or affected by it. The second group, the seed sown in stony places, have a certain amount of reception, but it is short lived because of a lack of real conviction and concern. They do well for a time, but are soon offended and give up. The third group receive the Gospel message, but the various influences in this world of fleshly lusts and vain riches crowd out the Word of God from the mind and heart. Then the fourth group are the ones who really take hold of the message of salvation with earnestness and a willing heart to go all the way with the Lord in their lives.

How true this parable and its solemn warning is to us today! Christ gave it for the purpose of helping us to take heed to the danger that surrounds us concerning the Word of God. Satan is out to contest and hinder the Word of the glorious Gospel from taking effect in our hearts and lives. May we all be awakened in our hearts and minds to take heed and escape the tragic end of those who fail to receive a love for the truth to be saved.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was the trouble with the Word by the wayside?
2. What was the trouble with the Word in stony places?
3. What was the trouble with the Word among thorns?
4. How did the fourth group prevail to receive the Word?
5. What must we do today to really take hold of God's

Word?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Corinthians 1:21 The world by wisdom knew not God. The soul of man lost the knowledge of God through the influence of satan and the fleshly lusts of the world. We can see the path of humanity, down through the ages, leading souls away from the wisdom and knowledge of God. Worldly ideas and selfish gratification of the flesh blinds the mind and keeps the heart of man in darkness. Thus God has wisely ordained that the Word of His grace and salvation be proclaimed by preaching, teaching, exhortation and testimony. Only those who have a true desire and reverence for God are going to really be affected by His Word regardless of how it comes or is presented. The rest will take offense, ignore, or find plausible excuses for rejecting it and going their way unaware of what they are missing out on. But for the hungry and thirsty heart, who realize their need and the value of God's communicated Gospel, there will be a satisfying portion of peace and fellowship with their Creator. How wonderful to have the eyes of our understanding enlightened to know what is the hope of His calling!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I would like to share some thoughts from Phillip Keller's book, *A Gardener Looks at the Fruit of the Spirit*. Those that Jesus said were "by the wayside," he called "pathway people." "The garden of [their] lives had, in places, been beaten hard as rock by the passing to and fro of other people and influences in [their] experience." The different influences can be described as follows:

1. Friends and associates; language, etc. "What sort of impact do they make on my mind? Are they hardening me against God? Do they compact and compress my convictions *against* Christ? Are they slowly solidifying my sentiments against the gracious Spirit of God? ..I become conditioned by the culture of my society."

2. The literature that is read and the movies or TV programs watched. "We allow ourselves to be manipulated by the mass media....We are the sum total of all our own choices."

3. The music we listen to constantly. "Noble convictions and lofty restraints can be broken down through the implacable pounding of 'mad' music.' One of its most insidious dangers is that it distracts men and women from the things of God's Spirit. Instead, they become fascinated with the old natural life. Their emotions are aroused and their passions inflamed. The whole personality may be set upon a perverse way of conduct contrary to God's best intentions for His children. Unfortunately some of this music now passes amongst God's people as acceptable. Little do they realize how seriously they have been deluded. Their affections have been taken captive and their wills have been set hard against God."

4. The pursuit of pleasure. "Pleasures command so much of our thought, energy and means that those areas are land in our lives lost to God."

5. Our personal ambitions. "Any ambition established deep within our wills becomes the polestar of our daily decisions."

6. Our private thought life. "I am what I think about when alone—not what I pretend to be in public."

May God help each one to search our thoughts and consider our ways.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

**OCTOBER 16, 2011**

**THE WHEAT, THE TARES, AND THE FINAL HARVEST**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 Thessalonians 1:7 ...the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe....

**MEMORY VERSE:** Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and them *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.... Revelation 1:7.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Matthew 25:31-32.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 13:25, "*tares*": Bearded darnel or rye grass that has a striking resemblance to wheat. The inner coat of it's seed sometimes harbors a fungus that can be poisonous.

Verse 26, "*blade was sprung up*": The seed sprouted into a plant.

Verse 37, "*the Son of man*": Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Verse 38, "*the world*": This present earth that God created and all humanity upon it. "*children of the kingdom*": All who are truly saved from sin and transgression, born from above in the kingdom of God, and are faithful to the end.

Verse 39, "*the devil*": satan. "*the end of the world*": The destruction of this present world to take place at the second coming of Christ.

Verse 42, "*wailing and gnashing of teeth*": Loud weeping and grinding of teeth in pain or raging anger.

Verse 43, "*shine forth*": Be gleaming bright and radiant with heavenly beauty and rejoicing. "*hath ears to hear*": Is really eager and interested to know and understand.

II Thessalonians 1:10, "*glorified in his saints*": Be given eternal happiness and honor with all who loved and served Him in this life. "*admired in all them that believe*": To be seen and beheld with great wonder, loving affection, worship, and adoration by those who believed and followed Him faithful in

this time world. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *hūm* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory!" I Peter 1:8.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Oh, what a wonderful lesson that we have before us from the teachings of our beloved Savior! And yet, there is a profound and horrible sorrow portrayed also. How vital that we face up to the responsibility that the Holy Scriptures declares to be ours if we would be among the pure, holy, faithful and godly Saints Who will shine forth in the eternal kingdom of God when Jesus comes again!

Yes, Jesus will soon make His glorious appearance in flaming fire with His mighty angels to sever the wicked from among the just and cast them down to eternal destruction! He will reward the faithful and true Saints with eternal bliss and happiness in that eternal world to come. Oh, how important that we give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and have an entrance ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! II Peter 1:10-11.

Yes, satan sowed lies and deceit upon the human race. False religion and unholy attitudes of lust, unbelief, pride and vanity are abounding everywhere. The true standard of purity, holiness, modesty, humility and godly reverence is rejected by the majority of humanity. To take up the cross of self-denial and total submission to the will of God is not considered and sought after. We live in a world that is on the brink of eternal destruction. How we need to take heed to the plain teachings of the Word! How wonderful it will be for the faithful and true children of God in that day! The dead shall be raised incorruptible and we shall be changed! We will see Jesus coming in glory and on His great judgment seat. Oh, let us take our stand for God and the truth that is revealed in the Gospel of His Son! It will be worth every effort and submissive obedience to be accounted worthy to escape all of these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man in peace. Luke 21:34-36.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. What two kinds of people is our lesson about?
2. Who is responsible for those who offend and do iniquity?

3. What will be their final end?
4. What will it take to be accounted as righteous in that day?
5. What part will His mighty angels have in Christ's coming?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The coming of the Lord draweth near. Our world is in a terrible condition of evil and ungodliness. The styles and fads are so ungodly and immodest. Adultery and fornication are rampant. The television and internet, along with books and magazines, are wretchedly defiled with ungodliness and fleshly lusts. The love of money is defiling the small and great. Our country is overrun with wickedness and evil. There is talk of proclaiming a fast to move God upon His throne for the sake of this sin-cursed nation. But fasting will do no good if people do not humble their hearts and change their lustful ways. Darkness and ignorance prevail in the minds of men and women. The Scriptures are easy to understand if people are willing to listen and obey.

Jesus is coming soon! Where are our affections? Are they on things above? What are we striving to attain to? We should be striving to attain to the resurrection of the dead by counting all else as loss, seeking to possess Christ in reality, having His righteousness of faith, to know Him and the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable to His death, if by any means we might attain to the resurrection of the dead. Instead of our belly being our God and minding earthly things, we need to be having our citizenship in heaven from whence we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change these corruptible bodies to be fashioned like his glorious body. Philippians 3:7-21.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

It has been said that you should "let your conscience be your guide." However, this parable proves that our conscience is not a safe method. "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way...." Matthew 13: 25 The enemy is very interested in working through our own hearts and minds so that the path taken



would mimic the Word of God and Holy Spirit guidance. A false religion (tares) or understanding can be built and created to look very similar to the truth (wheat).

A person lost in the forest can wander aimlessly, and end up circling right back to where he started. We can also do this when we allow our own thoughts and conscience to be our guide. It is not a safe method. "Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts." Proverbs 21:2.

