

Chapel Flock



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[The River-](#)
[Bryon Doerksen](#)

[Just As I Am-](#)
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[Arms Of Love-](#)
[Bryon Doerksen](#)

Prayer

Lord, I am so grateful that You accepted me when I was dead in sin and washed me with Your precious blood. When I was placed inside You, everything old passed away and everything in me became brand new. For this great gift of life and salvation, I want to serve You the rest of my days. I am so thankful to You for giving me a new view of life and a whole new reason to live. When You came to dwell in me through the Person of the Holy Spirit, the drab, dark days of sin passed away, and a new world of light and color filled my life. For this, I am forever thankful, in Jesus' name. Amen.....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

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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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Mark 7:1-37 (AMP)

1 NOW THERE gathered together to [Jesus] the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 For they had seen that some of His disciples ate with common hands, that is, unwashed [with hands defiled and unhallowed, because they had not given them a ceremonial washing]— 3 For the Pharisees and all of the Jews do not eat unless [merely for ceremonial reasons] they wash their hands [diligently up to the elbow] with clenched fist, adhering [carefully and faithfully] to the tradition of [practices and customs handed down to them by] their forefathers [to be observed]. 4 And [when they come] from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they purify themselves; and there are many other traditions [oral, man-made laws handed down to them, which they observe faithfully and diligently, such as], the washing of cups and wooden pitchers and widemouthed jugs and utensils of copper and beds— 5 And the Pharisees and scribes kept asking [Jesus], Why do Your disciples not order their way of living according to the tradition handed down by the forefathers [to be observed], but eat with hands unwashed and ceremonially not purified? 6 But He said to them, Excellently and truly [so that there will be no room for blame] did Isaiah prophesy of you, the pretenders and hypocrites, as it stands written: These people [constantly] honor Me with their lips, but their hearts hold off and are far distant from Me. 7 In vain (fruitlessly and without profit) do they worship Me, ordering and teaching [to be obeyed] as doctrines the commandments and precepts of men. 8 You disregard and give up and ask to depart from you the commandment of God and cling to the tradition of men [keeping it carefully and faithfully]. 9 And He said to them, You have a fine way of rejecting [thus thwarting and nullifying and doing away with] the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition (your own human regulations)! 10 For Moses said, Honor (revere with tenderness of feeling and deference) 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 die. 11 But [as for you] you say, A man is exempt if he tells [his] father or [his] mother, What you would otherwise have gained from me [everything I have that would have been of use to you] is Corban, that is, is a gift [already given as an offering to God], 12 Then you no longer are permitting him to do anything for [his] father or mother [but are letting him off from helping them]. 13 Thus you are nullifying and making void and of no effect [the authority of] the Word of God through your tradition, which you [in turn] hand on. And many things of this kind you are doing. 14 And He called the people to [Him] again and said to them, Listen to Me, all of you, and understand [what I say]. 15 There is not [even] one thing outside a man which by going into him can pollute and defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him and make him unhallowed and unclean. 16 If any man has ears to hear, let him be listening [and let him perceive and comprehend by hearing]. 17 And when He had left the crowd and had gone into the house, His disciples began asking Him about the parable. 18 And He said to them, Then are you also unintelligent and dull and without understanding? Do you not discern and see that whatever goes into a man from the outside cannot make him unhallowed or unclean, 19 Since it does not reach and enter his heart but [only his] digestive tract, and so passes on [into the place designed to receive waste]? Thus He was making and declaring all foods [ceremonially] clean [that is, abolishing the ceremonial distinctions of the Levitical Law]. 20 And He said, What comes out of a man is what makes a man unclean and renders [him] unhallowed. 21 For from within, [that is] out of the hearts of men, come base and wicked thoughts, sexual immorality, stealing, murder, adultery, 22 Coveting (a greedy desire to have more wealth), dangerous and destructive wickedness, deceit; unrestrained (indecent) conduct; an evil eye (envy), slander (evil speaking, malicious misrepresentation, abusiveness), pride (the sin of an uplifted heart against God and man), foolishness (folly, lack of sense, recklessness, thoughtlessness). 23 All these evil [purposes and desires] come from within, and they make the man unclean and render him unhallowed. 24 And Jesus arose and went away from there to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He went into a house and did not want anyone to know [that He was there]; but it was not possible for Him to be hidden [from public notice]. 25 Instead, at once, a woman whose little daughter had (was under the control of) an unclean spirit heard about Him and came and flung herself down at His feet. 26 Now the woman was a Greek (Gentile), a Syrophenician by nationality. And she kept begging Him to drive the demon out of her little daughter. 27 And He said to her, First let the children be fed, for it is not becoming or proper or right to take the children's bread and throw it to the [little house] dogs. 28 But she answered Him, Yes, Lord, yet even the small pups under the table eat the little children's scraps of food. 29 And He said to her, Because of this saying, you may go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter [permanently]. 30 And she went home and found the child thrown on the couch, and the demon departed. 31 Soon after this, Jesus, coming back from the region of Tyre, passed through Sidon on to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of Decapolis [the ten cities]. 32 And they brought to Him a man who was deaf and had difficulty in speaking, and they begged Jesus to place His hand upon him. 33 And taking him aside from the crowd [privately], He thrust His fingers into the man's ears and spat and touched his tongue; 34 And looking up to heaven, He sighed as He said, Ephphatha, which means, Be opened! 35 And his ears were opened, his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak distinctly and as he should. 36 And Jesus [in His own interest] admonished and ordered them sternly and expressly to tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 And they were overwhelmingly astonished, saying, He has done everything excellently (commendably and nobly)! He even makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak!

