



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[Press On-Mandisa](#)

[Stronger-Mandisa](#)

[What Scars Are For-Mandisa](#)

Prayer

Lord, it is true that You have worked so many miracles in my life. If I were to try to recount all the times You have saved me, delivered me, rescued me, gotten me out of trouble, put me on a right path, and blessed me when I didn't deserve it, I wouldn't have enough time to recite them all! So how could I ever question that You would be with me right now in my present challenge? Of course You are with me and will help me. Forgive me for being so hardhearted as to forget what You have already done for me. And I thank You right now that You are going to help me this time too, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Radio Stations

[KWVE ...Calvary Chapel](#)

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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.

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Matthew 13:1-58 (AMP) 1 THAT SAME day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting beside the sea. 2 But such great crowds gathered about Him that He got into a boat and remained sitting there, while all the throng stood on the shore. 3 And He told them many things in parables (stories by way of illustration and comparison), saying, A sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the roadside, and the birds came and ate them up. 5 Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they had not much soil; and at once they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. 6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they dried up and withered away. 7 Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them out. 8 Other seeds fell on good soil, and yielded grain—some a hundred times as much as was sown, some sixty times as much, and some thirty. 9 He who has ears [to hear], let him be listening and let him consider and perceive and comprehend by hearing. 10 Then the disciples came to Him and said, Why do You speak to them in parables? 11 And He replied to them, To you it has been given to know the secrets and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has [spiritual knowledge], to him will more be given and he will be furnished richly so that he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. 13 This is the reason that I speak to them in parables: because having the power of seeing, they do not see; and having the power of hearing, they do not hear, nor do they grasp and understand. 14 In them indeed is the process of fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, which says: You shall indeed hear and hear but never grasp and understand; and you shall indeed look and look but never see and perceive. 15 For this nation's heart has grown gross (fat and dull), and their ears heavy and difficult of hearing, and their eyes they have tightly closed, lest they see and perceive with their eyes, and hear and comprehend the sense with their ears, and grasp and understand with their heart, and turn and I should heal them. 16 But blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied) are your eyes because they do see, and your ears because they do hear. 17 Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous men [men who were upright and in right standing with God] yearned to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. 18 Listen then to the [meaning of the] parable of the sower: 19 While anyone is hearing the Word of the kingdom and does not grasp and comprehend it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the roadside. 20 As for what was sown on thin (rocky) soil, this is he who hears the Word and at once welcomes and accepts it with joy; 21 Yet it has no real root in him, but is temporary (inconstant, lasts but a little while); and when affliction or trouble or persecution comes on account of the Word, at once he is caused to stumble [he is repelled and begins to distrust and desert Him Whom he ought to trust and obey] and he falls away. 22 As for what was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the Word, but the cares of the world and the pleasure and delight and glamour and deceitfulness of riches choke and suffocate the Word, and it yields no fruit. 23 As for what was sown on good soil, this is he who hears the Word and grasps and comprehends it; he indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundred times as much as was sown, in another sixty times as much, and in another thirty. 24 Another parable He set forth before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while he was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed also darnel (weeds resembling wheat) among the wheat, and went on his way. 26 So when the plants sprouted and formed grain, the darnel (weeds) appeared also. 27 And the servants of the owner came to him and said, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Then how does it have darnel shoots in it? 28 He replied to them, An enemy has done this. The servants said to him, Then do you want us to go and weed them out? 29 But he said, No, lest in gathering the wild wheat (weeds resembling wheat), you root up the [true] wheat along with it. 30 Let them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, Gather the darnel first and bind it in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my granary. 31 Another story by way of comparison He set forth before them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. 32 Of all the seeds it is the smallest, but when it has grown it is the largest of the garden herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and find shelter in its branches. 33 He told them another parable: The kingdom of heaven is like leaven (sour dough) which a woman took and covered over in three measures of meal or flour till all of it was leavened. 34 These things all taken together Jesus said to the crowds in parables; indeed, without a parable He said nothing to them. 35 This was in fulfillment of what was spoken by the prophet: I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things that have been hidden since the foundation of the world. 36 Then He left the throngs and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him saying, Explain to us the parable of the darnel in the field. 37 He answered, He Who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed means the children of the kingdom; the darnel is the children of the evil one, 39 And the enemy who sowed it is the devil. The harvest is the close and consummation of the age, and the reapers are angels. 40 Just as the darnel (weeds resembling wheat) is gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the close of the age. 41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all causes of offense [persons by whom others are drawn into error or sin] and all who do iniquity and act wickedly, 42 And will cast them into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and wailing and grinding of teeth. 43 Then will the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with God) shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let him who has ears [to hear] be listening, and let him consider and perceive and understand by hearing. 44 The kingdom of heaven is like something precious buried in a field, which a man found and hid again; then in his joy he goes and sells all he has and buys that field. 45 Again the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is a dealer in search of fine and precious pearls, 46 Who, on finding a single pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it. 47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet which was cast into the sea and gathered in fish of every sort. 48 When it was full, men dragged it up on the beach, and sat down and sorted out the good fish into baskets, but the worthless ones they threw away. 49 So it will be at the close and consummation of the age. The angels will go forth and separate the wicked from the righteous (those who are upright and in right standing with God) 50 And cast them [the wicked] into the furnace of fire; there will be weeping and wailing and grinding of teeth. 51 Have you understood all these things [parables] taken together? They said to Him, Yes, Lord. 52 He said to them, Therefore every teacher and interpreter of the Sacred Writings who has been instructed about and trained for the kingdom of heaven and has become a disciple is like a householder who brings forth out of his storehouse treasure that is new and [treasure that is] old [the fresh as well as the familiar]. 53 When Jesus had finished these parables (these comparisons), He left there. 54 And coming to His own country [Nazareth], He taught in their synagogue so that they were amazed with bewildered wonder, and said, Where did this Man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? 55 Is not this the carpenter's Son? Is not His mother called Mary? And are not His brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? 56 And do not all His sisters live here among us? Where then did this Man get all this? 57 And they took offense at Him [they were repelled and hindered from acknowledging His authority, and caused to stumble]. But Jesus said to them, A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house. 58 And He did not do many works of power there, because of their unbelief (their lack of faith in the divine mission of Jesus).

Now as we enter into the thirteenth chapter, we come into the area of the parables that deal with the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And in these we have more or less a key to all parables.

And years ago when I was in seminary I had a very smart professor who exhorted us young seminarians to not preach from the parables until we've been pastoring for at least thirty years. I now qualify. And I wish I had back a lot of those sermons that I preached from the parables when I thought my professor didn't know what he was talking about. But over the years there has been a definite change in my understanding of the parables.

I do not profess to have a perfect understanding even at this point. And as I look at these parables I cannot stand before you tonight and say, well now this is what Jesus meant, and have that kind of confidence. All I can share is what I have come to learn, and what I have come to believe, but as I continue to grow I cannot guarantee that in time I might even come to other understandings than what I presently possess. I will frankly confess to you, that I do not consider my understanding of the parables complete. I am certain that there is more to be gleaned than what I have yet been able to gather.

The same day Jesus went out of the house, and he sat by the seaside. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so he went into his ship, and he sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore (Mat 13:1-2).