The Lord has equipped us with everything we need to make our journey to Heaven. The Word of God is our road map, and the Holy Spirit is our compass and guide. We cannot afford to take any other route, for choosing our own path will cause us to stray into the broad way which leads to destruction.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



### TAKE UP YOUR CROSS AND FOLLOW JESUS

Luke 9:23 And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

Matthew 16:26 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?

Luke 14:25 And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

1 Corinthians 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. Galatians 6:14.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To really follow after Jesus and attain to the glory that He has gained, we must die to the lusts of the flesh, and be willing to live a holy and righteous life, which is well pleasing to God, even as our Lord Jesus Christ did so faithfully.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Luke 9:23, *"take up his cross daily"*: Every day of our Christian life we must renew our decision to deny self and follow Jesus all the way.

Verse 24, *"lose his life"*: Suffer death because of faith in Jesus.

Luke 14:26, *"hate"*: To love less.

Verse 27, *"come after me"*: Follow, put Christ first, before and ahead.

Verse 28, *"counteth the cost"*: Figure the expense and profit.

Verse 31, "*consulteth*": Take counsel. We must listen carefully to the words of wisdom from the Gospel of Christ. He is coming, and we are going to have to meet Him. Without bearing our cross faithfully and following His example of obedience to God, are we going to be able to stand before Him and His host of mighty angels in the presence of Almighty God?

Verse 32, "*ambassage*": Delegation of prayer and surrender to Christ to gain His favor and peace.

Verse 33, "*forsaketh not all that he hath*": Consecrate all possessions of self and earth to God and set one's affections on things above.

I Corinthians 1:17, "*wisdom of words*": Excellency of speech or worldly wisdom. "*cross of Christ made of none effect*": Count the cross empty and not necessary.

Verse 18, "*foolishness*": Of no need or value.

Hebrews 12:1, "*compassed*": Surrounded and faced with. "*cloud of witnesses*": Host of examples of faith and obedience to God on record. "*every weight*": All hindrances and distractions. "*so easily beset*": Very competitive and influential. "*run with patience*": Go forth with unfailing determination.

Verse 2, "*looking*": Looking away from earthly vanities. "*author*": Chief Leader. "*finisher*": Make perfect and complete. "*joy set before him*": Christ had a great joy of eternal fellowship with all who follow in His steps. "*despising the shame*": Counted as nothing all that He suffered in light of what His eternal gain would be. So must we in like manner endure to the end.

## LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today Christ's cross—He bore, suffered and died on—being applied to all who share in His eternal glory. We combined Matthew's and Luke's statements, bringing in Paul's writings together with them concerning these vital teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke and Matthew spoke the same essence of truth, but Luke adds the word "daily" to the thought of bearing the cross. And it surely is a daily matter in the hearts and lives of His followers.

Our text from Luke 14:25-33 really bears down on the thought of being willing to suffer and bear the cross in our hearts and lives. It shows that we must truly love Christ, so much more than self or anyone else, or we cannot be His disciples. Counting the cost and reckoning in our mind about

what it is going to take to really prevail and share in Christ's glory is so important. If we do not face up to this great challenge of losing all things, especially our life, we will not be able to handle the adverse things we will be called to go through. The comparison of our following the Lord to a king going to war with a greater host than his, is worthy of our attention. We are facing eternal judgment and the coming of Christ with His mighty angels. There is no way that we can prevail on our own, so it is sound wisdom and wise counsel to send our prayers of submission and obedience to Him in order to have conditions of peace. Our Memory Verse from Paul's epistle to the Galatians is worthy of our unfailing remembrance. There is no glory outside of suffering for Christ. This world will fade away, but if we bear our cross for Him faithfully we will share in His eternal glory. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. How did Jesus face the cross that He had to bear?
2. What will be the result of us drawing back from the cross?
3. What will we face if we seek to save our life?
4. What did Jesus gain by enduring the cross?
5. What is the glory we will share if we bear the cross?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Jesus spoke the truth when He said, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it." If we draw back from the reproach and adversity of the true Christian life we will lose everything. We will lose what we have now and will be completely void of everything except a place in hell with no hope of escape. But if we yield our hearts to Christ and follow the leadings and inspiration of His Holy Spirit, we will have the same joy that Christ had set before Him as He yielded to the Father's will and was obedient to the death of the cross.

The cross has been the theme of numbers of hymns written down through the years. Thomas Shepherd wrote: "Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for everyone, and there's a cross for me. The consecrated cross I'll bear till death shall set me free, and then go home my crown to wear, for there's a crown for me." Lucy

M. Lewis wrote: "Oh, the cross! the precious cross! The only way for sinners lost, the only way that we can gain an entrance to this heav'nly plane 'twas there my night was turned to day, 'twas there I found the heav'nly way. Oh, the cross! the precious cross! To me this world is naught but dross, Far richer treasures now I own, while up the shining way I run; when in that heav'nly land I'll see the One Who bore the cross for me." May the Lord strengthen and inspire our hearts to suffer and bear the cross for Him! —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The flesh and the Holy Spirit cannot live successfully and fully in the same life. As oil and water do not mix well, they are fundamentally different in their composition. Sometimes we try to do both. We want to live for God; yet, we want to do it our way and on our terms. We at times try to blend the two into a nice, palatable mixture. I remember once, in my mind and heart, trying to mix what I believed the Bible taught with the way the world believed it. The Lord spoke to my heart—"it doesn't mix." Trying to live both doesn't work. Trying to ride the fence, doesn't work. Joshua once brought Israel to a point of decision. "...Chose you this day whom ye will serve;..." in other words, quit trying to serve both.

The cross is a symbol of suffering, pain and death. For successful Christian living the self-life must die. One verse says, "I saw the death I had to die, a death in which my soul did cry." Self, flesh, anything that is false, dishonest, carnal must die if we would bear the reflection of Christ in our mortal body. Death is not the end. The end result is the life of the spirit infilling and indwelling in us. The Lord has given us this truth also through nature—death then life. Let us look beyond the cross. —Bro Bob Wilson



**OCTOBER 30, 2011**

### **DEFILEMENT IN THE HEART OF MAN**

Matthew 15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees,... saying,

2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

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

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

14 And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand:

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

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

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

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

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

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

10 I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if *there be any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Man looks on the outward appearance, but God weighs and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. Christ has shed His blood that the heart of man may be purged and purified from all sin and transgression.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Matthew 15:2, "*tradition of the elders*": Laws put in force by the Jewish leaders.

Mark 7:6, "*hypocrites*": One who professes outwardly what is not true in his heart.

Verse 15, "*defile*": To pollute, make profane and unclean.

Verse 21, "*heart*": The center of a person; the seat of his affections and desires, intentions, attitudes and disposition. "*evil thoughts*": Worthless, depraved and injurious purposes, considerations and reasonings. "*adulteries, fornications*": Unholy, uncontrolled passions toward the opposite sex. This is one of the greatest and most prominent sins of mankind.

Verse 22, "*covetousness*": Greediness for financial wealth and gain. "*wickedness*": Malice, ill will and hurtful plotting against others. "*lasciviousness*": Lustful desires. "*evil eye*": Envy and jealousy. "*blasphemy*": Evil speaking toward God and man. "*pride*": Haughtiness; exalted feeling about one's self above others. "*foolishness*": The opposite of true wisdom; recklessness and senselessness.

Jeremiah 17:9, "*desperately wicked*": Sick with no desire to be cured. "*try the reins*": Put the inner man to test. "*fruit of his doings*": The outcome and result of man's works and ways.

Proverbs 4:23, "*diligence*": Watchful guarding. "*issues of life*": The direction a person is choosing to take in this short earthly life. Whatever one decides in their heart is what they will do. For this reason we are counseled to take great care of what we allow into our heart.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

As so many times it was made manifest in the Gospels, the leaders and principle men in the Jewish religion were greatly opposed to what Christ taught and stood for. In our lesson today we see them finding fault with the Lord's disciples for not washing their hands before eating. And, though He was not

against uncleanness, yet it was the darkened mind and attitude of these men that Jesus spoke out against. They were so careful about washing of hands but were totally ignorant about what the real defilement was that existed, and that was in the heart. For this reason He quoted from Isaiah 29:13 about how they honored God with their lips, but their heart was far from Him. He even went farther to show how they allowed people to take of their means that should have been used to care and provide for their parents, and give it to the temple treasury. Thus they were making God's commandment, of honoring and taking care of their parents, of none effect.

