



# ~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Vol. 46 Issue 888

April 25, 2014

## Worship Music

Born in Me-  
Francesca Battistelli –

Time In Between-  
Francesca Battistelli

Angel By Your Side-  
Francesca Battistelli

## Prayer

Lord, I thank You for destroying the veil that separated me from Your Presence. By taking away the veil, You made it possible for me to come boldly before Your throne of grace to obtain mercy and receive help in my time of need. Because of what You did for me, today I am coming boldly to tell You what I need in my life. I present my case to You, and I thank You in advance for helping me just as You promised in Your Word. In Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

## Radio Stations

KWVE ...Calvary Chapel

KLOVE

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

"The Cross"

Billy Graham

" The Cure "

Pastor Chuck Smith

## Bible Study Sites

Chuck Smith  
Through The Bible

Bob Coy/Teachings

Mike MacIntosh

Jon Courson

Biblos.com

Billy Graham

Charles Stanley

David Wilkerson

Greg Laurie

Virtue for Women-  
Cathe Laurie

Chapel Flock.....text a prayer..... request telephone number.....

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## Matthew 7:1-29 (AMP)

1 DO NOT judge and criticize and condemn others, so that you may not be judged and criticized and condemned yourselves. 2 For just as you judge and criticize and condemn others, you will be judged and criticized and condemned, and in accordance with the measure you [use to] deal out to others, it will be dealt out again to you. 3 Why do you stare from without at the very small particle that is in your brother's eye but do not become aware of and consider the beam of timber that is in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, Let me get the tiny particle out of your eye, when there is the beam of timber in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first get the beam of timber out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the tiny particle out of your brother's eye. 6 Do not give that which is holy (the sacred thing) to the dogs, and do not throw your pearls before hogs, lest they trample upon them with their feet and turn and tear you in pieces. 7 Keep on asking and it will be given you; keep on seeking and you will find; keep on knocking [reverently] and [the door] will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who keeps on asking receives; and he who keeps on seeking finds; and to him who keeps on knocking, [the door] will be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will hand him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will hand him a serpent? 11 If you then, evil as you are, know how to give good and advantageous gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven [perfect as He is] give good and advantageous things to those who keep on asking Him! 12 So then, whatever you desire that others would do to and for you, even so do also to and for them, for this is (sums up) the Law and the Prophets. 13 Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and spacious and broad is the way that leads away to destruction, and many are those who are entering through it. 14 But the gate is narrow (contracted by pressure) and the way is straitened and compressed that leads away to life, and few are those who find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed as sheep, but inside they are devouring wolves. 16 You will fully recognize them by their fruits. Do people pick grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every healthy (sound) tree bears good fruit [worthy of admiration], but the sickly (decaying, worthless) tree bears bad (worthless) fruit. 18 A good (healthy) tree cannot bear bad (worthless) fruit, nor can a bad (diseased) tree bear excellent fruit [worthy of admiration]. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and cast into the fire. 20 Therefore, you will fully know them by their fruits. 21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father Who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name and driven out demons in Your name and done many mighty works in Your name? 23 And then I will say to them openly (publicly), I never knew you; depart from Me, you who act wickedly [disregarding My commands]. 24 So everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them [obeying them] will be like a sensible (prudent, practical, wise) man who built his house upon the rock. 25 And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a stupid (foolish) man who built his house upon the sand. 27 And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great and complete was the fall of it. 28 When Jesus had finished these sayings [the Sermon on the Mount], the crowds were astonished and overwhelmed with bewildered wonder at His teaching, 29 For He was teaching as One Who had [and was] authority, and not as [did] the scribes.

Tonight let's take a look at Matthew, chapter six. We are in the section of the book of Matthew that is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount because it was delivered to the disciples of Jesus on the mountainside there above the Sea of Galilee. "Seeing the multitudes, he went into a mountain: and he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and he taught them, saying," (Mat 5:1-2).

So the first thing we note is that this Sermon on the Mount is not for general world consumption. It is not a system of laws and all that the world should inaugurate or can inaugurate. The Sermon on the Mount is to the disciples of Jesus Christ, and it is only those who have been described in the first part of the sermon that can really put these things into practice and that only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And so there is, first of all, a description of the person of which Jesus is speaking and that description comes in the form of the Beatitudes as Jesus describes the person to whom the sermon is applicable: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are they that mourn, Blessed are the meek, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the pure in heart, Blessed are the peacemakers"(Mat 5:3-9). These are the children of God. These are the disciples of Jesus Christ. These are the characteristics of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

And then Jesus tells them what the reaction of the world will be towards them. And that is of persecution, not understanding them, reviling them, saying of all manner of evil against them falsely. But their response to the world's reviling is to be rejoicing and to be exceeding glad. And then he tells them the effect that they are to have upon the earth; ye are the salt or the preserving influence in a corrupting society. You are the light in the darkness. You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth.

And then Jesus gets into an area that surely was mind-boggling to each of the disciples as he begins to talk to them concerning the law and it's relationship to the believer. And he declares to them that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. But then that mind-boggling statement when Jesus said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." (Mat 5:20) The scribes and the Pharisees spent their entire life trying to keep every little part of the law. And so to have Jesus make this kind of a statement, immediately the first reaction I could be would just be that of giving up. Well that's it. I've had it. There's no sense trying to go any further. There's no way I can be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees.

And then Jesus went on to explain what he meant, for he began to give them five illustrations of the law as it was being taught and practiced by the scribes and the Pharisees. And he contrasted that with the law as it was intended when it was first given by God.

And the basic difference between the way the law was being practiced and taught by the Pharisees, and the way the law was intended by God in each case was that the Pharisees were teaching and practicing the law in a strict outward observance. They were keeping the law from an outward aspect but the way God intended was spiritual and not understand the law to be spiritual and governing my spirit, my attitude. They developed a whole wrong reaction to the law. As they looked at the law and their outward fulfillment of the requirements of the law, they felt very self-satisfied, very self-righteous and very proud and judgmental against all other men.

Jesus aptly described the attitude of the Pharisee when he said the Pharisee went into the temple to pray and he said, "Oh God, I thank you that I'm not like other men. I'm not an extortioner or I'm a blasphemer but I pay my tithes and I do this and I do that"(Luke 18:11). And he is perfectly describing the attitude that the Pharisee had as far as the law was concerned; the very smug, self-righteous attitude. But the law was not given by God to make men smug and self-righteous. The law was given by God to reveal to man the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to make the whole world guilty before God.

So their interpreting of the law was totally wrong and it was creating a completely wrong reaction on their part to the law. Rather than to make them feel guilty sinners before God and cry out "Oh God have mercy on me a sinner," because of the way they interpreted it they were able to fulfill the law. But the law being spiritual, though they may have fulfilled the outer or outward aspects, yet the spiritual aspects they had totally disobeyed.

So in the contrast that Jesus was giving, the way that the law was being taught; "You heard that it hath been said Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever kills is in danger of judgement: But I say unto you, whosoever hates his brother"(Mat 5:22). You see, it's the hatred from which murder comes. And you can be guilty of the law, "thou shalt not murder" if you have hatred in your heart against your brother. If you consider your brother a worthless fellow you've destroyed him in your own mind. He's worth nothing, you know, but your mind violated the law "thou shalt not murder".

"Thou shalt not commit adultery". Well, Jesus said look that isn't just the physical act. If you're looking at a woman and you desire her, then you've committed adultery already in your heart. The law was intended to make us guilty before God.

And as Paul the apostle said you know there was a time when he thought that, as far as the law was concerned he was perfect, he wrote to the Philippians and he said, "Concerning the righteousness which is the law" (Philippians 3:6). Man I had it, I had it made. But writing to the Romans he said, "I did not know that to desire or to covet was wrong except the law said, Thou shalt not covet" (Romans 7:7). So when I came to the realization that the law was governing the desires, hey, sin revived and I died. In other words, it killed me. It condemned me to death. I was guilty. Now he thought he wasn't guilty for so long but when he realized that the law was spiritual and I am carnal, hey I have failed.

And that's basically what Jesus is showing, is that the law is spiritual. And thus man cannot and has not fulfilled the law of God, and thus your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if you're gonna enter the kingdom of heaven. But how can your righteousness exceed the scribes and the Pharisees? Well, theirs was a righteousness of works and if you are trying to achieve a righteousness by works, there's no way you're going to exceed them. They've outworked you a long time ago. But God has established another basis for righteousness and that is the righteousness that God imparts or God accounts to a man by that man's faith in the finished work of God. By a man's faith in Jesus Christ, God accounts his faith for righteousness.

And Paul said, "I gladly threw over that righteousness that I once had which was of the law. Those things which were gained to me under the law I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse that I may know him and to be found in him; not having my own righteousness which is of the law but the righteousness which is through faith"(Philippians 3:8-9).

So this new relationship with God: righteous by the faith and by believing in Jesus Christ and God having imparted to me then that, or God accounting to me righteousness; thereby, my righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees because God has imparted to me the righteousness of Jesus Christ, exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees. And therein is my only hope of entering into the kingdom of heaven: my faith in God's finished work through Jesus Christ in achieving for me that righteous standing before God.

Now, we get into chapter six and here Jesus, first of all, enunciates a principle, and as is the method of great teachers, there is statement of the principle and then the illustration and amplification of that principle. The principle is this:

Take heed to yourself, be careful that you do not your righteous deeds (Mat 6:1)

The alms being the righteous acts.

before men, to be seen of men(Mat 6:1):

Now he's talking here about the motives for which you do things, for which you do your righteous things. Make sure that the motive by which you are prompted to do these things does not come from your desire to be recognized and noted by men. Take heed that you do not your righteous act to be seen of men.

The Bible tells us that we are all going to stand before the judgement seat of Christ and our works are going to be judged of what sort they are. Our works will be judged actually by the motives behind the work; what motivated me to do it. And if my motivations in doing my righteous deeds are wrong, than those deeds are worthless and they will be burned and consumed as wood, hay and stubble. For all of our works will be tried by fire. Many of our works that we have done for the Lord will just be consumed. They'll go up in smoke.