Chapter 7

Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem (Mar 7:1).

They came on up from Jerusalem to the area of Galilee.

And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables (Mar 7:2-4).

I mean, all of the rules concerning ceremonial washing for cleanliness. Now, this is not hygienic; this is ceremonial. And according to the ceremonial washing, and, of course, sometime after this the Mishna was compiled in which all of these rules and regulations were put concerning the washing; it's interesting that all of the rules that they had concerning the washing of hands, this particular type of washing, it wasn't that you just go over and wash your hands off. You had to wash your hands a particular way in order to be

ceremonial clean. Because you see, if your hands were ceremonial dirty by touching something that someone else had touched who wasn't clean...say, if I was a Gentile and I had touched a coin and you touched that coin, I was a Gentile unclean, therefore, if you touched the coin that I touched, you would be unclean too, because I'm an unclean Gentile. So, you go to the marketplace and you get your change, and who knows who's been touching those coins. And so, when you get home and you want to eat, you can't just go wash your hands hygienically and eat. You've got to wash them ceremonially. And to do that, you had to, first of all, get someone to help you out because you had to have what they called a half a log of oil, which is about two eggshells full in the first washing. And what you'd do is, you'd, with your fingers extended upward, you would take your fist and rub it in the one hand as the water was poured over. Rub your fingers together, and then your fist within the hand, and then the other side. And you would hold your hands out this way, because anything that touches you would be unclean. So, the water that you're washing with becomes unclean because it has touched you. And your hands were unclean, you see, ceremonially. So, you hold them out like this so that the water drips off the wrist, because you don't want that water to drip on you. Because any part it would hit, that would be unclean too and you'd have to go through another bath. So, you hold it out like this and let the water drip on down. Then, because the water that was used is now unclean, and that which is dripping off is unclean, then you would have to hold your hands downward and out from you, and they would pour another half log of water over your hands as you're holding them down and let it run off the fingers. And this is the way that if you didn't wash that way, and you would eat without going through this, they would do it several times during a meal. You know, go through this whole ceremonial bit of washing their hands.

Now, they also had these pots that you don't know what may have touched the pots. Some little fly may have landed on the pot that had landed on a Gentile's shoulder or something. And so, they would also go through the process of washing the pot on the outside. However, if when the pot was open, a fly would happen to land on the inside, that was it. You had to break the thing in pieces and not leave a piece large enough to take oil to anoint your little toe. In other words, it had to really be shattered, because it was unclean. And there were a lot of rules like this. If it was brass or metal, then there was a ceremonial washing for that, and you could use that over. Or dishes, if they were just flat, then they would be all right. But if there were any rim on the dish and it became unclean, then you had to break it completely. You couldn't use it again. And all of these rules were codified in the Mishna of these washings, the traditions of the elders.

Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? [they're eating bread without washing their hands] He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Mar 7:5-7).

It is interesting how easily the traditions of man can become the dogmas and the doctrines of the church. Things that are just traditions. I think that traditions are probably the hardest thing a person has to deal with as far as being free. We are bound by traditions. Traditions have a greater hold on a person than almost anything else. These traditions are deeply ingrained in us. But if you really go back to study the background of the traditions, you'll find that many times they have no biblical base at all. But oftentimes, traditions are based in paganism. And yet, because they have been practiced so long in church, they become the dogma of the church, and finally the doctrines of the church.

Take Halloween, the tradition of "trick and treat." The children dressing up as witches and goblins and going around. Now, which one of you loving parents wants to deny your sweet little child the privilege of dressing up like a witch or a ghost or a goblin? That they might take their sack around to the neighbors and munch sweets off of them. Extort them, actually, because the idea is, if you don't come through we're going to soap your windows. It's extortion! And yet, it's tradition! Of course, when I was a kid, there were no treats. It was just tricks. Or if there were treats, I didn't hear about it. But, really, as you look at the whole practice, it's quite wrong. In fact, it's extremely dangerous, because there are so many stupid people in this world, that there are those who get some kind of a kick out of lacing the goodies with razor blades or poison, or things of that nature. And every Halloween, children inadvertently are picking up harmful things, and many of them injured as the result of this. And yet, parents aid and abet them in their extortion plots, as they take them through the neighborhoods. You know, treat or else! But it's tradition. We can see so many flaws and wrong aspects to it, and yet, which one of you have enough guts to say to your kid, "No, you're not going to go out this year?" It's interesting just how deeply ingrained traditions become.

Now within the church so many traditions have developed. And unfortunately, in the church the same things are being done which Jesus accused the Pharisees of doing. And that is, teaching for doctrines the traditions of man. There are many doctrines of the church that have not a scriptural base, but have only a traditional base. The doctrine of infant baptism for salvation: you will not find one scriptural base for that doctrine. It's the traditions of men. And yet, it is held too tightly by many, many churches as solid church doctrine. But, it's doctrine based upon tradition, not the foundation of the word. And, that's just one of many. For He said,

For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject [you actually are rejecting] the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition (Mar 7:8-9).