But then Jesus called the people to Him and gave them the parable about what really defiles a man. He explained it to His disciples. Here we see that what really defiles a man is what he allows to be and come forth from his heart. We need to take careful note of these things that Jesus named out.

We have also included, with what Jesus taught, the words of Jeremiah about the heart, and what Proverbs 4:23 says about it. And we have chosen for our Memory Verse the closing words of Psalm 139, a prayer that we would do well to express sincerely before our gracious Heavenly Father.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the defilement that we need to be concerned about?
2. Why were the Jewish leaders not aware of this?
3. Why is having our hearts made clean and pure so important?
4. Why should we be so diligent to keep our hearts pure?
5. What should we say in prayer about our hearts?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

We, as mortals in this life of vanity, need to take heed to the Scriptures and the Lord's counsels about the importance of having our hearts pure and undefiled before Him. Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We know that it is through the blood of Jesus that we can have our hearts washed and made pure from all sin, as it says in Hebrews 9:14, that the blood of Christ will purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.



But James 4:8 says, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify your hearts, *ye* double minded." There is a cleansing that we need to accomplish through obedience to the Word of God. Hebrews 10:22 says, "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." There is a cleansing by the blood of Jesus in atoning and paying the penalty for our sins, but there is also a cleansing that we must obtain through obedience to His Word. Without obedience to the Word of Christ, the blood He shed on Calvary will not accomplish the salvation we are in need of. And without the blood our obedience will not accomplish it, either.

These awful things that Christ mentioned as defiling the heart are so paramount in this sinful society. Adultery and fornication are wide spread and most people are not aware of their contamination. So many are like animals in their lustful habits. People live to the flesh and are totally unaware of the spiritual life of holiness that God is calling us all to. We need to search the Scriptures and pray earnestly for light and understanding that we may know how to obtain the purity in heart and life that we need to please God. Just to say that the blood has purchased our salvation is not enough. We must obey and follow faithfully the commandments of the Lord. It is really the most happy and satisfying life that we can live in this world. There are enough plain teachings and counsels in the Holy Scriptures that will lead us into all truth, if we will have an open mind and heart to receive it. A life that is purified by the blood of Jesus and obedience to Him will prevail.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

There have been reports of homes in the northern states that have experienced flooding from the torrential rains that fell this year. Some of these homeowners placed sandbags around their houses to keep the rising water from ruining their belongings only to be plagued by another problem, the sewers in their basements backed-up and caused major damage to the whole house. The foul odor from the sewage went throughout the homes causing nearly everything to have a bad smell. We feel badly for those who have suffered such losses, but we

can draw some spiritual parallels to these temporal losses that are far more serious to the soul of man.

Some folks try to have an outward appearance of being pious and have a show of good works, but if you are around them for very long it becomes evident that they are harboring a bad spirit. It seems that the enemy has "subterranean passageways" into their heart and is filling it with his vile spirits of envy, malice, bitterness, unforgiveness, self-pity and rebellion. When these things are allowed to remain in the heart they cause the whole person to be defiled. The Spirit of holiness will not share an apartment in the heart where such foul spirits are dwelling.

God is a holy God and He loves purity and righteousness, and He has a perfect plan through His Son, Jesus, whereby the whole heart can be cleansed of all evil and filled with the peaceful presence of His Holy Spirit. This miraculous change transforms the whole person into a beautiful example of Divine workmanship.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**NOVEMBER 6, 2011**

### **JESUS IS COMING AGAIN**

Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

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

Mark 13:26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

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

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, **they drank**, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained **fire** and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** ...The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. I Thessalonians 5: 2-3.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, is going to make His glorious appearance to destroy this present heavens and earth, and bring all humanity to be judged and rewarded for the deeds done while in this mortal life.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Matthew 24:14, "*this gospel of the kingdom*": The true teachings and standards of salvation, holiness and triumph over sin and this world that Jesus Christ and His apostles **stood** for in the everlasting Kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Luke 21:26, *"the powers of heaven shall be shaken"*: The spiritual powers of the Holy Spirit in the Saints of the Church of God will be opposed and undergo great adversity.

Verse 28, *"your redemption"*: This is referring to the redemption of the body from mortality to immortality as referred to in Romans 8:23 and Ephesians 1:14.

Verse 34, *"surfeiting"*: Gluttony, overeating and indulgence of other fleshly passions. *"drunkenness"*: Drinking of alcoholic beverages and other bodily appetites. *"cares of this life"*: Distractions and burdens of mortal life.

Verse 35, *"snare"*: As a trap in which one is caught unexpectedly.

Verse 36, *"accounted worthy"*: Deemed entirely deserving. *"stand"*: Be approved and without fault or failure.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

We have drawn our lesson for today from the first three Gospels of the New Testament of the teachings of our Lord Jesus concerning His second coming. It is without fail the true promise of Christ that He will come again, as Hebrews 9:27, 28 declares: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." This is truly the second and final step in the plan of redemption. Jesus came down to human level, taking upon Himself our mortal infirmities and temptations. He faithfully endured everything, and willingly suffered the horrible death of the cross as an atonement for our sins. Then, He arose triumphant from the grave and showed Himself to His disciples for forty days. He then ascended up to the right hand of His Father, and has been there ever since interceding for us. He left the promise that He would come again, and the Scriptures declare that we who are accounted worthy will be changed to immortality at His coming.

Over two thousand years have passed since Jesus ascended to the right hand of God. The world around us has very little thought or confidence in this matter. Most mortals are taken up with the pleasures, lusts, burdens, responsibilities and cares of this earthly life. Very little thought is given about this great and wonderful Hope of the children of God except

those who are truly born from above and are living wholly for Him. But, just because time has continued for so long, it does not dim the hope of those who are living the godly, spiritual life that Christ teaches us to live. —Bro. Leslie Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. What will happen to all this earthly realm when Jesus comes?
2. What is required of us to be ready for His coming?
3. What two happenings were similar to the end of the world?
4. What did Jesus warn us about concerning His coming?
5. If He would come today where would it find us?

### COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” I Corinthians 15:51-52.

“...There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God,*

wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." II Peter 3:3-14

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive *and* remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." I Thessalonians 4: 15-18.

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

I noticed that the three things that are mentioned that can overcharge our hearts and make us unprepared for the coming of the Lord are the same things that are mentioned about in Noah's and Lot's day. Eating, drinking and earthly cares. The earthly cares of marrying, establishing a home, building, buying, selling and planting gardens are common enough to the human experience; what could be so wrong with them as to warrant such mention of warning?

When you think about it, these are the very things that our society today is consumed with. What are the things people love to do the most? Shop—and eat. And people today don't just eat for strength, or shop for necessities. They spend hours shopping, and most eating is done—for pleasure. People have an emotional attachment to food. You hear, "Don't speak to me until I've had my \_\_\_\_" Or, "There's nothing about a bad day that a little \_\_\_\_\_ won't fix."

I don't believe I've ever seen the emphasis on social drinking that there is today. Almost every fine restaurant serves liquor. Wineries have become the biggest tourist attractions in many states. Binge drinking is epidemic at most universities. Drinking has become more accepted even in religious circles, than ever before.

We all eat—but let us not be consumed with the pleasure of eating. Let us not be deceived with the drunken. Let us not allow the normal experiences of marriage, buying a home, shopping and yard-work choke the life of Jesus right out of our hearts.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**NOVEMBER 13, 2011**

**AS LITTLE CHILDREN**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew 19:13 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

Isaiah 11:6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and fating together; and a little child shall lead them.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

I Corinthians 14:20 Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.