Now, those things which I've done out of a pure heart and pure motive before God, those that remain the testing of fire, I'll receive a reward for them. But all of our works are to be judged of what sort or what motivation is behind the works.

Now Paul the apostle speaks of that which motivated him, he said, "For the love of Christ constrains me" (2 Corinthians 5:14). And really love is the greatest motivator for Christian service and the only valid motivator for Christian service.

I can be doing a lot of wonderful things but if I don't do it in love, they become worthless. You see, I can even sell everything that I have, distribute all of the profit to the poor, but I can do it in such a way that I call the newspaper and say, "Hey send a reporter out here. I got my house for sale and I'm going to give everything to the poor". And then once I sold my house, I put up a big sign, you know, "Chuck's relief program", and I invite all the poor in and all the photographers and everything else and I start giving out, you know, all of my goods and I feed the poor and I stand there smiling for the photographers. Channel seven and channel five come out you know, and they take their pictures and I get my face in. This is wonderful. Look what this man has done. Oh how glorious, he sold everything and gave to the poor. But you see my motive was to get my smiling face before the public and have everybody say, "Oh, isn't that marvelous". That's my reward, everybody is saying "Oh isn't that marvelous" and I better listen carefully and tune in on that "Oh isn't that grand?" because that's all the reward I'm gonna get.

And when I come up before God and stand before God and give him that Pepsident smile, you know, that I gave to the TV cameras, you know. Pin it on me Lord, I'm ready now to receive. And he looks at the account and he says, "Well, I don't see anything here, Chuck". I say, "Wait a minute Lord. What do you mean you don't see anything? Didn't you watch channel seven? Didn't you hear those people raving about how marvelous I was?" "Oh yes I remember. That was your reward".

And that's basically what Jesus is saying here. Now be careful what your motive is. Don't do things in such a way as to draw attention to yourself. That is, to draw the praise of people and the applause of the crowd. For if that is what's behind it and you're doing it in such a way as to attract attention to your good works, then the attention that you've attracted is all the reward you're gonna get. So take head that you don't do your righteous act to be seen of men, before men to be seen of them.

Now, there is a balance here because earlier Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world" (Mat 5:14) and you can't hide a light. Therefore what you do is going to be seen; it's going to be noticed. You can't hide the light. You're the light of the world, but "let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works they glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Mat 5:16). Now that's not always easy to do, but we are to seek to do those good works in such a way that when people see what we are doing, they won't be glorifying us but they'll be glorifying God. And that has to be of course, the motive behind it all to bring glory to God because I love God. I want to serve God. I'm doing it for him, that is the motive that God will honor. But if my motive is to receive glory and praise and credit for man, then the glory, praise and credit that I receive is my reward.

Now, there are those who say that we should not be interested in rewards, that we should be good just for goodness sake and that's, well that's again a very magnanimous thing to say. And people usually say that in order that they might appear to be very magnanimous, and thus they have their reward when they have said it, because people say, "Oh, isn't that marvelous? What pure heart he has. Oh, what a pure motive" you know. "He doesn't want any reward, he just wants to be good because he's good. Oh that's sweet" you know. That's sickly and it's unscriptural.

Jesus speaks many times here about rewards and how that we should be concerned for rewards, those rewards that come from our heavenly Father. So there is a place of reward in the Christian experience. Now, salvation is not a reward. Salvation is a gift of God through his grace towards us in Christ Jesus. And salvation is something that God gives to me through my faith in Jesus Christ, and it's nothing to do with my works or my effort or anything else. It only has to do with my simply believing on Jesus Christ and God gives to me that glorious gift of eternal life. God doesn't reward me with eternal life; that is a gift of God. I don't earn eternal life, I can't work for eternal life; it's a gift of God and not of works lest any man should boast. But, as a child of God, there are responsibilities that God places upon me. There are opportunities that God gives me of serving him. And I will stand before God and I will be rewarded according to my faithfulness in the fulfilling of those obligations and responsibilities that God has placed before me while I am here. And so it is proper for me to desire that reward from God and to seek after that reward from God.

Now, Jesus said if you do your righteousness before men to be seen of men, basically you have your reward in the fact that men see what you're doing and acknowledge it and they praise you for it. And then Jesus gives three illustrations to this basic principle as he deals with the three basic righteous things that men do. And that is the giving of their alms, their prayer and the mortifying of their flesh. And there is a right way and there is a wrong way to do each of these things. There's a right way to give to God; there's a wrong way to give to God. You give the wrong way and you've received your reward. You give the right way and God will reward you. And so it all depends on where and from what source you want your rewards. You want your reward from God or you want your reward from man?

Now there are a lot of people who are satisfied and desire the reward of man. In a few days, the fourth of July, we're going to see tremendous pyrotechnic displays and these skyrockets are, they're getting more exotic every year. And as you watch these bursts of colors in the air, you hear the boom and you see all of these colors bursting out and these little things squirreling away and everybody says, "Oh". You're sitting there in the Anaheim stadium, perhaps, and this thing goes off and everybody "Ah" you know. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Big flash, big burst, everybody's awing over it, but oh, it burns out so rapidly. You know it's just for a moment, boom; it's gone. So the glory of the world, it's like a skyrocket. You know, you come on the world scene and we've watched it, you've lived long enough to see those who came on the world scene and everybody say "Ah, oh" and a big flash, but oh what a quick burnout. Now they're gone. They're being replaced by the new flashing stars. And the glory of the world is so shallow; it passes so rapidly.

But you know, up there in the sky, there are trillion displays of fire and glory. Those stars, oh, I tell ya; if you could just look at them closely enough you'd see fantastic, spectacular displays of glory and beauty and they just keep going on and on and on. And long after the skyrockets have expended their glory and fallen in ashes to the ground, the stars are still there.

Daniel said, "And they who are wise will lead many to righteousness and they shall shine as the stars forever and ever"(Daniel 12:3). And, it all depends on which sky you want to shine. You can do your works before man in such a way that everybody says, "Ah, oh" you know, big flash, everybody's all excited and, and everybody's going around saying "Oh, did you know what he did? Oh, isn't that wonderful? Oh, he's so glorious" you know. You're soon ashes, everybody's forgotten and they're looking for the next flash. Or you can do it in such a way that forever in God's kingdom shining in that glory of his splendor and his beauty.

So, when you give, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward (Mat 6:2).

Now, I don't know if Jesus is exaggerating here or not. I have never really heard of anybody hiring a band to go before them when they are carrying their gift to church, you know, ready to drop your money in the offering and have the guy stand up and give a trumpet fanfare, you know, and so you come forward and place your gift in.

However, however, I have seen services where the evangelist will say; "Now God has revealed to me ye, that there are fifteen people here tonight that are going to give a thousand dollars to my ministry. Bless God. Hallelujah. I want you fifteen that God is speaking to your heart now to give that thousand dollars. I want you to stand to your feet" you know. And they harangue and they harass and they go until, "Praise God, look there's a brother over there. Oh, praise God brother, hallelujah". And the guy's standing there holding up his check, you know, and the evangelist runs back and gets it because I'll personally receive, you know. I'll personally take it out of your hand, you know. Greedy soul.

Now, as far as God is concerned, you will receive no reward from God for that thousand-dollar offering that you just gave. You already have your reward because, in a sense, you've sounded a trumpet. You've made a big public display out of your giving and everybody knows how generous you were. You stood to your feet; you received the applause of the people. Just drink it in because that's all the reward you're gonna get. Now to me, it is indeed sad and tragic that there are many people who actually encourage people to give with that kind of motivation because even in their receiving the peoples funds, using that as the motivator behind it, they have robbed those people from the reward that God would give them for the gifts that they have made. And I hold the evangelists responsible. They should know better. Sheep are often dumb and they don't know any better, but those people who are receiving money that way should know better and they are responsible. The Lord said you shouldn't be giving with a fanfare in a way to be seen of men. Not to make a parade, not to make a big do over what you have given to God.

But when you give your alms, really, just don't even let your right hand know what your left hand is doing (Mat 6:3):

Just give. Don't make a big deal over it. That your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly (Mat 6:4).

So in our giving is to be simple, with simplicity. Our giving to God, Paul tells us in the Corinthian epistle, is never to be out of constraint or pressure. We should never feel pressured to give to God. God doesn't want people to give to him motivated by pressure. Oh here's the finance committee coming to the door and they're going to get our annual pledge. Oh no. What are we gonna just say this time, you know. And of course I'm under the pressure.

Here are these important people; there's the banker there and there's the attorney and here's my doctor, you know and they're sitting there and I'm on the hot seat because I've gotta make my pledge to the church for the year. And these guys are all gonna know what I'm gonna pledge. And I don't want to look like a skinny skinflint. And so, what am I gonna do, you know. So I feel the pressure and I say, "Well, this year I think we're gonna try and give a thousand dollars to the church". And I here my banker sort of ahem, hum, hmm, a thousand dollars. Well, you know we're really wanting to add a few programs to the church this year so we really need -- well, maybe I can give twelve hundred, you know.

So then comes the first month and I owe a hundred bucks and oh no, I can't afford this hundred dollars. Oh, but I got to do it. I promised I'd do it, you know. And every month I find myself gritting and struggling over trying to make my pledge, and I'm griping about it and I'm upset about it. Hey, God doesn't appreciate anything given to him that you gripe about. You'd be much better off not to give than to give and gripe. Let them think that you're tight, let them think that you're not benevolent, let them think what they want, but don't give to God out of pressure. Paul said, "Therefore, as everyone is purposed in his own heart so let him set it aside and let him give hilariously because God loves a hilarious giver"(2 Corinthians 9:7). Whatever you can give to God hilariously, give. What you can't give to God hilariously, keep. God doesn't want it and God doesn't need it. And thus, the giving to God should always be a personal matter between the Lord and our family and it is something that we do because we love the Lord and we're motivated by our love for him, but we're not looking for credit from man or not looking to receive from man great accolades because of our generosity and giving to God. Now, the question of the tithe envelopes then. This is a necessity that is laid upon us by the U.S. Government The Internal Revenue Services, just one of the other evils that come from the IRS. A, I don't believe that we should pay more taxes than what are due. I think we should pay what are due but I don't think we should pay anymore than our due. And thus, for the purposes of the IRS we make out checks or we fill out an envelope that we might keep a record in case the IRS questions concerning your giving. But those files are strictly confidential. They are something that is between you and the Lord. And those are things that we only send you, your receipt at the end of the year and it is something that only you and the Lord know. I don't even know. I don't bother to go through those files. I'm not concerned. It's something between you and God and it's a personal thing. And we want to keep the giving just as personal as possible.