So now He is sitting. He has taken the posture of the teacher, and this is to the multitudes. Contrast to the Sermon on the Mount, when His disciples were coming to Him, He opened His mouth and taught them saying, but now He is talking to the multitudes from that little ship just offshore.

And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold a sower went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: and some fell upon stony places, where they did not have much earth: and immediately they sprung up, but because they had no deepness of earth: when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had not root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but others fell on good ground, and brought forth fruit, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirtyfold. Who has ears to hear let Him hear (Mat 13:3-9).

Now let's jump for a moment to verse eighteen, where Jesus explains this parable. And this one we can understand, because Jesus explains it.

Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and understands it not, then comes the wicked one, and catches it away that which was sown in his heart. And this is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed in stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and he receives it with joy at once; and yet he has not root in himself, and thus he abides for just a while: for when tribulation, or persecution arises because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received the seed among the thorns is he that hears the word; and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word and he becomes unfruitful. But he that received the seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, understands it, and bears fruit, and brings forth some hundred, some sixty, some thirty (Mat 13:18-23).

Now Luke also tells us of that parable. And Luke gives us a few more words of Christ concerning it. First of all, he tells us that the field is the world. He that sows is the Son of man. The field is the world, the seed is the Word of God, and he who sows it is the Son of man, Jesus Christ.

God's Word sown throughout the world, some of it falls on the wayside. The birds pluck it up. The bird is the evil one Jesus tells us in Luke. Satan immediately comes along and plucks the Word out of the person's heart. So there is an immediate rejection. There is nothing, there is no response. The Word doesn't take root. It does nothing.

In the second category there are those who receive the Word with joy. Oh they get all excited. They have a tremendous emotional experience, but there is no depth. And soon when trials come, persecution begins to come, they fall away, because they have lacked depth. They've never rooted themselves in the truth. They've never really studied. They've never really developed a foundation for their faith.

The third category, and unfortunately, I think that this is the category that we would probably have to deal mostly with, is that which fell among thorns. Lives who received the Word of God, there has been that development within them through the Word, but thorns have grown up with it. And the thorns ultimately choke out the life, that it becomes unfruitful. And when we read that those thorns are the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desire for other things, we realize that that fits many of us. How that our lives are not as fruitful for the Lord as they should be, because we've allowed the cares of this world, that desire for riches or for other things to choke out the fruitfulness from our own lives. And as we look at our lives, we see that we are not bringing forth that fruit that the Lord would have us to bring forth.

And so I would warn you of this third type of soil. Let us take care, lest we be burdened down with the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, so that God's Word is not productive and bearing fruit in us. Now there is what is called, expositional constancy. And I think that it is very important in understanding parables that we abide by this law of expositional constancy. And that is a theological phrase used in Hermeneutics whereby in interpreting scripture, if a figure is used to represent something in one passage, every time that same figure is used in a figurative way, it represents the same thing. In other words, here the field is the world, therefore in all of the parables where you have a field, in each parable the field represents the world. The seed is the Word of God. Therefore, wherever you have parables that involve the planting of seed, it is the planting of the Word of God. And it is important that we establish this expositional constancy, or else you can start reading into the parables other things, than what was intended by the parable. You have to remain true to the types, otherwise there would be just total confusion.

Now the question arises, after Jesus spoke this parable,

The disciples came, and they said, Lord, Why are you speaking to them in parables? (Mat 13:10)

Obviously it was a beginning of a new method of teaching by Jesus.

And he answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you know the mysteries of the kingdom, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that what he has. Therefore I speak to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophesy of Isaiah, which says, By hearing ye shall hear, and ye shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive. For this people's heart is waxed gross, their ears are dull to hearing, and their eyes they've closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear (Mat 13:11-16).

Now, why did Jesus turn to the method of parables? And be careful here, because a lot of people, surface reading would say, "well, He is trying to hide the truth, He is trying to disguise it, so only His disciples can understand it." I would like to suggest to you that first of all, that is the opposite reason why a person uses parables. The purpose of a parable is always to illustrate a truth. When a person cannot understand, when a person cannot see, then you use a story. You take something that is familiar to them, something that they can understand, and you tell the story, and then by the story you illustrate the truth that you are trying to get across to them.

Now the people had come to the place where they were dull of hearing. They were beginning to close their ears. Stories are always attractive. And they are a method by which the truth can be imparted as the story unfolds the truth, and you can see it in a parallel form. And the purpose of parables are never really to hide, the purpose of illustrations in the parable is an illustration. It is not to hide the truth, but it is to suddenly reveal the truth, in such a way that you can understand. It is to draw attention. And any good speaker when he realizes he's beginning to lose the attention of the hearers, will say: "now let me tell you a story," and everybody wakes up, "oh a story, let's hear a story."

You know that it is a means of attracting attention, and you also know that it is a means of illustrating a truth in a very subtle way, because now they see it. Though they may have closed their eyes, maybe they don't want to see, but suddenly they see it.

And this happened with Jesus and the Pharisees, as He was later on using some of the parables. He was nailing them, and all of a sudden they would say, uh, wait a minute, that was against us. And they realized He was speaking these parables against them. But He was coming at them in a way, that He was just telling a story, but suddenly they saw that it was directed towards them. And the truth would hit. And of course they would become angry when they saw. Hey, He really trapped us there, wiped us out with that one. And so Jesus because of the dullness of their hearing, because of the blindness of their eyes, because of the attitude, He now turns. He will still seek to reveal the truth.

Jesus isn't trying to hide truth from men. Jesus wants to reveal truth to men. But if a man cannot take it straight, then He will couch it in an illustration in order that they might catch the parallel and still get the truth. So this is why He began to adopt the form of parables.

Therefore [He said] many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and they have not seen them, to hear those things which you hear, and they have not heard them (Mat 13:17).

And then He explained to them the parable of the sower.

Now in verse twenty-four,

Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares (Mat 13:24-25)

Now here is seed that is being sown, but it is definitely declared that it's bad seed.

the tares among the wheat, and he went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then there also appeared the tares. So the servants of the householder came and said, Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where did this tares come from? And he said unto them, An enemy has done this. And the servants said unto him, Shall we go out and gather them up? And he said, No; lest while you are gathering up the tares, you also root up some of the wheat. Let them both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn (Mat 13:25-30).

Now Jesus is beginning to show that the kingdom of heaven, the church is not going to be a perfect representation, that there are going to arise within the church, that which is not true, that which is not genuine, that which is false, the tares will be there with the wheat. There will be that seed that falls on the stony ground. There will be the seed that falls among thorns. There will be those that will be unfruitful. And as far as the tares are concerned, they're even worth than those who are unfruitful.

There will be those that will grow up within the church system, they will come into the church system within the kingdom of heaven, that which is manifestly wrong. And rather than rooting it out, let them grow together, until the harvest, until the end, and then gather the tares and put them in the fire and burn them, but the wheat into the barn. So that into the system of God's kingdom there will come that which the enemy has planted, and God knows there are enemies to the cause of Christ in the church today.

I cannot for the life of me understand those men who are in the pulpit across the country today, who do not believe that the Bible is God's inspired Word. What are they then teaching? Why are they in the pulpit, if they do not believe the Word of God, to be the Word of God? If they do not believe the Bible to be divinely inspired of God, then what are you teaching the people? And there are tares that are growing with the wheat.