**MEMORYVERSE:** Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. I Peter 2:1-2.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** To be able to receive the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and be a part of His kingdom we must humble ourselves to be tender, sweet, and of a meek and quiet spirit.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 18:3, "*converted*": Be turned from pride and sinfulness to humility and righteousness.

Verse 5, "*one such little child*": One who is turned from ungodliness to being humble and loving as a little child.

Verse 6, "*offend*": Cause to stumble or go astray. "*millstone*": A very heavy stone used to grind meal.

Verse 10, "*their angels do always behold the face of my Father*": It is a strong opinion of God's Saints through the ages that each child of God has an angel assigned to watch over them. As Jesus says here, these angels are always ready to administer to the children of God as He would have them do.

Matthew 19:13, "*disciples rebuked*": Christ's disciples did not feel that Christ had anytime for infants and small children. Therefore they were against the mothers bringing their children to Jesus for His touch and prayer.

Verse 14, "*Suffer*": Permit. "*of such*": Truly of this sort.



Isaiah 11:6, "*wolf with the lamb*": This prophecy of our Saviour Jesus shows the blending of the souls of mankind with each other, having the wolf-like devouring nature in the hearts of men tamed and tempered to humility, love and meekness that will enable them to fellowship and blend with others.

I Corinthians 14:20, "*in malice be ye children*": Instead of having ill-will and badness we must be like infants. "*in understanding be men*": In mind and attitude be fully developed and enlightened.

I Peter 2:1, "*guile*": Trickery and deceit. "*envies*": Jealousy and ill-will.

Verse 2, "*sincere milk of the word*": Spiritual milk from God's Word.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have in our lesson today the answer Jesus gave to the question that His disciples put to Him about "who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." It seems that this was a paramount thought in the minds of these men, about position and rank and how one would attain to the upper level. This is a worldly trait that is still raging in our society. In Matthew 20:20 we have the account of the mother of James and John coming to Jesus desiring that her two sons would be given the position of sitting on His right hand and left hand in His kingdom. And in verse 24 it says that the other ten were moved with indignation against the two brethren. And Jesus gave them the same counsel that whoever would be great should be a servant, even as He, the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Verses 26-28. But in our lesson we have the thought of being humble as a little child.

In response to their question Jesus set before them a little child, and let them know that this was the position they were to be willing to fill in His kingdom of love and peace. We have included in our lesson a quote from the prophecy of Jesus in Isaiah 11. Some people like to apply this prophecy to what they think will be in the thousand year reign when Christ comes again. But we do not accept this theory, for this thought of wild animals dwelling with the tame and a little child leading them is to be fulfilled in a spiritual sense in this Gospel Day of grace.

The old carnal animal nature is to be changed to meekness, gentleness, humility, love and the tenderness of a little child. And it will be if people will let the Spirit of Christ have full sway in their lives.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why did the disciples want to know who was to be greatest?
2. What was Christ's answer to their question?
3. What must we do to have the disposition of a little child?
4. What causes people to want a high position of power?
5. How did Christ Himself manifest humility as a servant?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The following lines were written by Mrs. Jemima Luke in 1844. She was the wife of a minister of an Independent congregation in England. She had a great burden for helping children to know the Lord and helped prepare books to be published for them. She was on her way to a village school in a stage-coach when she wrote this lovely poem that is also put to music:

"I think when I read that sweet story of old, when Jesus was here among men, how He called little children as lambs to His fold; I should like to have been with them then. I wish that His hands had been placed on my head, that His arm had been thrown around me, and that I might have seen His kind look when He said, "Let the little ones come unto me."

"Yet still to His footstool in prayer I may go, and ask for a share in His love; and if I thus earnestly seek Him below, I shall see Him and hear Him above, in that beautiful place He has gone to prepare for all who are washed and forgiven; And many dear children shall be with Him there, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.

"But thousands and thousands who wander and fall never heard of that heavenly home; I wish they could know there is room for them all, and that Jesus has bid them to come. I long for the joy of that glorious time, the sweetest, the brightest, the best; when the dear little children of every clime shall crowd to His arms and be blest."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

"Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord..." Psalms 127:3 Children are one of God's most precious creations. While here on this earth, we see that Jesus loved the little children and blessed them. They were not a nuisance, or a bother to him; they were a blessing. He used them as an example as to what we are to be like.

So, let us examine, for a moment, the heart of an innocent child: Children are quick to forgive and do not hold a grudge for any length of time. They are completely unbiased and are without prejudice. They have lots of energy and contain such a zest for life. A well cared for child does not worry over anything and is pretty much carefree. Children acknowledge their dependence on others and do not hesitate to ask for help. They have a heart to please and can love with a great intensity. Little children, especially, are uninhibited in displaying their affection.

While it would not be possible or expedient for us to return to our own childhood, we can see that the attributes of a child should be adopted in our spiritual life. As children of God, we need to be quick to forgive and without prejudice. Let us be challenged to have renewed energy for the Lord with a great eagerness to serve in his kingdom—in whatever capacity. We should be reliant on the Lord and cease from our daily worrying. We need to put aside our self reliance and become truly dependent on the Lord. We should not be so hesitant to ask the Lord for our physical and spiritual needs. Let us love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength. And may we be unashamed in displaying our love to the Lord and to his people.

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**NOVEMBER 20, 2011**

### **AS WE FORGIVE WE SHALL BE FORGIVEN**

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

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

Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Matthew 18:23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Luke 6:36-37.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:14-15.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Matthew 18:21, *"forgive"*: To release from guilt and accusation another person for any wrong committed.

Verse 22, *"seventy time seven"*: That is 490 times. Four hundred and ninety times in a day is a trespass about every three minutes. And the same amount in a year adds up to a trespass about every three fourths of a day. Now whether it be in a day or a year, our Savior's figures spell out that there must be perfect and absolute forgiveness in our hearts for all trespasses committed against us.

Luke 17:3, *"rebuke"*: Correct or admonish.

Verse 4, *"trespass against thee seven times in a day"*: This figures up to amount to about a trespass committed every three and a half hours in a twenty-four hour day.

Matthew 18:24, *"ten thousand talents"*: An enormous figure reaching into the millions of dollars worth. It represents the awful amount of guilt and condemnation we as God's creation are under because of our trespasses and sins against Him. It is an impossible figure of guilt that we in no way are able of ourselves to pay. But through Christ God will truly forgive it all.

Verse 26, *"worshipped"*: Bowed down low before him.

Verse 28, *"an hundred pence"*: This has been figured to amount to a worth of about eighteen dollars.

Verse 35, *"from your hearts"*: Sincerely and truly.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In our lesson today we are considering one of the absolute requirements that God is holding on us as His mortal creation. There is no way out of it or around it. We must forgive our fellow creatures for any and all offences, wrongs, injuries, grievances, hurts, displeasures and violations committed against us. Our lesson shows that we are in need of a greater and more serious forgiveness than what might be owed to us. We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have

disobeyed, displeased, grieved, offended, violated and provoked God's anger. There is no way around it. We need His forgiveness and mercy. And our Heavenly Father made a way for us to be entirely and lovingly forgiven of our sins and trespasses. He sent His precious Son down here into this human flesh to show us what pleases Him and to die the horrible death of the cross as an atonement for our sins so that we can be forgiven, completely and sweetly forgiven. This is the message of the Holy Scriptures concerning the salvation that we so greatly need.