Then when you pray (Mat 6:5),

There's a wrong and a right way to pray.

Now don't be as the hypocrites: for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward (Mat 6:5).

Now prayer was a very important thing in the life of the Jew. Twice a day he had to say the Shema, which comprised of three sections of the Old Testament scriptures beginning with Deuteronomy six there, "The Lord our God is one Lord and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might, with all thy strength". And he had to say that, the first thing in the morning and he had to say it the last thing at night. He was to say it before nine o'clock in the morning and he was to say it before nine o'clock in the evening but twice a day he would say the Shema.

Then there was the second form of prayers, the Sheminoph. The Sheminoph was actually eighteen separate prayers, later on they added the nineteenth but they kept the word sheminoph, eighteen. And there were eighteen prayers that they would memorize as a child and they had to say three times a day; nine o'clock in the morning, twelve at noon and three o'clock in the afternoon.

Now because they had to say these same prayers every day, morning, afternoon and evening, it became a custom, as anything that you know we do by custom. It became something that, to many of them, was totally meaningless. I mean, it's a duty. I've gotta do it so you race through these eighteen prayers saying them just as rapidly as you can. You know, it's a duty. I gotta perform, you know, it's nine o'clock and okay, here we go, you know, and you race through the eighteen prayers. And then it's twelve o'clock; time to do it again and you race through the same eighteen prayers.

Now, with that as a background, you see, there were those who would time themselves so that when nine o'clock in the morning came they would be in a very conspicuous place on the street corner. Nine o'clock, oops, you know, and prayer shawl comes on, swoop, swoop, wrap themselves up and, and so they go through the eighteen prayers. And everybody says, oh ain't that wonderful? He stops right in the middle of his busy day right there in the street corner going through his eighteen prayers. Oh, he must be spiritual.

And it is possible that as you're going through your eighteen prayers you're thinking, oh, I know they're all watching me and they know how spiritual I am. They know that I'm a holy man. Isn't this glorious, you know, that everybody knows how righteous I am. Hmm, Lord I thank you, you know.

Now anything that we do repeat over and over again, the same words can easily become meaningless. You know, we set the little group patterns in our brain and all we have to do is tune in to that particular channel and set the, push the button and you can just say it without even thinking. "Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take" you know. I mean it; you push the button and it goes. It's like pulling the string on little dollies. I mean it's just something that's programmed in, you know. "God is great, God is good, we thank you Father for our food" you know. And you can mouth these words without even--you can be thinking about something else entirely as you're saying these words. I don't have to be thinking about what I say because I can just say these words by rote. And thus they become empty repetition of words. So first of all when I pray, I'm not to seek to get in some conspicuous place so everybody will see that I am a man of prayer.

I heard the reputation of a minister. Everybody said oh, he's such a man of prayer. And I was anxious to meet this fellow because I'd heard his reputation of being a man of prayer. And so it happened that I was at a summer camp speaking and he was also at that same summer camp. And I found out how he got his reputation as a man of prayer. Every morning at six o'clock down in the chapel, you could hear this fellow praying; all over camp you can hear him praying. And from six to seven you could hear him praying down there in the chapel, crying out to the Lord.

And I often wondered does God want us to have a reputation of a man of prayer? Is it not better to

go into the closet, and shut the door, and pray to the Father who sees in secret; and the Father who sees in secret then will be the one who rewards us (Mat 6:6).

I would not be surprised, but what the reward that that man gets from his prayer life is not the fact that he has a tremendous reputation of being a man of prayer. And he loves that reputation and he's doing everything to keep that reputation alive by praying in such a way that everybody is noticing the fact that he is praying.

Now we've got to be careful about motivation. Even in prayer, what I pray for is tested by motivation. James said, "You have not because you ask not" and then he added, "And you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you might consume it on your own lusts" (James 4:3). In other words, it's possible for me to even have the wrong motivation for praying what I'm praying for. Motivation is such an important thing. That's why the Bible said, "Let every man examine himself, for if we will judge ourselves we will not be judged of God" (1 Corinthians 11:28, 31). And it's good to examine, "Why did I do that?"

Now I do not always know. It's possible for me to deceive myself. And David, realizing the possibility of deceiving himself concerning his own personal motivations said Lord, "You have searched me. You know me. You know my down sittings, my uprisings. You understand my thoughts in their origins" he said, "such knowledge is too great for me. I cannot attain it. I really don't know myself Lord". And so he concludes that Psalm by saying, "Search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be some wicked way in me" (Psalm 139:23).

O God you search me, God you show me, God you reveal what is in my heart because I can be deceiving myself. But I'm not deceiving God, for he searches the hearts, the reins. He knows what are the motives behind everything I do. And God knows I don't want to waste my time. If I'm gonna do it, I want to be doing it out of the right motivation and I want to receive the rewards from the Lord for doing it.

And so in our prayers, be careful that we do not seek to pray drawing attention to ourselves or praying to impress people that they might be seen of men. The idea behind it is they're trying to impress people. Be careful that you don't pray to impress people. Prayer is not intended to impress people; it's intended to impress God. "Go into your closet, shut the door. Your Father which sees in secret will reward you openly".

The second negative is

Don't use the vain repetitions (Mat 6:7),

As they were doing in those days

thinking that you'll be heard for your much speaking (Mat 6:7).

It isn't the length of prayer nor is it the time or the amount of time spent in prayer that makes prayer valid. Those prayers that are recorded in the Bible are all, have been very short. So many times we think that prayer doesn't really become effective until we've been on our knees for an hour; not so. There's no sense in just filling up the time with meaningless little stereotype phrases when I'm talking to God. When you come in to God sit down, declare your business to God, declare your heart; open it to him, lay it out before him and be brief, be concise.

Because the Lord knows what you have need of, before you ever ask him (Mat 6:8).

Prayer's not information time where I'm now gonna inform you God of everything that's gone wrong in my life today. God knows everything that's gone wrong. I don't have to rehearse it for him nor do I have to go over a long list of my needs. God knows what I have need of before I ever ask him. And so don't use vain repetitions just to fill up time. The heathen think that they're gonna be heard for their much speaking, but it isn't the much speaking.

Now Jesus then gave to us a model prayer. It is tragic that many people have taken this model prayer and use it in vain repetition. And so they say this model prayer over and over again and they are encouraged many times to do so, as far as their penance is concerned, you know, so many hail Mary's and so many Our Father's, which are nothing but vain repetition. The very thing that Jesus spoke against: thinking that you'll be heard for your much speaking. No, you won't.

And just to repeat the Lord's prayer out of memory really has no value. There's tremendous value if you'll take it very slowly, phrase by phrase and really think upon it and meditate upon it. But basically, he's giving to us a model prayer. And as he gives to us the model prayer - first of all, prayer always is dependent upon relationship, and thus it is significant that the prayer opens expressing relationship,

Our Father (Mat 6:9)

And if he is not your Father then you have no right to call on Him.

The blind man said to the Pharisees when they were challenging him on how he was healed. He said "Well this man came and he laid his hands on me and I can see". Well what did he do? "Well, I told ya." And they said, "Well, as far as the man... " they said, "Give this glory to God. As far as this man we don't know anything about him"(John 9:15, 24). I said ain't that a marvelous thing? Here's someone you don't know anything about and he's opening the eyes of the blind. He's doing the work of the Messiah. And they got angry at the man. The man says, hey, we know that God doesn't hear, you know, the prayers of sinners. He must be doing something right if God's answering his prayers.

Now, notice that that isn't necessarily Biblical truth. This is the statement of a blind man to the Pharisees because in reality God does hear the prayer of sinners. One prayer at least, "God be merciful to me a sinner". Thank God he hears that prayer. And yet, David said "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord does not hear me when I pray". That's divine truth. "God's hand is not short that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear but your sin has separated between you and your God" that's divine truth. Sin separates a man from God. However, there is relationship involved in prayer. And that relationship is a child coming to the Father. And I'm a child of God through my faith in Jesus Christ. And so I can say, "Father".

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name (Mat 6:9).

The word "hallowed" could also be translated reverend. You know the Jews had a very high respect for the name of God. In fact, they had such a high respect for the name of God that they came to the place where they felt that their lips were unworthy to utter the name of God. Ultimately they came to the place where they thought that their minds were unworthy to even think of the name of God, to think it in their minds. So as the scribes, in copying the scriptures, would come to the name of God instead of writing the vowels they only wrote the consonance: YHVH. Try and pronounce that. Without the vowels you don't know how it is pronounced. And so to the present date we do not know how to pronounce the name of God.

But before the scribes would even write the YHVH in their manuscript, they would go in, take a bath, put on fresh clothes, take a new pen, dip it in fresh ink and then write those consonants YHVH. And imagine in a passage where you have the name of the Lord listed five or six times. Yet it became a little tradition among them that when they were copying they would always go and take this ritual bath and put on fresh clothes and then write those consonance YHVH. Now, whether or not the name was pronounced Jehovah or Yahweh, we're really not sure. Most scholars think that it was Yahweh. But the pronunciation of God's name has been lost as the result of this tradition among the Jews. But, oh, how highly did they esteem his name.

In the psalms it's the psalmist declared, "Holy and reverend is thy name"(Psalms 111:9). Here, basically, the same thing is being said in the Lord's prayer. Hallowed or reverend it be thy name. Now, where in the world men ever got the tradition of tacking reverend on the name of a man, I do not know. But I really do not consider myself as reverend Chuck Smith. I don't think there's anything reverend about the name Chuck. But it's unfortunate, you know, they start out and they say reverend Chuck Smith, and then you know they're trying to puff you up a little more and they say, "The reverend Chuck Smith". And then they try to puff you up a little more and they say, "The most reverend Chuck Smith" you know and "the most right reverend Chuck Smith". And you know they start adding all these titles to man. Oh how tragic, how sad. I really don't care for a title.