And it upsets me, because every time you get some kind of an article in the paper that deals with controversy, you can always find some stupid liberal theologian that will come with some position against those who are evangelical and all, and will make all of these derogatory statements against anyone who has a fervent love for Jesus Christ. And yet, Dr. so and so, the Pastor of such a church declares, well it's just a fad among the young people, and it'll all pass. And this kind, I don't understand. Well, the Lord said, let them grow. Now you see, if I were God, I wouldn't let them grow together. I'd say, go out and get rid of them, wipe them out. But God has His reasons. And the Lord is warning us here.

Now,

Another parable he put forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among the herbs (Mat 13:31-32),

Now most of your herb plants are very small. You know, you grow them in little boxes in your windowsill. But of all the herb plants, the mustard is the biggest. And of course mustard plants can get as high as the pulpit here. It's the biggest of the herbs that you grow.

But Jesus said concerning this particular mustard seed,

that it became a tree, [now that's an abnormality] so that the birds of the air come to lodge in the branches thereof (Mat 13:32).

Now there are those expositors who say that this is a parable that is illustrating how that the kingdom of heaven will have a small beginning. Jesus is gonna start with His twelve disciples, but as they have preached the gospel, the influence of the gospel is going to spread, until it is a great tree, and the birds of the air can come and nest in it. So that glorious influence of the gospel as it gradually spreads from just a very small humble beginning, as a small little mustard seed, but grows into a great tree: problems.

In expositional constancy, what are the birds? They are the ones, the evil ones, who came and plucked up the seed so it could not take root, could not grow. From this expositional constancy birds are always used in a bad sense in your analogies or in your comparisons. So inasmuch as in the previous parable He pointed out, that there were gonna be tares that are going to be growing along with the wheat in the kingdom, He is only further illustrating the same thing, as the kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, but somehow it has abnormal growth. It grew bigger than what it really is intended to be.

The true kingdom of heaven... well let me just say this, I think that the World Council of Churches is the wild mustard seed that's growing abnormally out of proportion. It's a monstrosity, and every bird of heaven lodges in its branches. And if you can think of any evil notify them, they'll be glad to do it. But I believe that that's exactly what Jesus is warning us about. That there will be this abnormal forced thing of man, not representative of the true righteous kingdom of heaven, and it will become a shelter for all kinds of evil purposes, as the church has been used today as a shelter for all kinds of evil purposes. Read Readers Digest this month, if you are questioning what I am saying about the World Council of Churches. If that doesn't make your blood boil, you're dead.

Now,

Another parable he spoke unto them; The kingdom of heaven is liken unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened (Mat 13:33).

Now again there are two interpretations. The first is, that the kingdom of heaven being like leaven, leaven having this unique capacity of permeating a whole loaf. All you do is take your little starter, and you mix up a new batch of dough, and you take a starter, that is a piece from the last batch that's already fermented, and you put it into the new batch of dough. And this little batch of leaven, the fermented from the old loaf, will permeate and the whole loaf will become permeated with the leavening process of just a little leaven hid in this measure of meal, three measures, it will leaven the whole thing.

And so the church is going to have, though it starts very small, is gradually going to develop and grow until it influences the whole world for good. And they teach that this will be the influence of the church. It will ultimately permeate and influence the entire world, though it starts off just so small, but yet this effect of the gospel in permeating the whole world.

As I look at the world today, I cannot honestly rejoice for the tremendous effect that the world has received from the influence of the church. I look at a sick world; a world that seems to me is getting sicker every day. I have difficulty with that particular interpretation. Also, because leaven is always used in the scripture as a type of sin.

Jesus said to His disciples: "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" (Matthew 16:6), which is hypocrisy. Paul writing to the Galatians concerning the problems that were existing there said, "Don't you know that a little leaven, leavens the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). Writing to the Corinthians concerning an incestuous relationship he said, "purge out the old leaven" (1 Corinthians 5:7). And always

leaven is used **expositional**, as a type of evil of sin, because leaven is actually the process of deterioration by rotting. And thus, it makes a beautiful type of sin that has a way of permeating the total person. It has a way of rotting, it has a way of destroying, its influence is permeating and rotting; not destroying necessarily, but rotting, and permeating.

So the other interpretation is that Jesus is giving a series of parables in which He is illustrating the same truth, or making the same warning all the way along, that the church is not going to be perfect. That there will come into the church evil influences, that will actually permeate themselves through the entire church.

Now I would like to suggest historically that this indeed has happened, and that even we ourselves are not totally devoid of the leavening influence of the Babylonian religion that was introduced into the church by Constantine. There was introduced into the church this leavening agent back at the time of Constantine, as he sought to bring together the pagan world and Christianity by bringing the pagan holidays, the pagan celebrations, and the pagan rituals and all, right into the church, taken from the old-aged mystery Babylon religion and incorporating that into the church. It was leaven and it began to leaven the whole lump. Until it is -- you can point around to the church today and you can see all kinds of remnants of that aged Babylonian religion, that even we ourselves are not totally free of. I say that because we still celebrate Christmas and Easter, which have their pagan origins, not Christian origins, it's a part of the leaven that leavened the whole lump.

Now all of these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables, and without a parable He did not speak unto them. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, and they said, Declare to us the parable of the tares of the field. And He answered and unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man (Mat 13:34-37);

So you have now your expositional constant.

The field is the world, [expositional constant]; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; [interesting expositional constant, which puts a whole light on the other things] but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers the angels. And therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; and so shall it be at the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, they shall gather up of his kingdom, [notice, out of His kingdom] all things that offend, and them which do iniquity (Mat 13:38-41);

They will grow together. It will be a corrupting influence within the church. It's the sad history of the church that it has been corrupted by these influences within it.

And he shall cast them into the furnace of fire: and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And whoever has ears to hear, let him hear (Mat 13:42-43).

Quite heavy.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in the field; the which when a man has found, he hides, and for the joy thereof he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field (Mat 13:44).

Two interpretations. Number one, the kingdom of heaven is glorious, it's like a treasure. When you discover it, man, you go out and sell everything in order that you might obtain that treasure; buy the field, obtain the treasure.

The other, now I've preached some tremendous sermons on that interpretation, that was before I've been pastoring for thirty years. That one has a serious flaw. The doors to the kingdom of heaven are opened freely to every man; you don't have to buy it, you can't buy it. It's a gift of God.

Again, what is the field? The field is the world. Who then gave everything to purchase the world? Jesus Christ. What then is the treasure? Are you ready for this? You.

Back in the Old Testament the story of Ruth, classic example of the law of redemption. Where Boaz ultimately purchased the field in order that he might have the bride. He told his brother, hey, you know Elimelech's our brother, sold the field that's coming up for redemption, the right of redemption. You are the guy. He said, oh, I'll take it. He said well, there is a catch. Whoever takes it has to take Ruth as his wife to bear a child by her for the family. He said, oh my wife wouldn't allow me to do that. He said, Boaz why don't you buy it? And Boaz said, all right I'll do that, because he was in love with Ruth and he bought the field in order that he might obtain the bride.