But along with this wonderful offer of forgiveness and mercy for our eternal good is given the wise and just counsel and command that we forgive our fellow creatures of earth, even as God has forgiven us. When we are hurt and grieved and displeased by what others say and do to us, we are charged and commanded by God to forgive and not hold any hard feelings against the one who does it. And the message strongly implies that if God so kindly and graciously forgives us for our great and grievous offenses against Him, we are, in turn, to freely and completely forgive our fellow men for anything they do to us that we are grieved and hurt about. And let us calculate in the numerical figures that Christ used to compare the weight of our sins against God with the weight of the sins of others against us. It shows how much worse are our sins against God than what others do in trespassing against us.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why are our sins against God so much the greater trouble?
2. How did Christ compare our sins with the sins against us?
3. What does true forgiveness really amount to?
4. Why is it altogether much better to forgive others?
5. Is there any chance of us being saved if we do not forgive?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

One great example of forgiveness is found in the story of Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, from Genesis 37 through 50. When you consider how terrible Joseph's ten older brothers treated him, it fills us with admiration for the way Joseph

forgave them. These brothers were jealous of Joseph and their sinful and selfish nature spurred them to treat him in a vicious and terrible manner. As Joseph approached their camp, being sent by his father Jacob to see about his brothers, there was fervent talk about slaying him, but they were entreated by the oldest brother, Reuben, to throw him into a pit, and he was going to later rescue Joseph and deliver him to his father again. But in the mean time the brothers decided to sell him to some traders who were passing by on their way to Egypt. And so they did. Then we have the account of Joseph's sojourn to Egypt and all that went on there. His mistreatment, imprisonment, and being forgotten those last two years do show the depth of his sufferings. But God brought him out and made Joseph the ruler of Egypt and the savior of humanity from the awful seven year famine. And when he saw his brothers come to get food and grain, Joseph had forgiveness in his heart, but put his brothers to the test to see if they were the same ruthless men they had previously been. And when he was certain that they were different men than what they had been, he revealed himself to them and gave them welcome to come to His protection and care. Joseph said, "Ye meant it for evil, but God meant it for good."

Then we have David and his mercy and forgiveness to King Saul. He spared Saul's life different times when his men urged him to kill him. But he forgave and spared the life of the man who was out to kill him. But the greatest example of forgiveness and good-will kindness was portrayed by our dear Lord and Savior as He was being crucified, and how He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34. And when the first martyr, Stephen, was being stoned by the hateful Jews, his last words were in a loud voice, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts 7:60. And so it has been down through the ages of this Gospel Day. The true Saints of God have been wronged, mistreated and slain; but their true faith triumphed in forgiveness for their oppressors and love for their Lord.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

We live in a world filled with trespasses and offenses. People are broken, hurting, scarred, maimed, bruised and bleeding on the inside, in their spirit, because of what some-

one has said or done. There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword.

Sometimes there are fronts put on to conceal and protect the wound: tough guy, distance, unconcern. The wound and the pain it brings is still there; just like it happened yesterday. The untreated wound often becomes infected and oozes out bitterness, anger, hurtful words and harmful attitudes. "The spirit of a man can sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" These inner wounds are far more serious than a wound in the physical body; and yet the spirit is the least attended to.

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and set at liberty them that are bruised. Forgiveness is the key. Jesus can help us to let go, releasing the offense and the offender is when true healing can begin.

—Bro. Bob Wilson

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NOVEMBER 27, 2011

### THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

Luke 17:11 And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up *their* voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw *them*, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on *his* face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where *are* the nine?



18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Psalm 107:21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for his* goodness, and *for his* wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

Psalm 100:3 Knowye that the LORD *he is* God: *it is he that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name.

Hebrews 13:15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name.

16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

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

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE:** In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. I Thessalonians 5:18

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** It is very pleasing to our gracious Heavenly Father for us to be very thankful and appreciative in our hearts to Him for His many blessings, and to season our prayers and supplications to Him with much thanksgiving and praise for His goodness to us.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 17:12, "*lepers*": These were men afflicted with the terrible disease of leprosy. Leprosy is described in Peloubet's Bible Dictionary as beginning "with little specks on the eyelids and on the palms of the hands, and gradually spread over different parts of the body; bleaching the hair white wherever it showed itself, crusting the affected parts with shining scales, and causing swellings and sores. From the skin it

**slowly** ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints, **rotting** the whole body. The lungs, the organs of speech and **hearing** and the eyes were attacked in turn, till at last consumption or dropsy brought welcome death." *"which stood afar off"*: It is evident that lepers were forbidden close contact with society and had to remain at a distance from every one.

Verse 14, *"Go show yourselves unto the priests"*: For a leper to be given permission to return to society, he had to present himself for an inspection by the priesthood. If the priest, or priests, pronounced him clean and recovered, he was permitted to return to his family and friends. That is why Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests.

Verse 16, *"thanks"*: Gratitude and deep appreciation. *"Samaritan"*: He was a native of Samaria, a people that the Jews seem to keep a distance from. In John 8:48 they said to Jesus, "Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" But we see here in our lesson and in the case of the Samaritan who befriended the Jew who fell among thieves, we find this people coming to the front. Also in John 4 we see Christ reaching for them in the woman at the well and to those in her city.

Psalms 107:22, *"sacrifice of thanksgiving"*: The offering of our hearts to God in praise, gratitude and appreciation for His goodness and many blessings.

Hebrews 13:15, *"by him"*: In the name of Jesus. *"continually"*: Daily and often during the day. "At midnight I will rise and give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments." Psalm 119:62.

Verse 16, *"communicate"*: Associate with and give to help others.

Philippians 4:6, *"Be careful for nothing"*: Be not anxious or worried about anything. *"supplication"*: Begging and making earnest requests and petitions.

Verse 7, *"passeth all understanding"*: Goes beyond all we can ask or think. *"keep"*: Guard, sustain and protect.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

A thankful and appreciative attitude of heart is very pleasing before the Lord our Maker. If Adam and Eve had remembered to be thankful for all the Lord had blessed them

to partake of, they would have been less inclined to listen to the devil. After all, they had access to all the other trees of the garden. God is worthy of our daily offering of thanks and our continual feeling of gratitude and praise to Him. Of the ten lepers who were healed, only one turned back to express their thanks to Jesus. "Where are the nine?" Jesus asked. And we have several other scriptures that clearly teach us to be thankful and express our gratitude to God daily without fail.

The 107<sup>th</sup> Psalm is a wonderful exposition of the goodness of God to the various situations that the human family has encountered down through the ages. Adversity, loss, affliction, trouble, distress and woe are constantly a threat to the ease and comforts that we seek to have. But, in these hard times we have pictured in this chapter, we behold the great mercy and goodness of our God in hearing the cries and prayers offered to Him, and the wonderful help and deliverance He brought to lift their hearts to gladness again. And in verses 8, 15, 21, and 31 is the expression: "Oh that *men* would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" Notice in verses 23-30 the description of the horrible sea storm! Then consider the wandering in hunger and thirst in verses 4 and 5. In each one of these awful troubles we find people calling upon God for help and deliverance. And we can all look back on the troubles and sorrows that we have passed through in this life. How wonderful it was that we prayed to God for His help and mercy and experienced His hand of deliverance! Truly the Almighty God is worthy of our thanks and praise and worship. Satan succeeds in getting many to doubt and disbelieve God's reality and help, but thank the Lord for the testimonies through the years from those who really experienced His wonderful deliverance!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. Why is being thankful such an important matter?
2. Why is it needful to express our thanks?
3. What do expressions of thanks in our prayers do for us?
4. How can we "in every thing give thanks"?
5. Is it not also good to give thanks to others for what they do?

## HYMN OF THANKSGIVING

*We thank Thee, Father, great and wise for all Thy boundless care:  
The sun that shines down from the skies that we are blessed to share;  
For air to breathe and strength to move, for life, and health, and being,  
All gifts bestowed by Thee to prove the truth in all we're seeing.*

*We thank Thee for the fruitful field, the crops and fruits that grow;  
The harvest in her bounteous yield, the oil and honey-flow;  
For all good things that we enjoy, and things that make life sweet:  
Our families, ev'ry girl and boy with love so pure, complete.*

*For all these things and many more our thanks we give to Thee,  
But more important is Thy store of grace so full and free.  
We thank Thee for thy blessed Son Who opened up the way  
That we might have Thy will be done: our debt for us to pay.*

*We thank Thee for the story old of Jesus here below,  
That we like lambs into His fold might have the right to go.  
We're thankful for His precious blood He shed so graciously  
And for His crowning brotherhood He shared so full and free.  
We thank Thee for His risen life and hope forevermore  
When ended is this earthly strife on that eternal shore.*

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Some people have difficulty being thankful because their mind is focused too intensely on their own problems or their earthly pursuits. The enemy often points out the successes of others and then whispers to his victim, "See, you don't have anything to be thankful for." He might say, "If you could succeed in some certain endeavor," or "If some super special event happened for your benefit, then you would have something to be thankful for." When these thoughts come to us, it is time to start resisting the devil and to begin counting our blessings.