The name of the Lord is reverend; it's hallowed, but surely not the name of any man. Now a lot of people take the title in ignorance and I don't accept that. A lot of people in writing to me write "Dear reverend Smith" or "reverend Smith" or whatever and I just laugh and I know that they don't know me because I don't consider myself reverend at all. I do reverence God and I reverence his name but there's nothing reverend about my name. And so I don't make a big deal over it but I mean it's just something that you know, it's one of those things that people started and they carry on. It's the exalting of man and I don't believe in the exalting of man. I believe, you know, that no flesh should glory in his sight. Let's exalt the Lord. Hold his name reverend and hallowed but let's not be exalting man. For he that exalts himself, the Lord will abase.

So, recognition is next. First of all, relationship; "Our Father". Recognition. "Which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name". Holy and reverend is thy name. I'm talking now to God who has created the universe. He said to Jeremiah, "Behold I am the Lord. Is there anything too hard for me?"(Jeremiah 32:27) I need to remember that when I pray because so often when I pray, I carry my own limitations in. This thing is too tough for me, it's too much for me; I can't handle it. And I'm prone many times to carry that sense of defeat or overwhelmed by the problem into my prayer life with God as though it's overwhelmed me. Surely it's gonna overwhelm God.

And so recognition of the one that I'm talking to is so important in prayer. We are told in Hebrews, "For he that cometh unto God must believe that he is"(Hebrews 11:6). That he is what? That he is the eternal God who sees as Jesus said, who knows as Jesus said, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all I ask of God.

Now, "Hallowed it be thy name" is actually a petition. It's praying that God's name be revered and held in high esteem or hallowed by men.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Mat 6:10).

Two more petitions, but the first three petitions all relate to God. They do not relate to me. In prayer, my primary thrust in prayer should be that desire to get God's will accomplished. It is wrong to think of prayer as an agency by which I can get my wishes fulfilled. God never intended prayer to be a means by which my wishes can be granted. God intended prayer as a means whereby I might work in cooperation with him in getting his will done on this rebellious planet earth. And true prayer begins with God. The purpose and the plan of God and prayer is never intended as changing the purposes of God.

I believe that every right thing that I have ever prayed for and received, God had already purposed and planned to give it to me before I ever prayed. You say then why pray? Because God has made me a free moral agent. God has given me the capacity of choice and God honors my choice and will not violate my free will. God will only do for me what I am willing for Him to do for me and what I allow Him to do for me. Therefore, prayer is opening the door to God to do the things for me that he was planning and wanting to do all the while but would not do against my will.

Jesus said to his disciples in John the fifteenth chapter "Now you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should be my disciples and that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, he may [not shall] he may give it to you." (John 15:16) God wants to give it to you, God wants to do for you but He will not cross or violate your free will which he gave to you. But prayer opens the door then for God to do for you what he's been wanting to do the whole time but will not violate or cross your will to do it.

So prayer begins with God, the purposes of God. And the real thrust of prayer is not my will be done --and this is the fallacy of these teachers today who have become so popular on television and in the full gospel circle. And that's the tragedy of the full gospel circles is

the lack of theological depth. The people are so shallow they are chasing after every new wind of doctrine. It's like cunning of men who are going around with some new concept and everybody begins to traipse after them. And now it's the old, you know, thing that prayer is you know, your grabbing the scepter and ruling the world. You demand that God do it, you know, and you insist and you press and you pray and you believe and God's gotta do whatever you ask him to do. Not so.

God is no little genie that has to fulfill your wishes. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe and in control of the universe. And let me say that I thank God for all of my unanswered prayers. I would've had this world in a big mess had God answered all my prayers because I was praying about things about which I really did not fully understand because I could only see partially. And I was sure that I had full knowledge but only had partial knowledge. And I was praying according to my partial knowledge and when I got full knowledge I said, "Whoa, thank God he didn't answer that one. Boy what a mess I'd have been in" you know. Let God be sovereign, let God be God. Honor him as God and realize that the real thrust of prayer is not to fulfill my wishes but is to get his will done; "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Yes I do have needs and yes it is proper and right that I petition God for my own needs. And so, we have these petitions that deal with our own needs.

Give us this day our daily bread (Mat 6:11).

Those provisions that are so essential for life and the maintenance of life.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Mat 6:12).

And forgiveness is such an important thing. Notice, the first one deals with the present. It's my present needs, give us this day. The second one deals with the past, the forgiveness. That's one of the things that I've done wrong up to this moment. Forgive us our debts, that deals with past; and then

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Mat 6:13):

That's in the future. God, take over the reigns and guide my life through the future. So in these petitions they deal with the past, the present the future. They deal with my provisions, with my forgiveness, with my guidance and with my deliverance, these personal petitions. And those are the basic issues that I need to come to God for concerning my own personal life; the provisions, the forgiveness and the guidance and deliverance.

But then prayer goes back to God.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen (Mat 6:13).

Now, prayer actually takes three forms. Prayer is worship. Prayer is just that awareness and awe of the greatness and the glory of God. And this is an important part of prayer, just that worshipping the Lord for what he is. Not asking him for anything but just that worshipping God as I am aware and conscience of his greatness and of his glory and his power. It's that sense that you feel when you look up into a desert sky. Oh God is so great. Oh he's so vast. And just that awareness and consciousness and awe of that greatness of God. It's that sense that you get when you look at a beautiful flower and oh, He's so beautiful in his creative designs. It's that awe you get when you see a child born. Oh, he's so wise in his design of the life forms. Worship. But prayer is also a petition. In a narrow sense, the asking of God for my own needs. But in its third form, prayer is intercession. Where I am seeking then and petitioning God for the needs of the lost world around me.

And all three of these are brought forth in this model prayer for Jesus, "My kingdom come, My will be done on earth as it is in heaven" intercession for the kingdom. "Give us this day our daily bread" a petition for my own need. "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever" that awe, the wonder and the glory and the greatness of God; the worship. Notice prayer begins with worship, ends with worship. Now we usually give petition first and then we move into intercession, but in the model prayer we have intercession first and then it moves into petition. I don't think the order is important but I think that all three forms should be followed when we pray. I think that we should spend time worshipping God. I think that we should spend time in intercessory prayer, and I think that we should spend time in the petitioning of God for our own individual needs.

Now it is interesting that in these various petitions that we make, that the petitions for forgiveness is predicated upon our forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" (Mat 6:12). And immediately there comes the question, is this then works? And does my forgiving another depend upon or does God forgiving me depend upon my forgiving another? And if so, then is forgiveness dependent upon works? And so you have a knotty theological problem. What does Jesus say?

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Mat 6:14-15).

Now, do you want me to change that? You want me to be responsible for changing the words of Jesus? You say, "But I don't understand". Wait a minute, he didn't call you to understand, he just called you to believe. And so I believe that it's very vital that we understand the importance of forgiveness and that we are to forgive not as a matter of mathematics as Peter thought. "Lord, how often shall I forgive my brother the same offense? Seven times?" and I'm sure that Peter thought he was growing in grace when he suggested seven times, that he can actually conceive of forgiving a guy the same thing for seven times. And Jesus said, "No Peter. Seventy times seven"(Mat 18:21-22). Four hundred and ninety, aye, aye, aye Lord.

Now, forgiveness is not a matter of mathematics. Jesus figured he'd lose count before he got to four hundred and ninety and realize that forgiveness is just a matter of the spirit of the child of God. Having been forgiven so much, it is incumbent upon me to forgive. And Jesus gave an interesting illustration one time in which he uses, as he so often did, the ludicrous to illustrate his point.

There was a certain man who owed his master sixteen million dollars. And the master called him in and said, "Well you're time is up on this loan, pay me what you owe me" and this fella said, "Oh, I just don't have it to pay. I can't do it right now. Give me a little more time". The master said, "Oh forget it, just cancel the debt" and he crossed out his sixteen million-dollar debt. This servant went out and got a fellow servant that owed him twenty-five bucks and he took him by the throat and said, "All right, you pay me what you owe me". The guy said, "Oh my wife's been sick and I've had to pay the doctor bills. I don't have the money right now but just give me a little time and I'll pay ya". "Oh no, you've had all the time you're gonna get". And he calls you know, the sheriff and he gets thrown in the debtors prison.

Now the Lord of that servant heard what he did and he called him in and he said, "Um, how much did you owe me?" and he said, "sixteen million dollars". He said, "Did I not forgive your debt?" "Yup." "How is it then that I hear that you've had a fellow servant thrown into the debtors prison for a twenty-five dollar debt?" And he called the sheriff and he said, "Throw him in until he's paid the uttermost farthing" every last half penny. (Mat 18:23-34)

And then again Jesus emphasized the fact that you have been forgiven so much by God, who are you to hold a debt against your brother? So having been forgiven we forget, and if we forgive then we are forgiven. If we don't forgive, Jesus said, we are not forgiven. I have no intention of modifying the statement of Jesus Christ. I just intend to follow it and to be forgiving and to forgive. God help me, that's against my nature. My own nature wants to get even. My own nature wants everything that's coming. My own nature just doesn't want to forgive.

Someone has taken a key and scratched a whole side of my car and I don't want to forgive that person, whoever they are. Someone took, stole two suits out of my car and they were dirty. I didn't even take them to the cleaners yet. And what they can do with a suit my size, I don't know but anyhow they ripped them off. I had them in the car ready to take them to the cleaners and I don't know who did it. Yet, you see, my own nature just doesn't want to forgive it. I'd like to get a hold of that person that scratched that side with a key. And yet thank God he's put in my heart that spirit of, oh well, it's all gonna burn, you know.