Now in this case the treasure is the church. And Jesus purchased the field in order that he might obtain the treasure. He didn't need another world, but yet He came to redeem this world.

Now you remember that when Jesus came, Satan took him into a high mountain and showed Him all of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them? And he said, "All of these will I give unto you, if you will bow down and worship me, for they are mine and I can give them to whomever I will" (Matthew 4:8-9). Jesus didn't dispute that. It belonged to Satan because men had forfeited it to Satan. Jesus came to redeem it back to God, but not by bowing down to Satan, but by going to the cross, and there shedding His blood and paying the price of redemption. And so Jesus purchased the world in order that He might take the bride out of it, His church, the treasure. So the parable became even more beautiful when I came to a real understanding.

And the next is of parallel.

The kingdom of heaven like unto a merchant man [again the Lord], seeking goodly pearls (Mat 13:45):

But the interesting thing is, is that a pearl to a Jew was not considered a valuable ornament. It was something that was prized by gentiles, not the Jews. So when you come to this pearl of great price, you're coming to really the gentile bride of Christ or you're coming basically to the whole bride of Christ, composed of gentiles also. Basically it is always basic Jewish, but composed also of gentiles.

Who, when he has found one pearl of great price, went out and sold all that he had, and bought it (Mat 13:46).

Now Jesus isn't the pearl of great price, that you have to sell everything and buy Him. The gift of Jesus is by free grace to you. He is the one, who gave everything, in order that He might redeem you.

Now again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that is cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind (Mat 13:47):

The sea of course is again the world of people, humanity, in an expositional constancy. And so the net is cast into it and men pull it in and it has every kind in it.

Which, when it was full, they drew it to shore, and they sat down, and they gathered the good into vessels, but the cast the bad away. And so it will be at the end of the world: the angels will come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus said unto them, Have you understood all those things? And they said unto him, Yes, Lord (Mat 13:48-51).

I don't understand them yet, but it's interesting.

Then he said unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which brings forth out of his treasure things new and old (Mat 13:52).

So there are these glorious things that we are constantly discovering in the richness in Christ and ever discovering new experiences in the old troops. And so the faithful householder who keeps bringing forth out of the treasury these glorious things.

And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there. And when he was coming to his own country [that is the area of Nazareth], he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and they said, Where did He get this wisdom, and how is he doing these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, aren't they still living here? Where did he get all of these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and in his own household. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief (Mat 13:53-58).

Self-explanatory.

Shall we pray? Oh, we ask Lord that you by your Holy Spirit will reveal thy truth to our hearts. Thy Word is truth. Lord, we realize that there is so much to be gained through the work of your Spirit in teaching us Thy ways. Give us, Father, a greater faith, a greater knowledge, a greater knowledge of Thyself. Lord, help us that we might bring forth fruit, hundredfold, Lord, preferably. God let our lives abound with the fruit of thy Spirit. Root out, O Lord, those thorns that would choke out the fruitfulness from our lives. Cause us to become sterile. Oh God, help us we pray and so commit ourselves unto You and to the kingdom that we will seek first primarily the kingdom of God and Your righteousness. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Matthew 14:1-36 (AMP)

1 AT THAT time Herod the governor heard the reports about Jesus, 2 And he said to his attendants, This is John the Baptist; He has been raised from the dead, and that is why the powers of performing miracles are at work in Him. 3 For Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison [to stow him out of the way] on account and for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, 4 For John had said to him, It is not lawful or right for you to have her. 5 Although he wished to have him put to death, he was afraid of the people, for they regarded John as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced in the midst [before the company] and pleased and fascinated Herod, 7 And so he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. 8 And she, being put forward and prompted by her mother, said, Give me the head of John the Baptist right here on a platter. 9 And the king was distressed and sorry, but because of his oaths and his guests, he ordered it to be given her; 10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 And his head was brought in on a platter and given to the little maid, and she brought it to her mother. 12 And John's disciples came and took up the body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus. 13 When Jesus heard it, He withdrew from there privately in a boat to a solitary place. But when the crowds heard of it, they followed Him [by land] on foot from the towns. 14 When He went ashore and saw a great throng of people, He had compassion (pity and deep sympathy) for them and cured their sick. 15 When evening came, the disciples came to Him and said, This is a remote and barren place, and the day is now over; send the throngs away into the villages to buy food for themselves. 16 Jesus said, They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat. 17 They said to Him, We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish. 18 He said, Bring them here to Me. 19 Then He ordered the crowds to recline on the grass; and He took the five loaves and the two fish, and, looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and blessed and broke the loaves and handed the pieces to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up twelve [small hand] baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 21 And those who ate were about 5,000 men, not including women and children. 22 Then He directed the disciples to get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent away the crowds. 23 And after He had dismissed the multitudes, He went up into the hills by Himself to pray. When it was evening, He was still there alone. 24 But the boat was by this time out on the sea, many furlongs [a furlong is one-eighth of a mile] distant from the land, beaten and tossed by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch [between 3:00—6:00 a.m.] of the night, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified and said, It is a ghost! And they screamed out with fright. 27 But instantly He spoke to them, saying, Take courage! I AM! Stop being afraid! 28 And Peter answered Him, Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water. 29 He said, Come! So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, and he came toward Jesus. 30 But when he perceived and felt the strong wind, he was frightened, and as he began to sink, he cried out, Lord, save me [from death]! 31 Instantly Jesus reached out His hand and caught and held him, saying to him, O you of little faith, why did you doubt? 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat knelt and worshiped Him, saying, Truly You are the Son of God! 34 And when they had crossed over to the other side, they went ashore at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent around into all the surrounding country and brought to Him all who were sick 36 And begged Him to let them merely touch the fringe of His garment; and as many as touched it were perfectly restored.

And at that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus. And he said to his servants, This is John the Baptist; he's risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, and the daughter of Herodias danced before him, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John the Baptist's head in a charger. So the king was sorry; nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded that it be given to her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus (Mat 14:1-12).

Here we have the story of Herod and the beheading of John the Baptist. He was called Herod Antipas; he was the son of Herod the Great. The word "tetrarch" means the ruler over a fourth part. When Herod the Great died, he had many sons, but three of them were given rule over part of the territory that Herod the Great once governed. Herod Antipas, the one who had beheaded John the Baptist, was married to the daughter of a Nabatean king, Areta.

And He went to Rome where he visited his brother Philip, Herod Philip, and there he fell in love with Philip's wife. And he enticed her to leave his brother, and to return with him as his wife. But in order to do this he had to then divorce Areta, the daughter of the Nabatean king, which he did. And he took Herodias as his wife.

Now John the Baptist spoke out against that. John the Baptist was a straight shooter. And he said it isn't lawful for you to do that. It wasn't lawful for him to put away Areta without a cause. And of course it wasn't lawful to marry his brother's sister. So John the Baptist spoke out boldly against him, and he paid the price of incurring the displeasure of Herod, for Herod imprisoned him and would have put him to death, yet there was such a popular appeal that John had to the people. He was a little fearful of putting him to death.

Josephus in his Antiquities, the historic account of the Jews, helps us in this a little bit. He said that Herod actually was desiring to put him to death, because of the tremendous popularity that John had among the people. And he was actually a little threatened by the popularity of John the Baptist.