Why do you think the enemy is so opposed to people being thankful? Could it be that he realizes how much it pleases the Lord, and what a positive effect it has on the thankful soul? Do

you think he knows that it will break the spell of an evil dialog that he is conducting with some unfortunate mortal. I believe we are on to one of his well used tools. Thanksgiving can release a person from anxiety, and it inspires faith and confidence in God. These benefits can in turn open up many avenues of special blessings from the Lord and cause one's spiritual relationship with Him to grow.

Another benefit of thanksgiving is that it motivates a person to share the kindness they have been blessed with to others. There are additional blessings enjoyed by those who minister to and give to others who are in need.

There is a story of a teacher who at thanksgiving time asked her young students to draw a picture of something they were thankful for. Some children drew pictures of pies, turkeys or their pets. There was one little timid boy who drew a picture of a hand. The teacher wondered what was in the child's mind for drawing such a picture. Finally she asked him what it meant, and the little boy said it was a picture of her hand, and that was what he was thankful for. It seems that the boy found security and reassurance in holding the teachers hand. It caused him to know that someone cared about him. Many times, instead of running and playing with the other children, he found a hand that gave him a sense of belonging and soothed the troublesome uncertainties that plagued his mind.

May the Lord help us all to be more thankful for the blessings we enjoy and learn to share those blessings with others.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey



**DECEMBER 4, 2011**

## **MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I Corinthians 7: 10 And unto the married I command, *yet* not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from *her* husband:

11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to *her* husband: and let not the husband put away *his* wife.

39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Romans 7:2-3.

### **WORD DEFINITIONS**

Matthew 19:3, "*tempting*": Testing and examining. "*every cause*?: Any and all reasons?

Verse 4, "*he which made them at the beginning*": God Almighty. "*made them male and female*": Designed and formed their relationship as husband and wife.

Verse 5, "*For this cause*": "The word in Genesis 2:24 is translated as "Therefore," which means in the Hebrew "for what is right and good." This is pointing to the truth that, as God has instituted marriage, it is right and proper for a man to leave father and mother and be joined as one flesh with his wife.

Verse 6, "*Wherefore*": Then it follows. Notice these three things: 1. Because God made them male and female to be united in one fleshly tie, a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife as one flesh. 2. Because of this they are no more twain (two), but one flesh. 3. Because of this let not man put asunder what God has joined together.

Verse 7, "*writing of divorcement*": A statement or decree permitting separation of man and wife.

Verse 8, "*hardness of your hearts*": Lack of understanding and true love. "*suffered*": allowed.

Verse 9, "*except it be for fornication*": There may have to be a separation because of one partner being unfaithful and having fleshly relation with someone else. But this does not mean they are free to go and marry someone else. Here is where many get the wrong idea and suppose that they are free to marry again because of what their companion did. Who ever has that situation had better be careful and prayerful.

Verse 10, "*if the case of the man be so with his wife*": If this is what has happened, that is, a man being separated from his wife. "*not good to marry*": Not profitable and acceptable to marry someone else.

Verse 12, *"eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake"*: Remain unmarried for the sake of their soul's eternal welfare. This has been the lot of various Saint men and women through the years. It means true submission to God and firm self control to thus deny the fleshly appetites and desires.

Matthew 5:28, *"adultery in the heart"*: All sin and transgression springs from the seat of man's affections and desires.

Hebrews 13:4, *"honourable"*: Beneficial and God-ordained. *"bed undefiled"*: physical relation between husband and wife is pure and ordained by God our Creator. *"whoremongers"*: Fornicators; those who have sex relations without being lawfully married. *"judge"*: Condemn and punish.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today concerns the sweet and precious plan that God has for humanity and how it can be defiled and ruined and made a snare to entrap the souls of men. In His wisdom God our Creator made man male and female and established this sweet relationship and happiness of marriage and a life together of love and joy. But, just as satan spoiled God's plan for His creation in other ways, so his crafty ways has upset God's wonderful purpose in man and woman being happy and full of joy with each other. How sad it is that so many couples down through history have failed to obtain this wonderful blessing!

But let us consider our Savior's words about how God planned it all in the beginning. As our Memory Verse points out, God's plan for man is honorable and pure. If it does not turn out that way, it is not God's fault. It is because of the failure of His creation to seek His guidance and obey His voice. If a young man and young woman will seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, (Matthew 6:33) God will be able to bring about a happy and successful marriage in their life.

We have included a few verses from the apostle Paul's instructions in I Corinthians 7 along with Hebrews 13:4 for our Memory Verse. And for our Central Thought we have Paul's declaration from Romans 7:2-3. Putting all of these scriptures together we can be assured that (1) God instituted and designed marriage in the beginning to be a real blessing and benefit to man, and (2) God's will is for man to be lawfully married to a wife of His choosing, and (3) if we will yield



ourselves and be obedient to the leadings of His Holy Spirit, God can and will bring happiness and abounding love for us today.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What did Jesus say about marriage in the beginning?
2. What does marriage make a man and woman to be?
3. Why is God so displeased and against double marriage?
4. How can one be a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake?
5. What is God going to do with fornicators and adulterers?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Let us fear and respect the Word of God and be not deceived to think that anyone can lawfully separate from their wife or husband and be married to someone else while their first companion yet lives. Satan has deceived many souls with this idea. The Scriptures are just too plain for us to be misled into this gross and soul-damning error. If a young person will yield to the Lord in their youth and let His Spirit guide them in all their moves of life, God is faithful to work and bring about a marriage that is happy, successful and a blessing to His cause. And a marriage ordained and blessed of God is one of God's greatest benefits to man.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

The phrase that stands out in today's lesson is Jesus' observation, "All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. . . and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."

We all admire the martyrs who were burned at the stake, or those who were beaten for not spitting on the Bible. Yet it seems that when the subject of being a eunuch for the kingdom of Heaven, or for the Gospel's sake, is even mentioned, there is immediately a barrier put up in people's minds. "Oh, God surely wouldn't want me to be lonely and unhappy." As was already mentioned in the lesson, there have been people down through the ages who worked through all of

that and got past all sympathy with their flesh. They lived with a secret thorn in their hearts, and to me, demonstrated just as much courage as the martyrs.

The issue gets much too complicated for any of us to try to figure out just what each person is supposed to do. The key is to get close enough to God to have something "given" to them, and seek for and obtain grace to receive and live according to what has been given. God is the only one who can give that directive and that special grace.

—Sis. Angela Gellenbeck



**DECEMBER 11, 2011**

### **ETERNAL REWARD FOR THE FAITHFUL**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MEMORY VERSE:** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in his body, according to that he hath done, whether *it* be good or bad. II Corinthians 5:10.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** The final reward for the faithful in Christ will be an everlasting dwelling with Him and all of His Saints in that new heaven and new earth. It will be so glorious and in every way a full recompense for every one, whether they lived a long life of toil and suffering or just a short time with less trouble. And the fellowship and joy of all the redeemed of all ages will be so rich and sweet that all that was suffered in this short life will not be brought to mind.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Matthew 20:1, "*householder*": Owner of the land.

Verse 3, "*third hour*": 9:00 in the morning. "*idle*": Inactive and unemployed.

Verse 4, "*whatsoever is right*": All that is just and equal.

Verse 5, "*sixth and ninth hour*": At 12:00 noon and 3:00 afternoon.

Verse 6, "*eleventh hour*": 5:00 afternoon.

Verse 15, "*Is thine eye evil?*": Are you critical and finding fault?

Verse 16, "*the last shall be first*": All will be equal and shared in that blessed world of life eternal. "*many be called, but few chosen*": We must take heed to our attitudes and ways. God calls everyone from sin to a godly life in His good will, but not everyone will qualify and be obedient to His will. In Revelation 17:14 we read that "...they that are with him

(Christ) are called, and chosen and faithful." Many are called, but few are chosen; and, sad to say, there will be some who were chosen but did not prove faithful.