You're putting your traditions above the commandments of God.

For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth [his] father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer [allow] him no more to do ought for his father or his mother [or, he can do what he wants] (Mar 7:10-12);

Now, if you would curse your father and mother under the Jewish law, you'd be stoned. You're to honor your father and mother. "And whosoever should curse his father and mother should be put to death." But, they developed this tradition. You say, "Now, Dad,

this is Corban. I'm going to give you a gift. You are a dirty rotten louse, and I hate you and I've always hated you. Now, this is for your good, Dad. This is a gift for you." As long as you preface it, "This is a gift; this is corban, that you might be benefited by this," then you can go ahead and say whatever you wanted. That was their tradition by which they circumvented the law of God. You were actually to provide for your parents. But you say, "Well, it's Corban. I've given that to God; you can't have that." And you could actually wipe out any obligation you had to a person by saying, "Anything I owe you is Corban. That is, it's dedicated to God, and therefore you can't have it." And by these traditions, they were actually negating the law of God.

Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye (Mar 7:13).

You hypocrites, He said.

And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me (Mar 7:14)

And now He says probably one of the most radical things He has said up to this point. Now, Jesus said an awful lot of radical things in His life. But up to this point, this is probably the most radical thing that He said. And you have to understand the background in which it was said, that is, of the people. Under the Mosaic law, there were certain meats that they were forbidden to eat, one of those being swine, or pig. Under the law it was forbidden. It was considered unclean; it was forbidden. Now, during the time of Antiochus Zepiphanes, that Syrian king who had conquered Israel and sought to just profane and blaspheme these people, he ordered that they, all of them, eat pork. It was a commandment of Antiochus Zepiphanes, and if they would not eat pork, they would be put to death. And hundreds of Jews died rather than to eat pork, thousands of them, during the time of the Macabeans. Thousands of them died rather than to violate the law and eat pork. Now Jesus is going to say something extremely radical with this kind of a background.

Hearken unto me (Mar 7:14)

He's talking to the crowd now. He's been talking to the Pharisees, telling them about how they've disannulled the law of God by their traditions and now he's calling the crowd to hearken to Him. And this radical statement,

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear (Mar 7:15-16).

It's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him; pork, whatever. Now, this was a radical departure from their traditions. In fact, when He came into the house away from the people, His disciples said, "Lord, explain that one to us."

And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but [only] into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? (Mar 7:18-19)

Now, the meats are all purged out of your body; they don't defile you in a spiritual sense. And of course, we're talking about ceremonial washing. The meat that you eat doesn't defile you. Now, it can make you sick or it can do things, but spiritually it doesn't defile you. There's no spiritual defilement in it, because it passes through your body.

And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that [is what] defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man (Mar 7:20-23).

So, it's not what goes in, but what comes out. And that reveals what is in the man's heart. And there's where the true spiritual defilement or purity exists in the heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God." That's where real spiritual defilement is; not in what you are eating, but what you are, the inward part of your life, what's in your heart. Not what's in your belly that counts.

And from thence he arose (Mar 7:24),

Now He's at the area around Genesarret, there at the Sea of Galilee.

and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon (Mar 7:24),

Tyre and Sidon, of course, are over on the coast. You've been reading about them quite a bit of late. Tyre is about thirty-five miles from Capernaum in the northeasterly direction. And of course, about twenty-five miles further up the road is Sidon. And Jesus left the area of the Galilee now and is going over actually into the Gentile territory.

and [he] entered into a house, and would have no one know it [he wanted to do it secretly]: but he could not be hid. For [there was] a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: the woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by nation; and she besought [begged] him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet [right] to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs (Mar 7:24-27). Now, at this point, many people are offended with Jesus. Here is a woman, a mother, who is in real trouble. She's got a daughter that's got big problems; her daughter is possessed by an unclean spirit. And this mother, out of desperation, is coming to Jesus for help. But because she is a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician, Jesus makes reference to her as a dog. Now, there were there wild scavenger dogs that were hated by everybody. They would run in packs; they would attack sheep, they would attack children. And

they were ferocious, vicious, hated animals. And it was very common for the Jews to call the Gentile dogs. And the word is equivalent to our English word bitch where it is a derogatory term. And so, they would use it, the word dog like a person would use the other word today, in a very derisive, derogatory way. And to think that Jesus would make reference to this woman like that is very unsettling, if He did. But He didn't. There is another Greek word for dog, which is the word that Jesus used. It is that little household pet that's always under the table, that little pet of the family. And most of the Jewish homes had their little pet dogs, which were domesticated and lovable little animals under the table. And when Jesus said, "It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," He used this Greek word that could be translated, "It isn't right to take the children's bread and to throw it to the little puppies, these cute little dogs under that table."

And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs [those little puppies] under the table eat of the children's crumbs (Mar 7:28).