And there is a certain price that you've got to pay for people knowing you. And the more people know you, the more people hate you. You know percentage wise, there's a percentage of people are gonna hate you. And so the more exposure you have to people, the more enemies you're gonna create. And so I suppose someone saw the license "Calvary" and realized my car and said, "Awe you know, we'll fix him". Poor person, you know, that they would have that kind of hatred and bitterness that they would do malicious kinds of damage like that but, I've got to forgive. I can't, I can't let that bother me. I can't just let that, you know, boil inside because you know what it'll do? If I am just thinking of this and musing on this and just getting angrier on this and "boy uh oh" you know and this.

I have certain little glands that start producing chemicals that'll start eating me up inside, start destroying me inwardly. It's important, Jesus knew that it was important that we forgive, that we not be bitter, that we not hold these feelings of bitterness or animosity or anger within because Jesus knew the chemical system inside. And he knows the chemicals, the destructive chemicals that are created by my glands when I have these thoughts of bitterness or anger or revenge or whatever.

And so it's for your own good that you forgive that you're not holding in your mind some evil intent against someone who did you wrong way back when. It's tragic that many people have just destroyed themselves physically over unforgiving spirits, over bitterness that they have held. So forgive.

Now the third righteous action was that of fasting. And again, a right way and a wrong way.

Don't be as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head, wash your face; that you appear not unto men to fast, but unto your Father which is in secret: and your Father, which sees in secret, shall reward you openly (Mat 6:16-18).

So again, don't draw attention to yourself or don't be doing it in such a way that you are receiving from man that awe and wonder because you are so spiritual because you fast. It used to be in the earlier days of my ministry that I fasted quite often. Obviously I don't fast much anymore.

But in those early days of the ministry, many times I'd be fasting and I'd go on my pastoral calls and some sweet lady would offer me a piece of homemade cake, you know. And I was fasting you know, for the last couple of days and what are ya gonna do? Well, thank you but I'm fasting. No, I'd just break the fast and eat the cake. Because I figure, hey, if you go ahead and just say, oh no I can't eat that I'm fasting, then you have your reward anyhow. And I wasn't really looking for the reward of man. I was wanting, you know, to receive the reward from God. And so offered something to eat, if I could get out of it I would, but you know, when they bake a cake you can't really get out of it. They want their reward, oh this cake is delicious, you know.

Now Jesus moves into a different realm in this sermon as he talks to us concerning our treasures. And basically negatively,

Don't lay up for yourself treasures upon earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal (Mat 6:19):

A few years ago there was a great, um, move by many people to buy gold and silver. And they created, through their buying, a demand, an artificial price. Because of inflation, they began to purchase the gold and silver as a hedge against inflation. And all of these men who are writing these McKeeber letters and all were encouraging the people to buy the gold and silver as a hedge against inflation. And they were glad to take the worthless dollars that these people had and to sell them gold and silver in exchange for their worthless dollars, or their dollars that would soon be worthless. And they were so magnanimous.

I was always a little suspicious of why they would take my worthless dollars and give me gold instead. If gold was going to be so valuable and the dollars weren't going to be any good, why would they then be so nice to me as to take my worthless dollars for their good gold? Yet they were, however, I didn't buy any. Because in James it said, "Go to now ye rich, weep and howl!" talking about the last days "for the misery that has come upon you. Because you've laid up your gold and silver for the last days" (James 5:1,3). But now your gold and silver is corrupted; it's not worth anything.

Boy, if O'Hunt had only read that. How he wept and howled when the silver market broke and he lost billions of dollars on the future that he had purchased in silver. If he had only read James instead of McKeeber, he could have spared himself a lot of misery. And now silver's five dollars an ounce again and gold is down around three hundred dollars. And so you watch all of your value dissipating. Gold that was eight hundred dollars an ounce, now three hundred dollars an ounce. Oh, oh, how I feel sorry for those who bought gold at eight hundred bucks an ounce. Hang on to it, gold will come back. No.

The Lord says hey, don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth. The value of gold is apt to depreciate, silver is apt to depreciate; moth and rust can corrupt it, thieves can break through and steal.

But lay up for yourself treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Mat 6:20):

Now, he has a reason behind this. Why should you be laying up treasures in heaven instead of here upon the earth? The whole reason is this,

Wherever your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Mat 6:21).

And if you've laid up your treasures upon earth then your heart is going to be in the material things of this world. If you laid up your treasures in heaven then your heart's gonna be in the things in heaven, the spiritual things. Now one is temporal, the other is eternal. And if you lay up your treasures on earth they, at best are temporal; you lay up your treasures in heaven, they are eternal.

Jesus gave a very interesting parable that is very difficult for people to understand and, um, we'll be getting to it when we get to Luke. It's about the fellow who was going to get fired from his job. And so he was the accountant for his boss and so he called the creditors in and he said, "How much do you owe my boss? A hundred barrels of oil. Here, let me change your ticket" and he wrote fifty barrels. "How much do you owe my boss?" you know "Ten measures of flour." "Here, let me change it." He made it five measures of flour. And he brought all of the debtors in and he halved their debts because he knew that in two weeks he's gonna be out of a job.

So, when he was out of a job he would be able to go around and say, "Hey, you remember that bill where I cut it in half? You know, I'm sort of needing a little bit". And these people would be obligated to him because of what he had done. Now Jesus said, "The lord of that servant commended the servant, not for his dishonesty but for his wisdom saying that "the children of this generation are wiser than the children of light"(Luke 16:1-8).

You see he was using his present position to establish his future. Jesus is telling you pretty much the same thing. Use the present to establish the future. Take opportunities of the present because you cannot add anything to your spiritual account once you die. I mean, the treasures that you lay up in heaven, that which you are doing now, once you die then you can't say "Oh Lord but I want to leave it all to you." Everything I have belongs to the Lord, but he lets me use it, you know. And I use it all and he doesn't get anything left.

No, the Lord says, "lay up" take advantage now. "Lay up for your treasures in, yourself treasures in heaven." And the reason is, "where your treasure is there your heart will be also".

The light of the body is the eye: if your eye is single [single purposed], the whole body is full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Now if the light is in you and is dark [oh man,] then how great is your darkness! And no man can serve two masters: either he'll hate the one, and love the other; else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (Mat 6:22-24).

So this all has to do with laying up treasures. If mammon is your, where your heart is, if that is the thing that has mastered your life, if you are mastered by your possessions, you cannot then be a servant of God also. You cannot serve God and mammon. You cannot be mastered by two masters. You begin to neglect the one along the line; you'll hold the one and hate the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Man have tried to do it but you can't do it.

Now, the Lord then talks to us about worrying. Don't worry, take no thought (Mat 6:25) The idea is take no anxious thought or don't be worried. about your life, what you're going to eat, what you're going to drink; or don't worry about your body, what you are going to put on. For your life is more than meat, and your body is more than clothes (Mat 6:25)

First of all,

Behold the fowls of the air: because they do not sow, nor do they reap, nor do they gather into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much better than they? (Mat 6:26)

So he is telling us, "Don't worry. Look at the birds. They don't sow, they don't reap nor do they gather in the barns". Now the Lord isn't actually advocating then that we're not to plant and we're not to harvest, we're not to work, that is not at all what he is saying. Nor are we to be totally passive as far as the needs; our needs being fulfilled or supplied. You don't see a little bird standing on top of a telephone pole with its mouth open waiting for the worm to fly in. He is active. He does go down and he pecks on the ground and he finds the worm and he eats it. He isn't totally passive and the Lord isn't teaching us a total passivity here. You know, you can just cruise, lay back, do nothing, God will take care of you. That's not scriptural.

Paul said if you don't work you shouldn't eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). And the Lord has given us the strength and the ability to work and like my little granddaughter says, "God gave me a brain and he wants me to use it". And God's given us the capacity and he wants us to use them. But don't worry, don't be fretting. Don't say, "Oh, what are we gonna do? How are we gonna pay? What are we gonna do?" you know. And don't be worried about these things because your Father knows that you have need of these things and your Father sees that the birds are taken care of .

Now, if your Father sees that the birds are taken care of he'll surely see that you're taken care of because he's your Father. And you're more important to him than birds. And so if your Father makes sure the birds are fed, you can be sure your Father will see that you are fed. So don't worry about that.

Now, which of you by worrying can add one cubit [which is about eighteen inches] to his height? (Mat 6:27)

Oh, I'm so worried about being a shorty. Oh, you know, I wish I were tall, oh. And which of you by just worrying about it and sitting there wishing can add eighteen inches to your height? Can't do it. Worry doesn't you know, worry -- the Lord's just saying hey, worry really doesn't have any value. Just there's no value in worry. Why worry?

And why do you take thought [or why are you worried] about your clothes? (Mat 6:28)

Oh, is my wife here?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin (Mat 6:28):

Now you get the idea of the spindle and the ladies, of course, had to make their own thread. They made their own cloth. Jesus said, "Look at the lilies of the field, they don't toil, they don't sit at the spindle".

Yet, even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these (Mat 6:29).

I mean, Solomon with all of his wealth and all of his glory wasn't dressed as beautifully as that lily out there in the field.

Now, if God so clothes the grass of the field, which exists today, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe ye, O ye of little faith? (Mat 6:30)

Now, you see Jesus is now bringing in the contrast of worrying to faith. If you really have faith you will not worry. If you worry it is an indication that you're lacking faith. Faith and worry are mutually exclusive. "O ye of little faith".

God clothes that beautiful grass of the field which today exists and tomorrow will be cast in the oven, burned. How much more will he take care of and see that you are clothed? And incidentally, I made a joke about my wife but I thank God those are the things that Kay has come to a place with Christ a long time ago. And I thank God for her and for the spiritual example that she is to me and to the ladies in the church, as one who is not overly concerned at all with dress or with anything else. We live very simple lives and I thank God that He has given me such a partner who sees as I see, the simple life that the Lord would have us to live in Christ Jesus. And I, I kid her. I use her just to get a laugh but that's probably not right, but God forgive me. I'm sorry. Otherwise she'll say to me "Hmm, you say that I do this, then I'm gonna go ahead and do it," you know.

Therefore take no anxious thought [or don't be worried], saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, What shall we wear? (For after all of these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things (Mat 6:31-32).