### **LESSON BACKGROUND**

In the chapter previous was the account of the rich young man (Luke 18:18 called him a ruler) who came to Jesus and asked about what he should do to have eternal life. When Jesus told him that he must go, sell all that he had, and give to the poor, and thus have treasure in heaven, and come, take up the cross (Mark 10:21), and follow Him, the young man went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Then Jesus told His disciples that every one who truly forsakes all things for His name's sake would receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. And then Jesus added, "But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first." Matthew 19:30 And then Jesus brought out what we have in our lesson.

There is a serious thought in our lesson. Obtaining eternal life in Christ is going to take more than many people are aware of. Paul listed the things that he was persuaded to diligently pursue for this everlasting prize in Philippians 3:7-11. He gave up all that he had gained in keeping the righteousness of the law in order to have the righteousness of faith, and sought to know (learn and follow) Christ, the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings, being made and to experience death as He, Jesus, had done. He did all this, as he said in verse 11, "if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And then in verse 14 Paul declared that he pressed "toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." So we see that there is much more to be desired, sought for, and pressed for to attain to the eternal prize than just making a profession.

It is for us to diligently pursue the mark to attain to its great reward. May we all take Paul's example and Christ's warning seriously, and apply ourselves to be all that we, as Christ's followers, are called to attain to.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What is Christ pointing out in our lesson?
2. Why is the first and the last the same in God's sight?
3. How can some be called but not chosen?

4. What else must we do besides being chosen?
5. How great will the eternal reward of the righteous be?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

The nation of Israel had been the people whom God had worked with to show forth His power and goodness. God actually worked in this way with the Jews to make manifest Himself to all the nations of the world around about. It was not that Israel was any better than the other nations. In fact, they showed through their years of history that they were just as bad, or in some ways worse, than other nations. But the people of Israel had vain ideas about their rank and nation, and had a tendency to look down upon other nations as inferior and low down. But it came about that Christ and His apostles turned from the Jews to seek to spread the glad tidings of salvation toward the Gentiles, the other nations of the world. They were considered last, but they became first when they received the everlasting gospel and obediently followed the King of kings and Lord of lords.

There are those who hear the gospel as little children, and there are those who respond to the calling of the Lord and give their hearts to Him in their youth. What a blessing they enjoy in their lives as they press and keep true and faithful through the years of their earthly pilgrimage! Then there are those who do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel until up in middle age, and some on up in the older years of life. But whosoever will respond and yield to the Lord and give all to Him can, and will, enjoy His blessings in this present life, even though they do not have the years spent for Him as those who yielded to Him in their youth. But in that glorious Home above we will all rejoice and sing His praises in one great glorious throng. "The first shall be last, and the last first." We will all be together and enjoy our eternal reward in unity together. Won't that be a wonderful day! May the Lord help us all to be faithful unto the end.

In Revelation 7:9-17 John beheld "...a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." These were

defined as being "they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Oh, what a blessed picture and how we desire to be one of that great throng of those who were called, chosen, and faithful unto death!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This parable is similar to the parable of the talents. "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey....After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoned with them." Matthew 25:15 There is a day of reckoning. This is just, as the goodman of the vineyard stated. A penny was earned by each laborer. So what the servants or laborers truly were dealing with were different levels of responsibility or labor. Those who were hired in the morning obviously had more intensity of labor than those that worked for one hour. The servant given the five talents had to work harder to gain five more talents than the servants give two or one.

Peter had some difficulty in understanding this when the Lord was calling him to a greater level of labor and responsibility. "Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, 'Lord, and what shall this man do?' Jesus saith unto him, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.'" John 21:21

Each child of God has a different level of duty and responsibility. Some may work in the vineyard for many years; while others may labor only a short time. Some may be called to endure great heartaches or sufferings while others may endure only light afflictions. The importance here is that the laborer be worthy of his hire—that each one is true to the responsibility given by the Lord. This is why we "dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." II Corinthians 10:12

But the picture does not end there. Sometimes, we have to look beyond the penny and see the true reward. Just as the servants given the two and five talents, we want to hear the Lord say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many

things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." There is an eternal reward to be gained that is greater than any penny, greater than a million dollars, greater than anything on this earth—it is eternal life! This is what our Lord is offering.

"It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus, our trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of his dear face—all sorrow will erase. So bravely run the race till we see Christ."

—Sis. LaDawna Adams



**DECEMBER 18, 2011**

### **BEING A FAITHFUL STEWARD**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** We must not be selfish and allow our affections to be upon this fleeting material wealth. We must use some of it to help others and give to the work of the Lord. This is how we make the friends that we really need.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 16:1, "*steward*": One who manages or oversees the property and goods of someone else.

Verse 2, "*Give an account*": Present a full report.

Verse 3, "*cannot dig*": Not able to do hard work.

Verse 4, "*receive me into their houses*": I will have a place to live.

Verse 5, "*debtors*": People who owed money.

Verse 6, "*sit down quickly, and write fifty*": Hurry now and change the amount from a hundred down to fifty. In other words, he is cutting what he owes in half.

Verse 8, "*wiser than the children of light*": More crafty and thoughtful with financial wealth than the children of God.

Verse 9, "*make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness*": Jesus is giving us a very important word of counsel. The mammon of unrighteousness is money, wealth, and earthly financial gain. We need to use this money to make friends for ourselves and for our eternal future. To do this we must use it to help the poor and needy. "*that, when ye fail,*": Or, that when you die and have to leave this earthly stewardship. "*they may receive you into everlasting habitations*": You



will be received into that heavenly eternal world, welcomed by the angels and the redeemed of all ages.

Verse 10, *"that which is least"*: The earthly financial wealth. *"in much"*: In the eternal riches in Heaven. *"unjust"*: Not true and righteous.

Verse 11, *"If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon"*: If you have been wasteful, selfish, indulgent and not responsible in handling money and material wealth. *"true riches"*: The grace of God, salvation, the work of the Lord, and eternal habitations in glory.

Verse 12, *"another man's"*: Earthly wealth that belongs to God. *"that which is your own"*: The eternal life and blessings that God has for you.

1 Timothy 6:17, *"highminded"*: Proud and lofty in mind and spirit.

Verse 18, *"ready to distribute"*: Liberal, good at imparting to others. *"willing to communicate"*: Happy to share and associate.

Verse 19, *"laying up in store"*: Treasuring away. *"a good foundation"*: A bountiful basis and assurance. *"against the time to come"*: For the coming eternal age. *"that they may lay hold on eternal life"*: That they may successfully attain unto the resurrection of the dead, as Paul stated in Philippians 3:11.

## **LESSON BACKGROUND**

We have before us a very vital and important lesson direct from our blessed Lord and Master. In it lies a very important secret to success in our pursuit of everlasting life in glory with Him. In order to get the point across, Jesus used a parable just as He did with other things He taught us. He gave the parable of the steward who used the power and authority he yet had (before it was to be taken away from him) to help secure him a haven of refuge and safety in the future. He gave away from what he still had control of to gain favor for himself. Jesus then brought out what it was all pointing to. We are going to lose our stewardship in this life. Death is coming. We will take nothing with us of wealth and earthly possessions when we leave this world. But we can use what Jesus called "the mammon of unrighteousness" to make friends who will receive us "into everlasting habitations." And then with Paul's counsel in

I Timothy 6:17-19 we see just what Jesus was pointing us to. Our material life and wealth will all pass away, but while we are still here we can procure eternal dwellings by sharing and giving and helping others. Proverbs 19:17 joins in with this: "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he (the LORD) pay him again."

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### **QUESTIONS:**

1. What was the steward facing? What are we facing also?
2. What did the steward do, and why did he do it?
3. What did Jesus apply all of this to concerning us?
4. How can we make friends with this earthly mammon?
5. If we are not faithful in this, what will be the result?