Herodias ultimately, of course, was the downfall of Herod. She was a very cruel and cunning woman. She, of course, was upset because John had spoken out against the marriage, had a deep kind of desire for revenge. And so she allowed her daughter to dance for Herod on his birthday. Her daughter's name was Salome. The dances were of those oriental-type, which were very suggestive, and sensuous. Salome was probably only sixteen or seventeen. And for her mother to allow her to do this, shows the fact that there was no real morality in the heart of Herodias at all, very immoral woman. And when Herod's passions were aroused by the dance of Salome, in that

moment of excitement and the applause for the dance and all, with the crowd around, he said, "ask whatever you want and I will give it to you" (Mark 6:22). And her mother Herodias had already coached her in advance that she should ask for the head of John the Baptist on a charger. And when she made this request, of course Herod wanted to back down, but he had made the promise, and so he held to it.

Now later on when Caligula became the emperor of Rome there was another son of Herod, Agrippa that he sent to reign over some of the provinces of Israel, and he gave to Agrippa the title of king. And so you remember Paul addressing him King Agrippa.

Now Herodias said to her husband Herod Antipas, look, he has the title of king. You ought also to have the title of king, because she had this desire to be known as Queen Herodias, and so this real thing in her wanting to be known as queen. She put her husband up to going to Rome to talk to the Emperor Caligula that he would give to Antipas also the title of king.

However, Herod Agrippa heard of the plan, and so he sent messages ahead to Caligula and said, hey, Antipas is not to be trusted, he is very likely to rebel against you. He is looking for position and power. And so Caligula believed the report that he received from Agrippa. And when Antipas came requesting that he receive the title of king, instead of receiving it, he had taken a lot of money with him, and she said, what's money, go and bribe him, Caligula, for this title of king. Caligula took the money, but he banished Antipas to Gaul.

And so that was the end of his ambition. And that was the end of Herod Antipas, he and Herodias. Caligula said, look, you can stay here if you want. But she said, no, I'll be with my husband. That's the only honorable thing she did. So she was banished with him to Gaul. The end of this man, who fought the prophet of God, because the prophet had enough courage to speak out against his sin, had him imprisoned.

And so we read of the death of the cousin of Jesus, John the Baptist. And when Herod heard of all that Jesus was doing, though he had put John the Baptist to death, his conscience was probably still troubling him. And he said, "this is John the Baptist, he's raised from the dead, and that's why he can do this marvelous works" (Mat 14:2). He no doubt really believed that John the Baptist was indeed a true prophet.

So now in verse thirteen,

When Jesus heard of this [horrible atrocity against John. It no doubt shocked Him.], and he went by ship into a desert place apart (Mat 14:13):

Desert, not meaning desert like the Mojave, or Sahara, but a deserted place, because there really isn't any real desert around the Sea of Galilee, but there are places that are deserted, or uninhabited. And so He went to one of the uninhabited areas there across the Sea of Galilee, over on the opposite side of the sea, there were several sort of deserted areas.

So when the people had heard that he was leaving, they followed him on foot out of the cities. And when Jesus went forth (Mat 14:13-14),

So He got around the other side, and here was a great multitude of people waiting for Him. Now the Sea of Galilee is only eight miles across. And from the area of Capernaum, if you cross over to the area there, Bethsaida there, it isn't really that far, and you can watch a little boat go all the way across. So as they are taking off for Capernaum, it's easy to tell which direction they are going. They just watch which direction they are going, and then the people run around the upper end of the lake, and then they'll be there waiting of Him, when He got to the other side.

This must have been difficult. Here you're troubled, because of this horrible atrocity, and you're wanting to get alone for just a little bit, to sort of put things together, get things in perspective. And so you try to get off alone, and have just a little time to wait upon God, and to pray, and to sort of get yourself collected, and you get to the other side, and here is the whole multitude of people waiting there for you. Now it would have been very easy for Jesus to have been brusque and say, look I came over to get a rest, can't you leave me alone? And I know so many people who have a great ministry today who might do just that.

But Jesus when he saw the great multitude, was moved with compassion toward them (Mat 14:14),

Oh, God give us a heart for the ministry, like Jesus. That whenever we see the people, rather than feeling; oh, no, why did they have to come here? Don't they know I want to be alone? That whenever we meet them, we are moved with compassion towards them. God give us a heart of compassion towards the needs of people.

And the needs of people always moved the heart of Jesus with compassion. He could not see a needy person without being moved with compassion towards them.

and he healed their sick (Mat 14:14).

Now many of these people were not really seeking Him. All they were seeking was help, the healing of their sick. And it would be very easy to sort of jump on the crowd, and to needle them, and get after them. All you want is the benefits. You really don't want to make the commitment. And that was so true. But Jesus never chided them. He never got on them. He just went ahead and ministered to them freely. And I love Him for that. Now when it was evening, his disciples came to him, and they said, This is a deserted place, and the time is now past; you better send the multitude away, that they might go into the villages, and buy themselves some food. But Jesus said unto them, They don't need to depart; give them to eat. And they said unto him, We only have five loaves, and two fish. And he said, Bring them to me. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes,

and looking up to heaven he blessed, and he broke, and he gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled (Mat 14:15-20):

The word "filled" in Greek is gluttoned, that would be a more appropriate translation. They all ate and were stuffed.

And they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside the woman and children (Mat 14:20-21).

So here is that recording of the marvelous multiplication of the loaves and the fishes to feed the five thousand. Now there are those who have difficulty with miracles, and so when they read this story they try to read into it, a plausible explanation to remove the miraculous from it.

We are told that these five loaves and two fish came from a little boy, who probably when he told his mother I want to go over and see Jesus, she packed him a lunch. And so when the multitude was there, they said, Lord, you better send them away, that they might buy food. And He said, no, they are hungry, they might faint in the way, let's feed them. And they said, if we had several thousand dollars worth of bread we couldn't feed this crowd. Jesus said, what do you have? And Andrew said there is a little kid over here with five loaves and two fish, but what's that to a multitude like this? And so the little boy came, and gave his five loaves and his two fishes to Jesus and He then blessed them, and broke the bread, and distributed.

And there are those who explain, that in those days, they wore these long robes and they had sleeves that tied at the wrist. And quite often people carried bread and fish in their sleeves. And that when everybody was hungry, and they all knew when they were hungry, everybody was so selfish, none was willing to share their own little lunch that they had tied in their sleeves.

But when the little boy came forth, and offered to Jesus his five loaves and two fishes, everyone was so touched and moved, by the beautiful example of this little child. They all untied their sleeves, and shared with each other and there was really enough there, that they could gather twelve baskets full, after everybody had eaten. And so it was the touching example of a little child, that moved the multitude. And isn't that a beautiful story. God has got a hot place for men who try to mess with the Word.

And immediately Jesus constrained the disciples to get into a ship, and go before him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away (Mat 14:22).

So He said to the disciples and all, go ahead, get in the boat and go over to the other side. I'll send the multitude away.

And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come He was there alone (Mat 14:23).