Now, in those days they did not have knives and forks and spoons. They did not have eating utensils. They didn't even use chopsticks. They used the utensils that God first created for man to eat with. They used their hands. And the eating was an interesting process. Always bread. And usually you would break your bread, pull it off and then dip it in the soup or in the sauces or in whatever. And you'd use your bread oftentimes as sort of a spoon. And when we're over there, we usually go out for what they call an oriental meal, but it's more of an Arabic type of a meal, where they serve you the pita bread and all of these sauces. And you break the thing and you do your dipping and all, and you have all these exotic kind of salsas and everything else to eat with your pita bread. But they use their hands; they use their fingers. Now, of course, by the time you're through eating, you've got the grease and everything else all over your hands. So, the final piece of bread, you would take it and use it to wipe off as a napkin. You'd use it to wipe off your hands. And then, you'd toss it under the table to the little dog down there waiting, standing up and "woof, woof." You stand up and you drop him this final piece of bread that had all these delicious juices on it. And the dogs would eat these crumbs or these pieces of bread that would be used to wipe off the hands from the master's table.

So, to understand it from its cultural background, it's not nearly as severe as it would just appear on the surface to us. Here's this woman, she's a Greek, and she's outside of the covenant. Jesus said, "I'm not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But here's this woman from outside of the covenant race, and she's coming to Jesus and she's saying, "Lord, help me! My daughter is at home and she's vexed with an unclean spirit." Jesus said, "It's not right to take the children's bread and to cast it to the little puppies." That is, the bread that they're supposed to be eating. "No, that's true, Lord. But those little puppies, they get the crumbs at the end, those that fall from the master's table." And Jesus said, "Ah, for this saying..." and another gospel said, "Oh, woman, great is thy faith."

For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil [was] gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis (Mar 7:29-31).

So actually, He made a round about journey going north before coming south.

And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and he put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; And [they] were beyond measure and astonished, saying, He hath done all [of these] things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak (Mar 7:32-37).

Now, here we find again an interesting method that Jesus is using: spitting, putting His fingers in the guy's ears because he's deaf and then spitting and putting it on his tongue. The interesting thing about Jesus is that He did not follow a pattern.

We seem to be so organized; we want everything to work by patterns. We're always looking for the secret formula. We're always trying to find that method. And we're seeking to develop within the church methodologies, "This is the method by which the work of God is wrought." No, there is no method by which the work of God is wrought. God works in many different ways and refuses to be confined to any pattern, because God doesn't want us to develop methodology. So, the Lord has chosen to work as He pleases to work, and often times in different ways. Now, we are told in Corinthians, "Now there are diversities of gifts that is of the Holy Spirit, and there are also diversities of operations." So that God may give to ten people a gift of the word of knowledge, but it works in a different way in all ten. Because there are diversities of operations, even of the diversities of gifts. God refuses to be patterned or pigeonholed. God always allows Himself that freedom of working in a unique way, however He sees fit. And so, it is wrong for us to try to find some method, some secret formula whereby we might see the power of God working in a particular way.

There was a time in my own ministry when I was seeking the Lord, as He said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." And I was seeking the Lord for the gifts of healing. We were living in Tucson, and I was diligently seeking the Lord. I wanted all that God had for me. There were so many sick people in Tucson; it's one of those places where people from the East who have asthma or arthritis or whatever, they go to Tucson because of the climate and the low humidity and so forth...a lot of sick people. And we had to minister to a lot of sick people. And so, I was just thinking, "Lord, it would just be so great if I just had the gift of healing." And, so oftentimes, in our services we would pray for the sick. And one evening we had a lady who was...we had set up a tent and we were having a tent meeting out in the area of Twenty-second and Craycroft, under Davis Motham. And this one lady came to the tent, and she was blind in her left eye. And so her friends brought her that she might be prayed for to be healed. And so I laid hands on her to pray that God would heal the blindness in her left eye. And as I prayed, when I said, "In the name of Jesus," I felt a sensation. And that's the best I can say, just a sensation in my left hand. And when I took my hand off and the lady looked, to my surprise, she said, "I can see! I can see! Praise the Lord, I can see!" And, you know, it was exciting. She went around and told the whole neighborhood that she could see. And of course, they all knew she

was blind and she proved it; she'd cover her right eye and read things with her left eye. And her eye was healed. I can't explain it; I was surprised. And pleasantly so, but nonetheless, surprised. She started bringing a lot of people with different ailments to be prayed for. And I was trying to remember, "Now, just how did I do it? And what did I say?" I was looking for the magic formula. And I'd put my hand on and I'd say, "In the name of Jesus," and wouldn't feel anything. "IN THE NAME OF JESUS!" It's got to be somewhere in there. But it's interesting how we're always trying to find that formula. God doesn't work by formulas; He works by His sovereign grace. You can't pattern God. And so, Jesus didn't follow the same methods; He used different methods.

Now, one further thing: He would tell people, "Now, don't tell anybody." But they'd go out and blow it anyhow. Why was Jesus saying, "Don't tell anyone"? Jesus was seeking to forestall any premature attempt by the people excited over the miracles seeking to acclaim Him and set Him up as the Messiah. There was a special day God had before ordained that the Messiah should be revealed to the people. When Jesus was in Cana of Galilee at the beginning of His ministry, and they were at this wedding feast and they had run out of wine, His mother came to Him and said, "Son, they've run out of wine." He said, "What's that to Me? It's not My problem." He said, "My hour has not yet come. Don't rush things, Mom. My hour is not yet come." Jesus was constantly looking forward to that hour in which He was to be presented as the Messiah. And over and over again we hear Him saying, "My hour is not yet come." So, He would say, "Look, keep it quiet; don't tell anybody." Because there was an attempt, prematurely, to acclaim Him as the Messiah.