Your Father knows you need these things. Don't worry about them, your Father knows you need them. And thus, that is not to be our primary concern. We're not to be seeking those things as the paramount issues in life. But what are we to be seeking?

But seek ye first (Mat 6:33)

Now the Gentiles seek those things. Oh, the fashion of this world. The word "Gentiles" is also translated "heathen"; the heathen are all seeking. I mean, look at the eateries today, the gourmets, all of the emphasis of the magazines upon food, upon clothes. It's amazing the interest that the heathen world has in these things.

But you, seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness (Mat 6:33);

Priority, oh how important. Put first things first and God will take care of the rest. If you will seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;

**all these other things will be added (Mat 6:33)**

**God will take care of those. You don't have to worry about those. All you have to do is seek God first and foremost in your life. The kingdom of God, his righteousness, and God will take care of everything else.**

**Now, if you look at our lives and if you look at the time that we spend and are concerned in purchasing the clothes, in purchasing the food, in getting the money to purchase clothes and the food and these things; you'll find that so much of our time is absorbed because we are exposed constantly to the pressures of Madison Avenue to be conscience of the style, the width of our lapel, or the width of our ties or whatever, because you know, this is what's in style, this is what is vogue. And so we get rid of clothes before they are really worn out because they're no longer in style.**

**And we have become the victims of this whole commercial system. And we've become lazy in our food preparation and so we pay a dollar and twenty-five cents to get a loaf of bread when if you want to do just a little bit of work you can by raw wheat for six and a half cents a pound and you can grind it and you can make a healthy loaf of bread for nineteen cents. But oh, you know, that takes a little extra effort.**

**But don't worry about these things basically, and that's what the Lord's saying. Don't let this be the paramount issue. Don't let these things be the primary things of your life. Let the primary thing be the kingdom of God and his righteousness and God'll take care of all these other things. You don't have to worry about them. The Lord knows that you need these things. Again, remember Jesus said, "When you pray don't think that you have to pray a long time" God knows what you need before you ever ask him and the Lord knows that you need these things.**

**Therefore don't worry about tomorrow (Mat 6:34):**

**And isn't that interesting that most of our worry is about tomorrow. Our worry is always more about tomorrow than it is about today. I'm in today and here I am and I ate and you know I've got clothes and I, I don't worry so much about today but what am I gonna do tomorrow? What am I gonna do when that bill comes due next week? And it's usually about the future that our worry is generated.**

**But the Lord said,**

**Don't worry about tomorrow: for tomorrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof (Mat 6:34).**

**I'm reminded of the exhortation from James in his epistle when he said, "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves"(James 1:22).**

**Now as we finish the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says much the same thing as he likens those who hear his words and do them. They're liken to a wise man who when he built his house, first of all, dug deep and laid his foundation on the rock. Contrasted with the foolish man who hears the words but doesn't do them. And he's like the man who just builds his house upon the sand.**

**And so may the Lord help us as we look at this great manifesto that was laid out for us by Jesus Christ, that we won't be just hearers of the word say, oh my isn't that marvelous? Oh yes, that's so true. Oh yes, I really shouldn't be worried about these things. Oh yes, I should lay up treasures in heaven. Oh yes, you know, and I agree to it and I say, oh yes, yes, yes. But I don't do it. I'm foolish. I'm building on the sand. I'm building a superstructure that's gonna collapse in the storm. It's important that I be a doer of the Word and not hearer only.**

**So may God help each of us as we go out this week that, rather than admiring the Sermon on the Mount that we might, in reality, live the Sermon on the Mount. That these principles might become realities in our own lives and that we might abide by these words of Jesus Christ. That we might indeed be the children of the Father and thus the recipients of all of those blessings and joys and goodness that the Father bestows upon his children.**

**The Lord bless you and watch, guard, and keep you;**

**The Lord make His face to shine upon and enlighten you and be gracious to you;**

**The Lord lift up His {approving} countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.**

**Numbers 6:24-26**

**Matthew 8:1-34 (AMP)**

1 WHEN JESUS came down from the mountain, great throngs followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came up to Him and, prostrating himself, worshiped Him, saying, Lord, if You are willing, You are able to cleanse me by curing me. 3 And He reached out His hand and touched him, saying, I am willing; be cleansed by being cured. And instantly his leprosy was cured and cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, See that you tell nothing about this to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony [to your healing] and as an evidence to the people. 5 As Jesus went into Capernaum, a centurion came up to Him, begging Him, 6 And saying, Lord, my servant boy is lying at the house paralyzed and distressed with intense pains. 7 And Jesus said to him, I will come and restore him. 8 But the centurion replied to Him, Lord, I am not worthy or fit to have You come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant boy will be cured. 9 For I also am a man subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my slave, Do this, and he does it. 10 When Jesus heard him, He marveled and said to those who followed Him [who adhered steadfastly to Him, conforming to His example in living and, if need be, in dying also], I tell you truly, I have not found so much faith as this with anyone, even in Israel. 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west, and will sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 While the sons and heirs of the kingdom will be driven out into the darkness outside, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth. 13 Then to the centurion Jesus said, Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed. And the servant boy was restored to health at that very moment. 14 And when Jesus went into Peter's house, He saw his mother-in-law lying ill with a fever. 15 He touched her hand and the fever left her; and she got up and began waiting on Him. 16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were under the power of demons, and He drove out the spirits with a word and restored to health all who were sick. 17 And thus He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, He Himself took [in order to carry away] our weaknesses and infirmities and bore away our diseases. 18 Now Jesus, when He saw the great throngs around Him, gave orders to cross to the other side [of the lake]. 19 And a scribe came up and said to Him, Master, I will accompany You wherever You go. 20 And Jesus replied to him, Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have lodging places, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. 21 Another of the disciples said to Him, Lord, let me first go and bury [care for till death] my father. 22 But Jesus said to him, Follow Me, and leave the dead [in sin] to bury their own dead. 23 And after He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. 24 And suddenly, behold, there arose a violent storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered up by the waves; but He was sleeping. 25 And they went and awakened Him, saying, Lord, rescue and preserve us! We are perishing! 26 And He said to them, Why are you timid and afraid, O you of little faith? Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great and wonderful calm (a perfect peaceableness). 27 And the men were stunned with bewildered wonder and marveled, saying, What kind of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him! 28 And when He arrived at the other side in the country of the Gadarenes, two men under the control of demons went to meet Him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce and savage that no one was able to pass that way. 29 And behold, they shrieked and screamed, What have You to do with us, Jesus, Son of God? Have You come to torment us before the appointed time? 30 Now at some distance from there a drove of many hogs was grazing. 31 And the demons begged Him, If You drive us out, send us into the drove of hogs. 32 And He said to them, Begone! So they came out and went into the hogs, and behold, the whole drove rushed down the steep bank into the sea and died in the water. 33 The herdsmen fled and went into the town and reported everything, including what had happened to the men under the power of demons. 34 And behold, the whole town went out to meet Jesus; and as soon as they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their locality.

Let's turn to Matthew's gospel chapter eight. The fifth chapter of Matthew begins "And seeing the multitude, he went into a mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying," (Matthew 5:1-2). And so we have the great Sermon on the Mount in Matthew five, six and seven.

So in chapter eight it begins, And when he would come down from the mountain (Mat 8:1), And so having proclaimed the kingdom of God and those conditions of the kingdom, those that will dwell within the kingdom, having now come down from the mountain, He begins to show the activities of the kingdom of God, what it will be like during the kingdom age.

We read in Isaiah chapter thirty-five concerning the kingdom age, and it declares how that the deaf will hear, the dumb will be singing praises, the blind will behold the glory of the Lord and the lame shall leap for joy. The whole kingdom is a kingdom of a restored age. As you look around the world today you cannot see God's divine intention, when God created the world. When you look at man around you today, you do not see God's intent when he said "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness"(Genesis 1:26) because we look around at a fallen world and we see fallen man and we cannot understand God's original intent as we look at the world today. And that's why many people are confused concerning God.

How can a God of love allow the things to happen that are happening in our world today, you see. But in reality the world that you see is the world that is in rebellion against God's law, a rebellion against the kingdom of God, and it is a world that said "We will not have this man to rule over us". You see a world of men who thought that they knew better than God how to govern themselves. And we're looking now at the tragic byproducts of man's rejecting God's reign over their lives. But Jesus, when he came declared again the glorious aspects of the kingdom, and now He begins to demonstrate a foretaste of what it will be in the kingdom.

So when he was come down from the mountain, again the multitudes joined (Mat 8:1). When He went to the mountain it was his disciples that came to Him and "He opened his mouth and He taught them saying". The Sermon on the Mount was not for the multitudes, it was for that infinite few; it was for the disciples. There is no broad worldly application at the present time to the Sermon on the Mount; there will be in the kingdom age. But there is definite application among His who already are citizens of His kingdom. In other words, there's an application to us because we are a part of His kingdom and we have already bowed our knee to the King.

But once again having come from the mountain those multitudes again surround Him and follow Him.

And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him (Mat 8:2),

Now leprosy was a horrible, loathsome disease in those days. At that time there was absolutely no cure for leprosy. We now have medicine by which leprosy can be arrested; it cannot yet be cured but it can be arrested. They call it now Hansen's disease, in order to get away from the stigma of leprosy. But the word "leprosy" still sort of creates a revulsion, sort of, in our minds and, you know, ostracize and leprosy in almost a horror and a fear. So they no longer call it leprosy but Hansen's disease, naming it after Dr. Hansen who was first able to isolate the bacillus of leprosy.

So, um, this man was a man who had been ostracized from society. A leper had to cry out "Unclean! Unclean!" to cause people not to approach him too closely. If you were approaching a leper from say, a downwind position when you came within a hundred and fifty feet of him, he had to start crying out "unclean, unclean" so that you would not come any closer except at your own risk. If you were coming from an upwind position, then at three hundred feet he'd have to start crying to you "unclean, unclean" or other way around, but it was a man that was ostracized from society because of this disease.