Now notice this, I think this is important to know. It had been an extremely hard day. Jesus had received the news of horrible atrocity, His cousin John had been beheaded by Herod. And He felt it sort of imperative to just get alone for awhile. So He got into the ship with the disciples, and they headed over to the other side.

But the people seeing the direction that they were going, run around the upper part of the Galilee, and meet Him when the ship landed. And here was the multitude. And Jesus spends the day ministering to them. He is weary emotionally, because of what had happen to John. No doubt weary physically by ministering to these people, being pressed by them all the day long up until the evening. He feeds them and then He sends them away, as the disciples are heading back. Hard day, troubling news, physically exhausted, time to really flake out, but instead He went up into a mountain apart to pray. Oh, the importance that prayer had in the life of Jesus.

Now if He being the Son of God felt the necessity to be strengthened through prayer on these kinds of occasions, how much more we, weak, failing disciples or followers of Him need to spend time in prayer, to be strengthened by God. We would say, oh, it's time to really get a rest. I really need to get a nap. I really need to get my strength. But instead He went up, and spends the evening, the night in prayer according to another gospel. But prayer was His place of strength. He discovered it to be a place of great strength. Even as you can discover that prayer is a place of great strength indeed.

And so when the evening was come He was there alone.

But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, and it was tossed by the waves: for the wind was contrary (Mat 14:24). Coming from the side of Gennesaret, back across the sea, there is that valley that comes into the Sea of Galilee, from the Mediterranean where, when they get these storms, it usually blows in through that Chinnereth Valley. And so in coming back, you're coming against that wind that comes howling through that valley. And so the disciples were faced with this dismal prospect of trying to row against the wind and against the flow of the wind-whipped waves, because they were heading back towards the area of Capernaum. And so they were in the midst of the sea. And they were being tossed with the waves, for the wind was coming from that direction of the Mediterranean. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. [That is almost morning.] And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It's a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid. [An impulsive] Peter answered, Lord, if it is you, bid me to come to you on the water. And Jesus said, Come on. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and he began to sink, and he cried, saying, Oh, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, why did you doubt? (Mat 14:25-31)

Amazing story, isn't it? How that Peter was able for a time to walk on the water, and it would appear that he could walk on the water, as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. But suddenly, maybe a wave crashed, splashing his face and he looked around and, oh, what am I doing out here? And he started to sink. "Lord, save me." I can hear Jesus chuckle, as He said, "oh, oh, you of little faith". What happened to you? You started well, what happened to you Peter? "Oh ye of little faith."

I think that the lesson is keeping our eyes upon the Lord. I think that is so important for us. It is so easy for us to get our eyes on our circumstances. And we start looking around and the boisterous waves; we start looking at our problems. We start looking at our situations and we begin to sink. Because every one of us are faced with daily situations that can really sink us, if we really get into it. We need to keep our eyes on the Lord, who is the Master over the sea, over the waves, over the winds. And looking at Jesus he was able to walk for a ways on the water. Getting his eyes off Jesus and on the waves, he began to sink. As long as we keep our eyes on Jesus we can walk on the water, so to speak.

Now to me it's great that when Peter started to sink he knew where to call. "Lord, save me." I've been in the same boat. Man, how many times I've cried, "Oh Lord, save me." And the graciousness of Jesus. "Oh thou of little faith". Why did you doubt Peter? You're doing all right.

And when they had come into the ship, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came and worshiped him, saying, Of a truth, thou art the Son of God (Mat 14:32-33).

They just had seen such a tremendous demonstration of His divine powers.

And when they were gone over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out unto all the country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased (Mat 14:34-35);

And Gennesaret is there. It is Chinnereth, or Gennesaret. It's the name of that valley coming from the area of the Mediterranean aqua area.

And they besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole (Mat 14:36).

Now Jesus did not have some kind of magic garment that if you touch it, you would be healed. The healing took place in each case because of the faith of that person. And the touching of His garment was the point for them to release their faith. There is sort of a passive kind of faith, if such a thing can exist. A believing that God can do it, knowing that God can do it, being fully persuaded and assured that God can do it.

And I think that we all probably fit in that category who believe in God. We know that God can do anything. And I am faced with some malady or whatever, and someone says, "Well, God can heal you." Yes, I know that is true, I don't doubt that. I go to the hospital and I see these people in critical condition. The doctors have given them up, and I say, "Well, God can heal you," and I believe that. I believe God can do anything. But there is something to activating that faith, to where it is not, I believe that can heal you, but that I believe that God will heal you now, that moment when faith is activated to receive that touch, or healing from God.

And I think that this touching of the hem of His garment created a point of contact for those people to release their faith. In other words, in their minds they were saying I know that the moment I touch the hem of His garment, I'll be healed. And that was so in their minds, that the moment they were able to grab the hem of His garment, they released the faith, and it was no longer just a passive, I know God can, but I know that God is. And in that moment, release their faith to take then at that moment their healing, and the moment they activated, or released the faith, they were healed.

There were many things in the New Testament that formed points of contact for the releasing of faith. And Jesus actually established more or less points of contact on various occasions. When He put mud in the blind man's eyes, and said, "Now go and wash up the mud, as soon as you wash it out, you can see" (John 9:6-7). The man believed that the minute I can wash this mud out, I am gonna see. And it was a point of contact for the releasing of his faith.

In the Old Testament, when the prophet Elisha told Naaman to go dip in the River Jordan seven times, when you come up from the seventh time, you're going to be healed, it was a point of contact for the releasing of faith (2 Kings 5:10). In the Book of Acts they sent out from Paul handkerchiefs, or more literally sweatbands, and his aprons, and they would lay them on the sick, and the people would be healed. Peter, when he was walking down the street, they would set the sick in the way, so that his shadow would fall on them, and the shadow of Peter falling on them was a point of contact. People said, oh I know as soon as Peter's shadow falls on me, oh I am gonna be healed. And they had that point of releasing faith (Acts 5:15).

And somehow we need be able to release the faith, so it will become activated. So I know that as soon as it will happen, and it's a point of contact to release the faith, and there is a valuable lesson there.

Matthew 15:1-39 (AMP)