After the feeding of the multitudes, they said, "Wow! It's got to be Him. Who else can feed them like that? The Messiah, the Kingdom Age is here. Look, He can take a few loaves of bread and feed everybody." And they were going to, by force, push Him into the position of the Messiah. And He passed through their midst; He disappeared from them. God had promised a day. In the Psalms He declared, "This is the day that the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." The day that the Messiah would be revealed. And so, Jesus was seeking to stop any movement by the people to prematurely go ahead of God's plan, to seek to establish Him as the Messiah. So, that is why He would say, "Go thy way; don't tell anybody." But, you know, when God has done something like that, how can you be quiet about it? And so the more He seemed to try and stop them, the more they published it. And people were amazed because He was able to open up the ears of the deaf and to loosen the tongues of the dumb. The marvelous work of our Lord. We'll continue in chapter 8 of next week, as we get the feeding of the four thousand and a similar miracle to that of the feeding of the five. Dr. J. Vernon McGee has a little commentary entitled "Marching Through Mark." I think we better write one, "Crawling Through Mark." But, it's all the word of God, and it's all good for us.

May the Lord be with you and bless you through the week. May the word of Christ dwell in your heart richly through faith. And may God help you to take the time to pray, more time in prayer this week. Make it a covenant in your heart before the Lord just to spend more valuable time with Him. Even if it means turning off the TV, as horrible as that may sound. And may God just draw you close to Himself, fill you with His love, with His Spirit, strengthen you by His Spirit in your inner man. And out of your heart may there proceed praises, blessings unto the Lord our God. Oh, may God richly bless you this week as you walk with Him in close communion. In Jesus' name.



Mark 8:1-38 (AMP)

1 IN THOSE days when [again] an immense crowd had gathered and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples to Him and told them, 2 I have pity and sympathy for the people and My heart goes out to them, for they have been with Me now three days and have nothing [left] to eat; 3 And if I send them away to their homes hungry, they will be feeble through exhaustion and faint along the road; and some of them have come a long way. 4 And His disciples replied to Him, How can anyone fill and satisfy [these people] with loaves of bread here in [this] desolate and uninhabited region? 5 And He asked them, How many loaves have you? They said, Seven. 6 And He commanded the multitude to recline upon the ground, and He [then] took the seven loaves [of bread] and, having given thanks, He broke them and kept on giving them to His disciples to put before [the people], and they placed them before the crowd. 7 And they had a few small fish; and when He had praised God and given thanks and asked Him to bless them [to their use], He ordered that these also should be set before [them]. 8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they took up seven [large provision] baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 9 And there were about 4,000 people. And He dismissed them, 10 And at once He got into the boat with His disciples and went to the district of Dalmanutha (or Magdala). 11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with and question Him, demanding from Him a sign (an attesting miracle from heaven) [maliciously] to test Him. 12 And He groaned and sighed deeply in His spirit and said, Why does this generation demand a sign? Positively I say to you, no sign shall be given this generation. 13 And He went away and left them and, getting into the boat again, He departed to the other side. 14 Now they had [completely] forgotten to bring bread, and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. 15 And Jesus [repeatedly and expressly] charged and admonished them, saying, Look out; keep on your guard and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod and the Herodians. 16 And they discussed it and reasoned with one another, It is because we have no bread. 17 And being aware [of it], Jesus said to them, Why are you reasoning and saying it is because you have no bread? Do you not yet discern or understand? Are your hearts in [a settled state of] hardness? 18 Having eyes, do you not see [with them], and having ears, do you not hear and perceive and understand the sense of what is said? And do you not remember? 19 When I broke the five loaves for the 5,000, how many [small hand] baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? They said to Him, Twelve. 20 And [when I broke] the seven loaves for the 4,000, how many [large provision] baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? And they said to Him, Seven. 21 And He kept repeating, Do you not yet understand? 22 And they came to Bethsaida. And [people] brought to Him a blind man and begged Him to touch him. 23 And He caught the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village; and when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands upon him, He asked him, Do you [possibly] see anything? 24 And he looked up and said, I see people, but [they look] like trees, walking. 25 Then He put His hands on his eyes again; and the man looked intently [that is, fixed his eyes on definite objects], and he was restored and saw everything distinctly [even what was at a distance]. 26 And He sent him away to his house, telling [him], Do not [even] enter the village or tell anyone there. 27 And Jesus went on with His disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He asked His disciples, Who do people say that I am? 28 And they answered [Him], John the Baptist; and others [say], Elijah; but others, one of the prophets. 29 And He asked them, But who do you yourselves say that I am?