### **COMMENTS AND APPLICATION**

Along with the counsel from Paul in I Timothy 6 in our lesson, let us consider some more of what he said in verses 5-12. He spoke of "...men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. (Think of the many people down through time that this has happened to!) For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." In Luke 12:15-21 Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." and gave the parable of the foolish rich man, ending up with the counsel, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Christ's teachings are abounding with faithful warnings against this destructive danger.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." This sober, stirring message will come to all of us. We will shortly be put out of our earthly stewardship. Life is so brief at its longest. We will leave all we have known earthly.

"There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war." The Scriptures are very clear regarding accountability after death. "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ...so then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."

In the closing verses of the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ecclesiastes, the writer is saying to the young—rejoice, enjoy your youth and vitality. God gives you the opportunity to chose, but don't forget you will have to give an account of all.

Let us all be good stewards: found forgiven through the blood of Jesus, living humbly, honestly, fervently and carefully in the Spirit.

—Bro. Bob Wilson



**DECEMBER 25, 2011**

### PEACE ON EARTH

Luke 2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall* be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Acts 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

38 How 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.

John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 16:33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

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

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

Psalms 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Psalms 119:165 Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

**MEMORY VERSE:** Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on *thee*: because he trusteth in thee. Isaiah 26:3.

**CENTRAL THOUGHT:** In being forgiven of our sins and no longer under the sentence of death, we obtain peace of heart and mind and a bright hope of eternal glory with Him who died for us and arose again.

### WORD DEFINITIONS

Luke 2:14, "*good will toward men*": Satisfaction, delight and rightful purpose in the hearts of men.

Isaiah 9:6, "*government upon his shoulder*": Rule and authority in His control. "*Wonderful*": Miraculous and marvel-

ous. *"Counsellor"*: Giver of wise guidance and instruction.

Verse 7, *"increase of his government"*: Progress and expansion of his rule. *"no end"*: No boundary or limit. *"upon the throne of David"*: The rule and kingdom under David was a type and shadow of the kingdom of Christ. It is not a literal earthly throne or kingdom, but rather a spiritual kingdom in hearts and lives of righteous and holy men and women, boys and girls. *The zeal*: The flaming desire and purpose. *"will perform this"*: Will fully accomplish and establish this everlasting kingdom in Christ Jesus.

John 14:27, *"I leave"*: I send forth. *"not as the world giveth"*: This peace that Christ gives comes not by war and fleshly strife. This is a spiritual quietness accomplished by the love of God in the heart of man. *"troubled"*: Disturbed and agitated.

John 16:33, *"tribulation"*: Distress and adversity. *"overcome"*: Subdued and conquered. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15 He overcame pride with humility and obedience to God.

Isaiah 32:17, *"work of righteousness"*: Its fruit and accomplishment. *"effect"*: Service rendered. *"assurance"*: Perfect and unwavering trust.

Verse 18, *"peaceable habitation"*: A home and household of peace and harmony. *"sure dwellings"*: Places of safety. *"quiet resting"*: Securely protected.

Philippians 4:6, *"Be careful for nothing"*: Be not anxious about anything. *"in everything"*: In every matter and move and activity. *"by prayer and supplication"*: By earnest communication and petitioning.

Verse 7, *"passeth all understanding"*: Goes beyond all one can think. *"keep"*: Guard and protect and preserve.

Colossians 3:15, *"to the which also ye are called in one body"*: We are called in unity and harmony to this blessed peace of God.

Psalms 37:11, *"inherit the earth"*: Possess the land. This is not the literal and material earth and its substance, but rather the spiritual blessings of salvation and victory over sin and this ungodly world. *"abundance of peace"*: Super abounding victory over fear and worldly influences.

Psalms 119:165, *"nothing shall offend them"*: No obstacle or cause for stumbling and failure.

Isaiah 26:3, "*perfect peace*": Continuous and unfailing peace. "*stayed*": Leaning and holding on to. "*trusteth*": Depends wholly for refuge.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

From different places in the Holy Scriptures we have gathered thoughts about the great peace that we can have and enjoy in the grace of God that was brought to us through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of God in Heaven. Jesus truly brought peace to this earth by paying the debt for our sins and overcoming death and the grave. By this we are set free from guilt and condemnation with a blessed hope of life eternal in the world to come. The angels rightly sang of glory to God and peace and good will toward humanity. The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is a gospel of peace, as Romans 10:15, quoting from Isaiah 52:7, declared: "...How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Christ proclaimed it, Paul preached it, and the Old Testament Scriptures in our lesson foretold it.

We are enjoined to "let the peace of God rule in your hearts." Quietness and assurance of God's love does bring peace to our hearts and minds. Worry, fear, anxiety, grief, gloom and despondency are driven away from our souls by this wonderful peace. When we can have this great kingdom of peace reigning within our hearts and minds, we will feel better in soul and body. Hope is bright and comforting. The past is committed to God. We live one day at a time, not dreading with worry about tomorrow. It is just what we need as mortals passing through the trials and tests of life.

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

### QUESTIONS:

1. What is the only way that one can have real peace of mind?
2. What did Jesus do that brought peace to mankind?
3. What are some of the things that peace helps us to overcome?
4. What kind of future does this peace assure us to have?
5. How does this peace affect our relationship with others?

## COMMENTS AND APPLICATION

Numbers of songs have been inspired and written through the years about this wonderful peace. I want to quote from a song that has inspired my heart so much. The author is W. D. Cornell. "Far away in the depths of my spirit tonight rolls a melody sweeter than psalm. In celestial-like strains it unceasingly falls o'er my soul like an infinite calm: Peace! Peace! Wonderful Peace, coming down from the Father above; Sweep over my spirit forever, I pray, in fathomless billows of love. What a treasure I have in this wonderful peace, buried deep in the heart of my soul; so secure that no power can mine it away, while the years of eternity roll. I am resting tonight on this wonderful peace, resting sweetly in Jesus' control; for I'm kept from all danger by night and by day, and His glory is flooding my soul. And me-thinks when I rise to that City of peace, where the Author of peace I shall see, that one strain of the song which the ransomed will sing in that heavenly kingdom will be: Peace! Peace! Wonderful Peace! Coming down from the Father above; sweep over my spirit forever, I pray, in fathomless billows of love. Ah! Soul, are you here without comfort or rest, marching down the rough pathway of time? Make Jesus your friend ere the shadows grow dark, O, accept of this peace so sublime." Thanks be to God for His glorious peace!

—Bro. Leslie Busbee

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The message of the angels announcing the birth of our precious Savior in Luke 2:14 declared praises to God and peace toward mankind. The value of that heavenly peace that fills the heart of man is beyond comprehension, it can only be experienced. This glorious peace ministers comfort in times of trouble, it is evidence of our relationship with God and it is a sweet motivation to do His blessed will.

Jesus demonstrated that peace to His disciples when He was found fast asleep on the ship that was rocking in the angry waves one dark stormy night on the sea of Galilee. The peace that Jesus possessed gave Him confidence that God would care for them in the midst of a violent storm.

There is a story that illustrates the difference this peace makes in the soul of man. It seems that a father was bidding farewell to his son who was being "shipped out" by the military during WWII. In the father's anguish he said, "If my son is killed, I hope every Jap in the world is killed!" A year later, the father received word that his son had been killed. A short time after his son's death the father received a payment from a life insurance policy. However, by this time something had changed in his heart—where bitterness and anger had once reigned, the peace of God now dwelt. The father took the money and gave it to sponsor mission work specifically for the Japanese people. When the Prince of Peace dwells in the human heart it causes a total transformation to occur in one's attitudes, ambitions and their actions. Faith, hope, charity and submission to the will of God are hallmarks of this peace in the soul.

The hymn by Fanny J. Crosby gives a lovely description of the benefits resulting from this peace. "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glory Divine!...Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blest...."

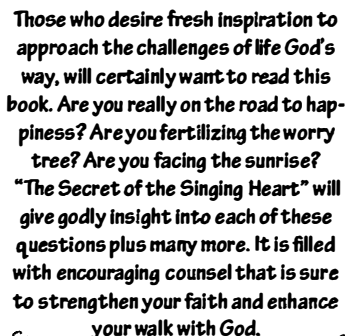
—Bro. Willie E. Murphey





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