He came and worshipped Jesus, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean (Mat 8:2).

Somehow recognizing the power of the King, "if You will, You can make me clean".

And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, and said, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy left him (Mat 8:3).

Now here's an interesting thing; number one, there are those who complain that Jesus violated the law for it was unlawful to touch a leper. And that is true. If you touched a leper you were ceremonially unclean. You could not then come into the temple of God. It would be like having touched a dead carcass until you had, first of all, gone through the ceremonial baths and so forth. But it wasn't you know, it wasn't that horrible in a violation of the law, but the thing is when Jesus touched him he was no longer a leper. So there is a matter of argument there too.

But the interesting thing to me is "if You will" and the response of Jesus was "I will". Now there are some people today who object to our praying "Lord, if You will, thy will be done". I find no problem praying that at all. In fact, I do believe that we make a tragic mistake in assuming or presuming to always know what the will of God is. And to presume that God does will healing in every case is not really scriptural. Evidently with Paul the apostle God did not will healing concerning that thorn in the flesh. A minister of Satan was buffeting him. For three times Paul prayed concerning that and the Lord finally said, "Paul, my grace is sufficient for you"(2 Corinthians 12:9).

And thus, when I come to God concerning my own physical needs I do not see it as a lack of faith. I see it only as great wisdom and tremendous faith and complete commitment of myself to God when I say "Lord, your will be done". I have a difficult time with people who would, who would argue with that or, or would put that down. I'm not at all afraid of God's will. In fact, I am afraid of something, anything other than God's will for me. I really don't want to step out of the will of God. And Paul the apostle said, My desire is that Christ should be glorified in body whether by life or by death. I don't care. My main concern is Christ be glorified.

Now, I do believe that perhaps in most or majority of the cases the Lord will answer, "I will; be thou clean" but he may not and I must be willing to accept whatever He says, having committed myself completely in his hands. If He says, "I will; be thou clean" praise the Lord. If He says, "Well, this is for God's glory that you might just really develop in your own walk and relationship with God, coming to a total trust in Him.

There are areas that I want to reveal to you and glories that I want to reveal to you, and glories that I want to bring into your life and let you be exalted above measure because of this glory that I'm gonna bestow upon you. It's, it's really necessary that you experience this weakness of your flesh to be constantly reminded of your human nature because I'm gonna bring you into a dimension and into a realm that is just, you know, so far beyond.

I say well, praise the Lord. Thy will be done, you know. And I find no problem with that at all. But to the leper Jesus said, "I will; be thou clean". And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Now Jesus commands him to,

tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them (Mat 8:4).

Now, that is interesting to me that even in the law of Moses there was provision for the curing of an incurable disease. And in the law of Moses it declares, "Now this is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing" (Leviticus 14:2). So God made provision in the law for him to do a work that is contrary to nature; that is the healing of leprosy. And so even in the law, God made provision for the leper in the day of his cleansing for the miraculous work of God in his life.

And in the day of his cleansing he was to come and to bring this dove, two of them actually. And one was to be killed, the blood put in a basin and the other one dipped in the blood and then turned loose and it was to fly off. And the leper would go through this ceremony of cleansing, but it's a beautiful ceremony of just that, you know, whole new freedom in life that you have when God has worked his miraculous power in your life.

So the Lord said go ahead and follow the law. Go to the priest and go on through the right. Let the priest examine you, set you in this house for seven days, examine you again and then proclaim you clean and then bring the offering and all. And the Lord told him just go ahead and fulfill the law.

And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum (Mat 8:5),

Now Capernaum is a little later on called His city. Jesus headquartered in Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. And uh, I can understand why, what a beautiful place. Oh, I love Capernaum just from an aesthetic, you know. I love water and I love blue skies and the whole thing and what, you know. It's just a pretty place. And I can understand why Jesus headquartered there in Capernaum.

He was entered in Capernaum,

and there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him (Mat 8:5),

Now a centurion was a Roman soldier. The first one that Jesus ministered to was a leper, a man who was outside of society, ostracized because of his disease. The second one he ministers to is a Gentile, one who is outside of the covenant to Israel. A Roman centurion who came unto him, begging him,

saying, Lord, my servant lies at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion answered and said, O Lord, I'm not worthy that you should come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed (Mat 8:6-8).

He probably figured if he took the Lord home his wife would kill him, you know. She hadn't had a chance to get the house ready. Uh, so no Lord, don't come, just you know, say the word and my servant will be healed. But notice now his understanding of authority.

I also,

for I am a man under authority, [let's see, having under] having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he come; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it (Mat 8:9).

I understand what authority is about, Lord. I am a man under authority. I am under authority and I have soldiers under me. I understand authority; there's a chain of command in authority. I am under authority, yet I have men under me. No man can rule over man rightly who is not himself ruled. You see, if you get a man who does not have that sense of "I am under authority", be he the President of the United States, if you do not have a man who has that concept "I am under authority," then you've got a tragic situation and you'll have tyranny. But when I realize that though I have authority I am still under authority, I've got to be under that authority of God. No man can really rule who is not under authority and understands the principles of authority.

And so I am under authority but I have soldiers who are under me and understand what it's all about. I can say hey, go, and he goes; come, and he comes. Lord, I know that you have authority and all you have to do is speak the word and my servant will be healed. You don't have to come to my house. I'm not really worthy of that. You just speak the word.

And when Jesus heard that, he marvelled, and said unto them that followed, I tell you the truth, I have not found such great faith, no not in Israel (Mat 8:10).

I've never met an Israelite that as much -- here's a fellow coming from the Gentile kingdom, one who is coming from the Roman Empire, he's outside of the covenant of Israel, but here he is demonstrating tremendous faith in Jesus Christ. Hey, Lord, don't have to come, just speak the word. I know what authority is about. You can just speak the word. And Jesus went on then to predict the glorious work of God's spirit among the Gentiles.

And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven (Mat 8:11).

The east and the west, referring to the Gentile nations. Many will come from out of the Gentiles, sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now it's interesting that when I think about heaven, I usually think of Paul and John and more of the New Testament characters. I never really thought too much of sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I'm sure that it will be a thrill indeed, but there are so many. I thought about David, that's gonna be a great one to get together with. Elijah and Elisha, I like those characters, Gideon. But the kingdom of heaven is gonna be comprised, Jesus said, of many Gentiles also.

Whereas the children of the kingdom [that is the Jews] will be cast out into outer darkness: and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mat 8:12).

Because of the Jew's rejection of Jesus Christ, the glorious good news of God will be carried to the Gentile world and many will come out of that Gentile world and will become a part of God's glorious kingdom, whereas the children of the kingdom, those natural seed of Abraham, because of their rejection of their Messiah, will not enter into the kingdom.

And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; as you have believed, so be it done unto you. And the servant was healed in that very hour [that time] (Mat 8:13).

Now the next miracle of Jesus was preformed upon a woman, who in that particular culture was not respected and esteemed as she is today. During those days if a woman was pregnant, when she would go into labor, everyone would gather at her home and they'd bring everything for a big party and a celebration. And when the midwife would come out and say, "It's a boy" they'd all start celebrating and have a big party and a great time, a celebration. If the midwife would come out and say, "It's a girl" they'd all pack up their stuff and go home.

The first one Jesus touches is a leper, the outcast of society. The second one is a Gentile, an outcast of the covenant. The third one is a woman who was looked down upon. You know Jesus never looked down on anyone, nor did he ever exclude anyone. The kingdom doesn't exclude. So when Jesus came into Peter's house, Peter's wife's mother was lying down, she had a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them (Mat 8:14-15). That is she fixed them something to eat; ministered to him in a physical way, food and, and waited on Him. And when the evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and he healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias [Isaiah] the prophet, when he said, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our weaknesses (Mat 8:16-17).

In the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, as he is prophesying concerning God's servant the Messiah he said, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

Now, there are those Bible scholars today who want to make that apply only to spiritual healing, but really the finest commentary you have on the Old Testament is not always those who declare themselves to be Bible Scholars today. The finest commentary you have on the Old Testament is the inspired New Testament. And here Matthew, writing by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares that the physical healing upon all of these people that were brought to Jesus as he was there in Peter's house in the evening, and as Jesus healed them all, he was doing that, that the prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled. So, Matthew extends the prophecy of Isaiah to include physical healing as well as spiritual healing.

When we partake of communion, Jesus, when he took the bread he broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me". The question arises, When was his body broken? And we know from the gospel that it was, the body wasn't broken. That is, the bones were not broken. For though the Jews had sought Pilot that they might break the legs of the prisoners to hasten their death that their bodies would not be hanging on the cross on the Sabbath day. When they came to Jesus, he'd already dismissed his spirit, he was already dead. And they marvelled that he was already dead and they did not break his legs in order that the scriptures might be fulfilled: Psalm twenty-two "Not a bone of Him shall be broken".

So, the prophecy was "not a bone was to be broken". In fact, as a type of a sacrificial lamb he could not have broken bones. So, he thrust the spear in the side of Jesus and there came forth blood and water. But yet Jesus said, "This is my body broken for you". He must have been referring to the scourging that He was to receive when they would lay upon his back thirty-nine stripes. It was a form of inquisition whereby they elicited the confessions of the prisoner.

You remember when Paul, there on the steps of the Antonio fortress, asked the captain if he could speak to the Jews that had been trying to kill him and he said go ahead. And Paul began to say "Hey fellows, I know exactly how you feel. I felt just like you one time. Man I was really, you know, bent on destroying this new sect of Christianity. And I was actually on my way down to Damascus to imprison those that called upon the name of the Lord, when suddenly there came a light from heaven and I was uh, you know, lying there on the ground. And I heard the Lord saying, "Hey, why do you persecute me? I'm gonna call you to the Gentiles".

And when Paul said that word "Gentiles", man, the Jews got upset. They started throwing dirt in the air, they started screaming and ranting and tearing their clothes and trying to mob Paul again. And the captain says, "Get him inside". He'd been talking to the people in the Hebrew tongue. The captain couldn't understand it and he said, "What did you say to those people that got them so upset?" He said, "Examine them by scourging. Find out what he said." Paul said, "Wait a minute. Is it lawful to scourge a Roman citizen who is not condemned?" He said, "Are you a Roman citizen?" He said, "You bet I am." The guy said, "I bought my citizenship. It cost me quite a bit of money. How did you become a citizen?" He said, "I was free born".