Peter replied to Him, You are the Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One). 30 And He charged them sharply to tell no one about Him. 31 And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must of necessity suffer many things and be tested and disapproved and rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be put to death, and after three days rise again [from death]. 32 And He said this freely (frankly, plainly, and explicitly, making it unmistakable). And Peter took Him by the hand and led Him aside and then [facing Him] began to rebuke Him. 33 But turning around [His back to Peter] and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get behind Me, Satan! For you do not have a mind intent on promoting what God wills, but what pleases men [you are not on God's side, but that of men]. 34 And Jesus called [to Him] the throng with His disciples and said to them, If anyone intends to come after Me, let him deny himself [forget, ignore, disown, and lose sight of himself and his own interests] and take up his cross, and [joining Me as a disciple and siding with My party] follow with Me [continually, cleaving steadfastly to Me]. 35 For whoever wants to save his [higher, spiritual, eternal] life, will lose it [the lower, natural, temporal life which is lived only on earth]; and whoever gives up his life [which is lived only on earth] for My sake and the Gospel's will save it [his higher, spiritual life in the eternal kingdom of God]. 36 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life [in the eternal kingdom of God]? 37 For what can a man give as an exchange (a compensation, a ransom, in return) for his [blessed] life [in the eternal kingdom of God]? 38 For whoever is ashamed [here and now] of Me and My words in this adulterous (unfaithful) and [preeminently] sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when He comes in the glory (splendor and majesty) of His Father with the holy angels.

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Mark's gospel, chapter 8.

Now, Mark has already told us how that Jesus fed five thousand men beside the women and children with five loaves and two fish. Now we find a second miracle of the multiplying of the food in order to supply the needs of the people. It is interesting at the beginning of Christ's ministry, when Satan was tempting Him, he said to Him because He was hungry after the forty day fast, "Why don't You take these stones and make them into bread?" But Jesus would not use His miraculous power in order to take care of His own physical need. But when it came to the physical needs of others, He was then willing to use that miraculous power; never to satisfy His own flesh or His own need, but was willing to use it in order to satisfy the needs of others.

In those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude (Mar 8:1-2),

There again, we have that word related to Jesus Christ: compassion on the multitudes. Always, it seemed, when He saw the multitude of people, His heart was moved with compassion. Now, here He is compassionate because of their physical needs. It is interesting how considerate Jesus always is. Sometimes we become very insensitive to the needs of others, but never Jesus. He was always sensitive to the needs of the people. And He said,

I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and [they] have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers [many] of them came from far [long distances] (Mar 8:2-3).

So He's concerned for those people that have been with Him now for three days. And it's interesting if you do attempt to fast, the third day seems to be one of the most difficult days of the fast as far as physical strength. Somehow, after the third, fourth, fifth day, your body changes. You begin to get a little stronger and you begin to lose that tremendous hunger. But the third day is sort of a difficult day if a person is determined to fast. And He realized that they've been there now for three days. Some of them had come from long distances. To send them home in this condition, they would become weakened; some of them would faint.

And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? [Where can we get enough bread to take care of their needs out here in this wilderness area?] And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, [and again, that word] and were filled [glutted, or stuffed, we might say today]: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away (Mar 8:4-9).

So again, taking just a few loaves, a few fish, blessing them and feeding a large multitude of people; and then again, gathering more fragments at the end than what they started with.

In the feeding of the five thousand, when they gathered there the twelve baskets, the word for basket is a word that signified a typical basket that was used by the Jews. It is interesting; this particular word basket here is a typical word that is used for a basket that the Gentiles did use. Whatever significance that might have is a matter of speculation. Some have speculated that much of this crowd were Gentiles, and so these Gentile type of baskets were available to collect the fragments that remained. Where the feeding of the five thousand men beside women and children, was near Bethsaida, a Jewish city. He is actually now over the other side of the lake, more into Gentile territory. But they see in that the significance that Jesus is the bread of life, not to the Jews only, but now He is that bread of life also to the Gentiles. Because He is now feeding many Gentiles also miraculously with that bread of life.

And straightway [immediately] he entered into a ship with his disciples, and [they] came into the parts of Dalmanutha. And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him (Mar 8:10-11). Now, in those days the people were looking for the Messiah, and there were many men who came on the scene who declared themselves to be the Messiah. And quite often these men who came on the scene declaring to be the Messiah promised that they were going to do some spectacular feat. Some of them promised that they were going to divide the Jordan River and to stop its flow like happened in the days of Joshua. And others promised many types of supernatural feat that they were going to perform, like speak to the whole world simultaneously...on satellite TV and everybody would understand it in their own language. But these pretending Messiahs never did come through with their feat. But the Jews were looking for some supernatural, spectacular phenomena to happen at the hands of the Messiah in order that He

might prove that He was the Messiah. So they asked Him for a sign from heaven. But it says they were tempting Him.

And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation (Mar 8:12).

Another place and another gospel, it records that Jesus said unto them, "A wicked and an adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Jesus did not perform miracles just to satisfy the curiosity of the crowd. The purpose of His miracles were always the helping of the helpless. He always used His power to minister to the needs of people. He did not use them to minister to His own needs. He did not use them just to make some spectacular display to draw attention, or the attention of people to Himself.

Herod had heard of Jesus and the miracles that He did and Herod wanted Jesus to perform a miracle for Him, like having some magician show you some fancy trick. But Jesus would not perform any miracles for Herod. He refused to perform miracles just to satisfy people's curiosity for supernatural phenomena. And so here, as they were seeking a sign, He just said, "No sign is going to be given to this generation."