1 THEN FROM Jerusalem came scribes and Pharisees and said, 2 Why do Your disciples transgress and violate the rules handed down by the elders of the past? For they do not practice [ceremonially] washing their hands before they eat. 3 He replied to them, And why also do you transgress and violate the commandment of God for the sake of the rules handed down to you by your forefathers (the elders)? 4 For God commanded, Honor your father and your mother, and, He who curses or reviles or speaks evil of or abuses or treats improperly his father or mother, let him surely come to his end by death. 5 But you say, If anyone tells his father or mother, What you would have gained from me [that is, the money and whatever I have that might be used for helping you] is already dedicated as a gift to God, then he is exempt and no longer under obligation to honor and help his father or his mother. 6 So for the sake of your tradition (the rules handed down by your forefathers), you have set aside the Word of God [depriving it of force and authority and making it of no effect]. 7 You pretenders (hypocrites)! Admirably and truly did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said: 8 These people draw near Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts hold off and are far away from Me. 9 Uselessly do they worship Me, for they teach as doctrines the commands of men. 10 And Jesus called the people to Him and said to them, Listen and grasp and comprehend this: 11 It is not what goes into the mouth of a man that makes him unclean and defiled, but what comes out of the mouth; this makes a man unclean and defiles [him]. 12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, Do You know that the Pharisees were displeased and offended and indignant when they heard this saying? 13 He answered, Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be torn up by the roots. 14 Let them alone and disregard them; they are blind guides and teachers. And if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a ditch. 15 But Peter said to Him, Explain this proverb (this maxim) to us. 16 And He said, Are you also even yet dull and ignorant [without understanding and unable to put things together]? 17 Do you not see and understand that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the abdomen and so passes on into the place where discharges are deposited? 18 But whatever comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this is what makes a man unclean and defiles [him]. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts (reasonings and disputings and designs) such as murder, adultery, sexual vice, theft, false witnessing, slander, and irreverent speech. 20 These are what make a man unclean and defile [him]; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean or defile [him]. 21 And going away from there, Jesus withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman who was a Canaanite from that district came out and, with a [loud, troublesomely urgent] cry, begged, Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is miserably and distressingly and cruelly possessed by a demon! 23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, Send her away, for she is crying out after us. 24 He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 25 But she came and, kneeling, worshiped Him and kept praying, Lord, help me! 26 And He answered, It is not right (proper, becoming, or fair) to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs. 27 She said, Yes, Lord, yet even the little pups (little whelps) eat the crumbs that fall from their [young] masters' table. 28 Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you wish. And her daughter was cured from that moment. 29 And Jesus went on from there and passed along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Then He went up into the hills and kept sitting there. 30 And a great multitude came to Him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others, and they put them down at His feet; and He cured them, 31 So that the crowd was amazed when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they recognized and praised and thanked and glorified the God of Israel. 32 Then Jesus called His disciples to Him and said, I have pity and sympathy and am deeply moved for the crowd, because they have been with Me now three days and they have nothing [at all left] to eat; and I am not willing to send them away hungry, lest they faint or become exhausted on the way. 33 And the disciples said to Him, Where are we to get bread sufficient to feed so great a crowd in this isolated and desert place? 34 And Jesus asked them, How many loaves of bread do you have? They replied, Seven, and a few small fish. 35 And ordering the crowd to recline on the ground, 36 He took the seven loaves and the fish, and when He had given thanks, He broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they gathered up seven [large provision] baskets full of the broken pieces that were left over. 38 Those who ate were 4,000 men, not including the women and the children. 39 Then He dismissed the crowds, got into the boat, and went to the district of Magadan.

Chapter 15

Then came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were from Jerusalem (Mat 15:1),

Hey, these guys had come a long way to challenge Him. They came all the way from Jerusalem clear up to Galilee, which was about a journey of over a week from Jerusalem to Galilee. So they came up to the Galilee and they said,

Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? (Mat 15:2)

Now the Jews of course had the written law. But on top of the written law, they had developed the oral traditions. And these oral traditions many times actually superseded the law. As traditions have a way of becoming so imbedded in our being, that it's harder to break traditions than almost anything else. And Jesus was not one to conform to traditions. He was not in any wise a traditionalist. Of course, they also had the Talmud, the several volumes of the amplification and explanation of the law. So in it many, many traditions.

"So why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands before they eat bread (Mat 15:2). Now from this, don't immediately conclude that they are a bunch of dirty slobs. According to the tradition, there were many things that could make a person unclean. But this uncleanness was a ceremonial uncleanness, which if you were ceremonial unclean, you could not enter into the temple. And many things could make you ceremonially unclean. If you would touch anything that was unclean, you became unclean. Now if you touched anything that was touched by something unclean, you became unclean.

And to them Gentiles were unclean. And if a Gentile walked across the dusty road, and you would walk across, and the dust that his foot touched would become unclean, because he was an unclean Gentile, and thus if you walked in the same dust, you became unclean because you touched the unclean dust that was made unclean by a Gentile, who walked over it.

There were certain foods that if you ate them would make you unclean. And so this business of washing became quite a tradition. And there were certain ways by which you had to wash in order that you might insure that you were cleansed from all of the dust or impurities, or the unclean things that you might have come in contact with. And you had to do this before you touched your food; else your food would be unclean. And when you ate it, you would become unclean because you were eating unclean food.

So they had the traditional ceremony for washing, and you would have to hold out your hands in an upright manner. And they would pour water over your hands as you rubbed your hands back and forth, up and down, and the water had to drip off of the wrist, because the water is now unclean, because it's touching whatever was unclean on your hands. And you got to make sure the water doesn't fall on you. So you hold it out and up, so that the water drips off your wrist, and doesn't hopefully run up your arm or that portion of your arm would be unclean.

Having then poured the water over, and washing your hands in this upright manner, then because the dirty water from your unclean fingers has come down over your hands, you've got to get rid of that. So you put your hands down next, and they pour water over the top of your hands, as you're rubbing your hands in a downward manner. And then finally rubbing your fingers together, as water is poured over, to get rid of all the uncleanness.

And here with the disciples just grabbing the bread and eating it, without going through this whole little ritual. And this is what Jesus was being challenged on. "Your disciples aren't following the traditions." There is nothing in the Bible that says you got to wash your hands a particular way. And at this point Jesus is about ready to blow tradition totally out of the window. So His disciples were accused of transgressing the traditions. Not going through the ceremonial washing of their hands before they eat their bread.

But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress [not the tradition, notice] but you transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? (Mat 15:3)

Oh, oh, watch out now, because even within the church it is possible for us to develop certain traditions, and to get hung up on traditions, and it is also possible that many of the traditions within the church are actually a violation of the commandment of God.

There was a lady who came to church here at Calvary Chapel invited by some of her friends, and she was visiting here from Missouri. And she happened to belong to the Missouri Senad Lutheran Church, and after service she came up to me and she was shaking. She was so angry. She said, "Why didn't you face the altar when you prayed?" I mean she was really upset. And I said, "What?" She said, "When you prayed you didn't turn and face the altar. Why didn't you?" I said, "Well, I guess because I don't think Jesus lives in the altar." But the traditions you see; "Why didn't you turn towards the statue of Jesus when you prayed?" But by traditions there is the violation of the commandment of God that says, we're not to have any images.

So you see, we're not too far removed from the Pharisees and from the Jews, who allow tradition to actually develop to the point, that by the traditions there was actually a violation of the commandment of God. So they were accusing the disciples of Jesus of not keeping the traditions. Jesus said, hey, you're violating not the traditions, but the commandments of God by your traditions.

For God commanded, saying, Honor thy father and mother: and, He that curses his father or mother, let him die the death. But you say, Whosoever shall say to his father or mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mayest be provided by me; and he honors not his father or his mother, he shall be free. And thus you have made the commandment of God of none effect by your traditions (Mat 15:4-6).

Now the Bible says you weren't to curse your father or mother, that's the commandment of God. You're to honor them, not to curse them. But they had a tradition. If you preface your curses by saying, "look, this is for your good and your benefit, you're a dirty rotten..." "It's a gift now, I am doing it for your benefit. I am telling you this for your benefit. They were free, as long as they would preface it by this is a corban and this is something by which you might be benefited.

And so Jesus points out that through their tradition they had actually made allowance for it, an actual violation of the commandment of God. And thus you've made the commandment of God of no effect by your traditions.