But, that was the policy of the Roman government. The third degree you might say. They lay upon the prisoner thirty-nine stripes upon his back in order to get him to confess his sins, his crimes, his guilt. But as a lamb before her shearers is done, so he open not his mouth but there his body was broken. Now it was not just some capricious act of man it was a part of God's divine plan. And so we must ask, Why would God allow his son to endure such torture and suffering? Isaiah tells us prophetically "with his stripes you are healed". Peter quoting Isaiah said, "By his stripes you were healed"(1Peter 2:24).

Now, as Paul is writing to the Corinthian church concerning the Lord's supper and their particular abuse of the Lord's supper, He said unto them that many of them were weak and sick because they did not understand the Lord's body. In other words, he is saying, you did not understand what the broken bread really symbolizes. "You are eating and drinking of the body of Christ unworthily. For this cause many of you are weak and sick because you don't understand the Lord's body" (I Corinthians 11:29). You don't really understand the full significance of the scourging that Jesus received where He bore our sufferings and our sickness. And so people are taking the broken bread not really fully understanding the Lord's body and thus not receiving the full benefits of the work of Jesus Christ for us. So, Matthew broadens that suffering of Christ to include the physical healing and relates it to physical healing, whereas so many today seek to narrow it and isolate it just to spiritual healing. I'm afraid that you do not have a solid, strong scriptural basis to try to just make it apply to spiritual healing only, the healing of sin and so forth. But there is also the application for the physical needs of the body. Now when Jesus saw the great multitudes that were about him, he gave a commandment to depart to the other side. And there was a certain scribe who came, and he said unto him, Master, I will follow you wherever you go (Mat 8:18-19).

He's getting ready to leave and go over to the other side of the lake. He said, I'll follow you wherever you go.

And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man doesn't have anywhere to lay his head (Mat 8:20).

In other words, he is saying to this fella that's coming up on an impulse, and there're a lot of people who impulsively say, "Oh, oh I wanna give my life to the Lord." The Lord says count the cost. Follow me wherever I go, just count the cost. "The foxes have their holes, the birds of the air have their nest but I don't have anyplace to lay my head", now count the cost. He's not saying, you know, don't follow me; he's just saying before you jump on board just consider the cost. Count the cost of discipleship.

Another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first (Mat 8:21)

Now we talked to you about the inconsistencies of speech last week as we were studying the subject of the Lordship of Jesus Christ when many will come saying, "Lord, Lord" remember that? How Peter said, "Not so Lord" and we said that was a perfect inconsistency of speech. Here again, an inconsistency of speech, "Lord, me first". Uh, it can't be that way. He's got to be first. "Lord, allow me first", nope, you've got the wrong idea of the kingdom.

to go and bury my father (Mat 8:21),

You say, "Oh, wait a minute. That's legitimate isn't it?"

Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead (Mat 8:22).

Put me first, you see. Now, the chances are as the fellow's father was in perfect health; this is a common term for procrastination. Hey I want to do it but I'm not ready yet, but one of these days, you know, allow me first to bury my father. Wait awhile until my dad dies, you know. And it's a term of procrastination. And they use that, even though the dad was in perfect health and probably had another twenty years, but one of these days I'm gonna get, you know, I'm gonna get on board. Just suffer me first, take a little time. The Lord is speaking against procrastination. The idea of putting Him first; "Follow me, let the dead bury their dead".

So when he had entered into the ship, and his disciples followed him. Behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with waves: but he was asleep (Mat 8:23-24).

Now this isn't the first time and the only experience of a tremendous storm that arose on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus got in this little boat. And up at that north end of the lake these common -- it is a common thing to have these storms, these squalls come up. Through the valley there, that comes from the area of Haifa, there is this, there is this, a valley that comes through there and you'll get these tremendous winds that will just come up suddenly. And I've watched the Sea of Galilee go from just a glassy calm; wow, what great water skiing, to a tremendous waves that will just -- waves can get nine, ten feet high there in the Sea of Galilee in these sudden squalls that'll arise as the wind comes whistling up the Chinnereth Valley there. And so this isn't the only occasion that this happened.

Now it would seem that Satan is perhaps behind the whole thing trying to destroy Jesus. There arose a great tempest in the sea, and so much the ship was covered with waves, but He was a sleep. And Jesus had a common practice of sleeping when he got on the boat.

And his disciples came unto him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And he said unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and he rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him! (Mat 8:25-27)

So Jesus showed his mastery over the elements. One of the other gospels in telling us this story, tells us that Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to Gennesaret". Now uh, that's probably why He rebuked him for having a little faith; that they were fearful they were gonna go under. He said, "Let's go over", when Jesus said let's go over, there's no way you can go under. So when they woke him up and said Lord, don't you care if we perish? He rebuked them, said, "Where's your faith?" Did you hear me say, Let's go over to Gennesaret? "Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?"

And so when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two that were possessed with devils (Mat 8:28),

The other gospels tell us of the one who was probably more prominent than the other.

And they were coming out of the tombs, and they were exceeding fierce, so that no man dared to pass by that way (Mat 8:28).

Incidentally, just recently the archeologist have discovered that city over there on the other side of Gennesaret And it's quite exciting that as they were building a new road to go up the Golan, they began to uncover this city. And so they actually moved the road up a little ways so that they could then go into their archeological exploration of this city. So now we can point with pretty much certainty the very cliff that the swine ran down into the sea because we have now discovered a city of Gennesaret over there on the other side.

And so these men possessed with devils, plural, were living there, in there, in the tombs.

And they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time? (Mat 8:29)

Number one, the demons possessing these men recognized who Jesus was and acknowledged who He was; "What have we to do with you, Jesus, thou Son of God?" You remember James, you say you believe God and you think that's something big. Hey the devils believe. And notice hear they are sort of fear and trembling in the presence of Jesus they said, "Are you come here to torment us before our time?"

Now they know that their time is coming, they're aware of that. They know that he has authority and power over them; they recognized that and it's important that we also recognize "greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world"(1John 4:4). We are in the spiritual battle but we need not to be fearful of the enemy because of that greater power of God's spirit resident within us.

And so there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine feeding (Mat 8:30).

Now that was an illegal occupation and industry in Israel. It was unlawful for them, according to the law of Moses to be raising swine, to have swine, to eat pork.

So the devils besought him, saying, If you cast us out, allow us to go away into the heard of swine. And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole heard of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and they perished in the waters (Mat 8:31-32).

There's only about one steep place that leads into the Sea of Galilee and it's a few miles away from the city of Gennesaret that has been discovered.

Now there are evil spirits that can take possession of human bodies and can control the motor functions of a human body. Jesus himself set free many people who were possessed by these evil entities, spirits. When He sent his disciples out, which we will get to, He gave them power to cast out these devils. When a person's body is invaded by one of these evil spirits, they often lose control of their own faculties and these evil spirits are able to actually speak right through that individual.

This is not something that is just superstition, and a part of a superstition of an ancient culture, but there are quite a few documented experiences of the activity of these types of spirits even today. There are, there is a book by Moody Press entitled "Demon Experiences in Many Lands" which is a compilation of the witness of missionaries from different parts of the world and experiences that they have had with these evil spirit entities.

Perhaps one of the most classic modern day experiences, that of the girl whose name was Clarissa who back in 1947, there in the Philippines had the unusual phenomenon of going into these fits where, when she would come out of them would have these bite marks all over her body. Places where it was impossible for her to bite herself; on the back of the shoulder, upon the back of her neck and all, and blood would be drawn. They put her in the Bellevue Prison there for her own protection. And the greatest psychiatrists of the Philippines were brought by the mayor of Manila to psychoanalyze and to find out what was going on. And they came up with, you know, no explanation and no help.

Finally they called for a couple of missionaries; Bob McAllister and Lester Sumrall. And Lester Sumrall has written a book entitled "Bitten by Demons" of the story of Clarissa. Actually Life Magazine got hold of the thing and did a special on it, showing pictures of her and all, of these bite marks on her. And it was quite an interesting thing to the world of psychology and all at that time. But nonetheless, through the ministry of Bob McAllister and Lester Sumrall the girl was delivered from these demons and Clarissa accepted Jesus Christ. And it's quite an interesting story; it's one that you don't want to read before you go to bed.

They recognized Jesus, they acknowledged his authority over them, they acknowledged their day is coming. It would appear that they do take some comfort in inhabiting a body that they do not like to be unembodied spirits, but they do like to take residence in a body. Now Jesus said when an evil spirit is cast out of a man it goes through wilderness places looking for a place to inhabit; a house to inhabit. And if it finds none, it'll come back to the house from which it was driven. And if it finds it all clean, swept and garnished, it'll go out and get seven others and say hey, got a neat place to live, you know, and bring them in. And thus the state of a person becomes worse than his first.

Um, it's an area that I don't relish, I don't like. I keep as far away from it as I can, but there are times when we have had to exorcise these evil spirits. And it's a very difficult and uncomfortable ministry of which I really have no real liking at all.

So they begged Jesus permission to go into these swine. And when they had entered the herd of swine, they ran down this steep place and perished in the waters.

So that those that were keeping the swine fled, and they went their way to the city, and they told everything, that was befallen to those men that were possessed by these devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus (Mat 8:33-34):

To hear Him? To receive Him? No.

When they saw him, they begged him that he would leave their coast (Mat 8:34).

Hey, you're upsetting our industry. You just wiped out our profit. Get out of here. They were more interested in their own profit than they were the sad welfare of these two men. But it's a sad thing that people would ask the Lord to depart, but such is often the case today. You upset my plans. (Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

( Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 1399-1402)

Chapel Flock PO Box 161102 Wichita, KS 67216 (316) 243-1438

(If you wish to be removed from the mailing list e-mail at: chapel-flock@sbcglobal.net)