Thomas, when the disciples told him that Jesus was risen from the dead, "We have seen Him," he said, "I will not believe until I can take my finger and put it in His hand, or take my hand and put it in His side." And so the disciples were gathered together and Thomas was with them. And Jesus suddenly appeared in the midst. And He said, "Okay, Thomas, go ahead. Put your finger in My hand. Put your hand in My side." Now, when Jesus said that to Thomas, the first thing it indicated is that Jesus was there listening when Thomas said, "I'm going to believe until." Though, they didn't believe Him at that point, Jesus was right there with them. As He said, "Where two or three of you are gathered in My name, I'm going to be there in the midst." And so, He was showing them, first of all, that He was in the midst of them when Thomas was expressing His doubts. And so, when He appeared, He said, "Thomas, okay, you wanted to do that? Go ahead, take your finger and put it in My hand. Take your hand and put it in My side." "Oh, Lord," he said, "my Lord and my God, I believe." Jesus said, "Blessed are they who seeing, believe. But more blessed are they who believe without seeing."

There are some people that are always looking for signs. I don't know that that is always healthy. We read in the scriptures that there is a man who will be coming on the scene very soon, and he's going to be showing all kinds of spectacular signs. And if a person's faith is geared towards seeing some spectacular sign or miracle or whatever, they're going to be in big trouble. Because when the anti-Christ comes, he's going to come with all types of signs and wonders and lying miracles, and deceiving the people by the signs that he is able to perform. So, it is not a healthy thing to put your faith or trust in the signs that a person might be able to produce. It is important that you put your faith and your trust in the word of God, what God has said. And to believe God's word, not requiring some supernatural sign before you believe.

And he left them, and entering into the ship again [he] departed to the other side. Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and neither had they [any bread] in the ship with them more than one loaf [except for just maybe one loaf]. And he charged them saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, It is because we have no bread [Uh-oh, He knows we forgot to get bread]. And when Jesus knew it [realized what they were thinking], he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? [Why do you think that I said that, because you didn't bring bread?] perceive ye not yet, neither understand? [Didn't you understand?] Have ye your heart yet hardened? [Is your heart still hardened?] Having eyes [to see], see ye not? and having ears [to hear], hear ye not? And do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up [did you take up]? And they said, Seven. And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand? (Mar 8:13-21)

You know, if you've got one loaf, that's all we need. You know I was talking about us getting hungry or needing to eat while we were on our way across. Leaven was always a symbol of evil. It was the starter that they would always save from the previous batch of dough that they had made. And it was like the sourdough that the old forty-niners used to use. They always had their starter. They always keep a part of the dough from the previous batch that had already been leavened. And when they would make a new batch of dough, they would stick in this little part from the old batch, their starter that would start their fermenting process in the new batch of dough. And it would permeate the whole batch of dough by this process of fermentation, or actually, it's a method of petrification, or fermentation by which it permeates the whole loaf. And because just a little bit could permeate the whole loaf by this process of fermentation, it was, to the Jews, a very good symbol of evil, how just a little bit of evil tolerated can permeate throughout a whole system. And when Jesus said, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, or the leaven of Herod," He was talking about that evil of the Pharisees. That type of spirit that is able to permeate and infect others. Not talking about the fact that they had forgotten to take bread.

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and [they] besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town (Mar 8:22-23);

Now, rather than performing this miracle in front of all of the people, Jesus, rather, took this blind man out of town.

And when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw aught [anything]. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking (Mar 8:23-24).

In other words, he began to have some vision, but it was very blurry.

After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up; and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town (Mar 8:25-26).

You just go home and don't tell anybody. This is an interesting miracle, inasmuch as it is the only miracle recorded where there was a gradual healing. The first time Jesus laid His hands upon him, he was not completely healed, but he had a partial restoration of his sight. And it was only after Jesus laid His hands on him the second time that he had clear vision, and so it was a case of a gradual healing and the only one we have recorded in the ministry of Jesus.

There is much about healing that I do not understand. I basically don't understand why it is that some people are healed and other people are not healed. If I were God granting healing, I feel that I would be more generous. And I would be more prone to heal those good worthy people, and there's some of the people healed that I would never heal them. So it's good that I'm not God, because I could really mess things up in a hurry. And soon, men would be coming on the basis of their goodness and their merit and their worth. And there would be no more grace; I could wipe grace out in a hurry. Because I definitely would give more by deservings than I would just grace.

I do believe in healing; I believe very strongly in healing. I believe there are all kinds of healing. I believe that there are gradual healings. Any healing process is divine, as far as I'm concerned. Even if the doctor has operated and removed the appendix or whatever and ties things off and sews things up, the doctor doesn't cause that skin to come together and to knit and all. He stitches it, and he knows that there is a process by which those cells will join together and heal and scar over and will seal itself up. He doesn't do that, he just knows the processes of healing that God has established. There's an established process of divine healing within our bodies. And it's nonetheless divine just because it is nature. Who created nature and the processes of nature?

There are some who object to divine healing, saying it's all in a person's mind anyhow. It was psychosomatic. Well, God help those poor critics. If a person has a psychosomatic illness and they come and are prayed for, and they are released from that psychological block and they are able to function properly, why knock it? I don't know what was causing the problem in that individual. Maybe they did have a psychological block and they had just blocked out any vision, and it was purely a psychosomatic thing. So what? If they come and are prayed for and can see, why not just rejoice in what God has done? He has done a divine healing in their mind. If you don't want to acknowledge it physically, at least it has gone on in their emotions and in their minds, and He's done a healing of the scars or the wounds or whatever was there. And I'm willing to acknowledge that and praise God for it, and acknowledge it as divine healing.