You hypocrites (Mat 15:7),

Jesus is pretty straight. In fact He gets so straight it's almost scary, when we move along in Matthew here.

You hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people draw near to me with their mouth, and they honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mat 15:7-9).

Now the church has developed many dogmas that they teach for doctrine, and are in the same position as were these Scribes and Pharisees in the time of Christ, who began to honor and hold traditions and the commandments of men, even over the commandments of God.

So he called the multitude, and he said unto them, Now hear, and understand this: [and here goes tradition, bombed.] It's not that which goes into the mouth that defiles a man; but that which comes out of the mouth, this is what defiles the man (Mat 15:10-11).

Call the multitude and say, "listen now, here me out, it's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you, it's what comes out of your mouth that defiles you." Oh boy, that is just going against that whole tradition of how you're to eat with washed hands, and really even what you're to eat.

So go out and enjoy a pork chop. It's not what goes into your mouth that's gonna defile you, just make sure it's cooked well so all the tapeworms and the Trichinella is dead, so that you won't become infected. Yuck. Eat shrimp. Because it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles a man, it's what comes out of his mouth that defiles him. This is heavy, heavy duty.

Then his disciples said unto him, Hey, Lord don't you know that they were really offended at what you said? And Jesus answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up (Mat 15:12-13).

There are plants that are growing, weren't planted by the heavenly Father, they are gonna be rooted up. Just let them alone. Notice He didn't say: "go out and argue with them."

Just let them alone: they are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both of them will fall in the ditch. Then Peter said to him, Lord what did you mean by the parable? (Mat 15:14-15)

And the parable was it's not what goes into the man's mouth that defiles him, but that which comes out. Peter said, "what do you mean by that Lord?"

And Jesus said, Don't you understand that whatsoever you eat goes into your belly and is cast out into the draught. [It goes through your body. It's perched.] But does things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they are the things that defile a man. For out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts, and murders, and adulteries, and fornications, and thefts, and false witness and blasphemies: and these are the things that defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands doesn't defile you (Mat 15:16-20).

You don't have to go through a ceremonial washing before you eat food, it doesn't defile you, it goes through your body, passes through. But what you say, what comes out of your mouth, it reveals what's in your heart. And out of the mouth the hatred, the bitterness, those things that you express, the lust, the desires, these things that are in the heart, the things expressed by the mouth, and there is the true defilement of a man.

Then Jesus went from there, and he departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (Mat 15:21).

Now going into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon He is actually moving into the territory that is Phoenician, and thus moving out from the totally Jewish community.

And, behold, there was a woman of Canaan [a Serah-Phoenician woman] who came out, [or lived in those same areas] and she cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; for my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and they besought him, saying, Lord would you send her away; she is bugging us (Mat 15:22-23).

What they were saying is, "Lord take care of the daughter, get rid of the woman, she won't let us alone."

But he answered and said, [no doubt in the hearing of the woman] I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him saying, Lord, help me. And he answered and said, It's not right to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, unto him, That 's true, Lord: yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as you will. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour (Mat 15:24-28).

Now as we read the translated text we have difficulty. Difficulty understanding Jesus treating a woman in this rather cold and almost insulting manner, as it would appear from our text. But let us note a few things. Number one, Jesus from the beginning knew that He was gonna heal the daughter. He knows all things.

The Bible says they didn't need to testify to Jesus about anything because He knew all men. He knew what was in men. He knew what was in the heart of this woman. He knew the faith that was there, and He was drawing skillfully from her this great expression of faith that was there. And His first rebuff was that of silence. He didn't answer her at all. And over the apparent silence of Jesus, she persisted, until the disciples were so bugged by her, they said, "Lord why don't you just take care of her. She is a menace."

And Jesus, no doubt, as I say in her hearing, said, "Look, I am only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And so she came and she worshiped him, saying, "Lord help me." Now continuing to draw her out, He said, "It isn't right to take the children's bread." That is the children of Israel, and those benefit of healing that He had brought to them. It isn't right to take that and to cast it. And here you got to be careful; there were two words for dogs. And the Jews often called the Gentile, "Gentile dog", and it was a dirty word.

Now there are no swear words in Hebrew. They have no words to swear by in Hebrew, no curse words. If a Jew wants to curse he has to curse in English. There are no curse words in Hebrew, which I think is quite fascinating. But the dirtiest thing they can call a person is a dog. They had these wild dogs that run in packs, that everybody hated. They were vicious. They were just hated. And so they would refer to usually, rather than say, he is a Gentile, they would say, "he is a Gentile dog."

But then there was another Greek word for dog, which is a little puppy, which was usually around the table as the children were eating. Now when they ate they didn't have utensils like we have, the knives, and forks, and spoon, and so the kid didn't have to learn table etiquette. But they would just pick off with their hands and you would eat with your hands. And after you were through with your meal, you would then take a piece of the bread, and you would wipe your hands off with the piece of bread. Just clean all the grease and juices off with a piece of bread. And then they usually take that piece of bread and toss it to the little puppies that were around the table.

And so it was a very common picture in the minds of the people when Jesus said, "It isn't right to take the children's bread, and to cast it to puppies." And she said, "yes, Lord, but the little puppies eat the bread that falls from the master's table." Jesus said, oh, aha, all right. "Great is your faith." It was faith that conquered over the silence of Jesus. It was faith that conquered over the seeming reluctance of Jesus. It was faith that won. This mother was desperate.

Some of you mothers have wayward daughters. Now probably none of you would go so far as to say they are vexed by the devil, but here was a mother in real distress. And she came to Jesus and her faith triumphed. Listen, come to Jesus. Don't go away, until you've received. There was no way she was gonna go until she received help. Jesus answered and said unto her, "Oh woman, great is thy faith." Interesting He said that also of the Roman Centurion and of this Serah-Phoenician woman.

And Jesus departed from there, and He came near to the sea of Galilee; and he went up into a mountain, and he sat down there. And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, and blind, and dumb, and maimed, and many others, and they cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, and the lame walking, and the blind were able to see: and they glorified the God of Israel. Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and he said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have continued with me now for three days, and there is nothing to eat: And I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. And His disciples said unto him, Where should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill this great multitude? And Jesus said unto them, How many loaves do you have? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And he took the seven loaves and the fish, and he gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And again they did all eat and were stuffed: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside the woman and children. And he sent away the multitude, and they took the ship, and they came to the coast of Magdala (Mat 15:29-39).

Now Magdala is probably two miles south of Capernaum there in the Sea of Galilee. They have discovered the ruins of the city of Magdala from which Mary Magdalene did come. And you can see the ruins there of Magdala today. And incidentally, someone wasn't reading the scriptures carefully and they built a church there at Magdala, that they call the Church of the Loaves and the Fishes, where they said Jesus fed the multitude. But notice He didn't come there, until after He had fed the multitude in the mountains apart from there. But it's convenient for the tour buses, and so they take you down by the Sea of Galilee there at Magdala to show you the mosaic of a church where there is loaves and fishes, and the mosaic on the floor. And they swear that this is the spot where it all happened.

(Through The Bible c 2000 Series; Chuck Smith; Bible commentaries,1979-1986)

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

(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)