I have seen miraculous healings; I have seen gradual healings. And I've seen people die. And I do not know why it is that some have gradual healings, some have miraculous healings, and some are not healed. I don't know that. That isn't in my realm or category to understand. And I frankly confess, I don't understand. God oftentimes works in ways in which we do not expect Him to work. God often works in very natural ways, but nonetheless, a supernatural work of God.

In the early years of our ministry when we were struggling to keep alive, it was necessary many times to pray and trust God for the physical needs of the family. I mean, when, in the Lord's Prayer it says, "Give us this day our daily bread," we know what that is all about. So many days we had to pray for our daily bread, because we didn't have the money to buy it. But we did have the promise of God. "My God shall supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus our Lord." Now, God did not always send someone to the door with an envelope and money in it. He did sometimes, but not always. God did not always send the money in the mail. Sometimes He did, but not always. God did not always send people to leave a basket or a bag of groceries on our front steps, but many times He did. But more often than not, God supplied our needs by someone calling up and saying, "Hey, Chuck, I need someone to help me today. Can you work for me today?" I'd say, "Yep!" And as I was on my way, I'd say, "Thank you, Lord, for providing for our needs." And God so often provided for our needs by giving me an opportunity to work for someone for wages whereby we were able to buy the food for dinner. Many times Alpha Beta Market would call and they'd say, "We need a manager down in store eleven. Can you go down there this morning?" I'd say, "Sure," and I'd take off and our needs would be supplied. Or the mortuary would call and say, "We've got a body we have to go out and pick up. Can you do it?" I'd say, "Sure," and I'd get five bucks for every body I'd pick up. And I'd say, "Thank you, Lord. We've got food for dinner tonight." God has a sense of humor, too. God does not always use supernatural methods, as we think of supernatural, to take care of us or our needs. Many times it is through very natural processes that God is working. But the important thing is that we learn to see the supernatural in the natural.

I feel sorry for that person who has lost the sight of God. I feel sorry for that person who can't look at a flower and be in awe of God, to smell a rose and not be able to just worship God and the Creator. Now, I don't think you should get all caught up in roses, and say, "Oh, God..." There is an irrational way of looking at nature; and the irrational way of looking at nature is looking at nature and worshipping nature. And saying, "Oh, that's God; Mother Nature did this." The rational man looks at nature and worships the God who has created the natural, the things of nature around him. That's the rational way of looking at nature. Paul tells us of those who made the mistake of worshipping and serving the creature more than the creator. It's always sad when a person is so near-sighted, he can only see the obvious and he worships, then, the obvious rather than God who has created those things.

So, here we have Jesus healing this man. And again, using spit, using unlikely methods. A guy comes and he's blind, and he says, "Can You heal me?" And Jesus spits in his eyes. Now, another time, Jesus spit on the ground and made mud, and He put the mud in the guy's eyes, and He said, "Now go down to the pool and wash the mud out," and when he did, he was able to see. Again, I love it, because the Lord is not going to be confined to a pattern. How we would love to get God in a box. How men love to tell you exactly how God is going to work, and they put the limitations and the confines around God. "And God only works in this way, and only works in this dispensation, and only..." and they're only trying to limit God. And unfortunately, many times they do limit God's work in their own lives, as did the children of Israel because of their unbelief. As we are told in the Psalms, "And they limited the Holy One of Israel because of their unbelief." But Jesus is using a variety of ways: healing instantly, here a gradual healing, sometimes touching,

sometimes not touching, just saying a word, sometimes going to visit, sometimes just saying it and saying, "Go home, and you'll find it's done." But not being confined to a pattern.

And Jesus went out (Mar 8:27),

Now He's at Bethsaida.

and his disciples [with him], into the towns of Caesarea Philippi (Mar 8:27):

So, He's leaving Bethsaida which is at the north end, the extreme north end of the Sea of Galilee, and now He is heading on up into upper Galilee, on into the area of Caesarea Philippi, which is clear on up at the end of the upper Galilee, right at the base of Mount Hermon. The name of it today is Banious, because when the Greeks came through, they built a shrine next to the cave from which the Jordan River used to gush forth. Now, after earthquakes and all, there was a change underground and the Jordan River comes forth a hundred feet below these caves almost. But it used to come out of these caves; so, they built this little shrine to the Greek god Pan, and the Greeks called it Panious. But the Arabs had difficulty pronouncing "p's" and they said "Banious" for "Panious," and so the name has come to be Banious now, of this area that was once Caesarea Philippi.

and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? (Mar 8:27)

Now the time has come when Jesus is going to reveal to the disciples His true identity. Up to now, He has not declared Himself to His disciples His true mission. They suspicion it, I'm sure, but He's never really declared it to them. And He said, "Whom do men say that I am?" And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elijah; and others [say], One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ (Mar 8:28-29).

Now, Christ is not a name; it is a title. It is the Greek for the Hebrew Messiah. And the word Messiah in Hebrew means the anointed one, and the word Christ in Greek means the anointed one. Now, it was customary in those days when a king was crowned to anoint that king with oil, to pour oil over his head in an anointing ceremony by which he was recognized and acknowledged now as the king. So, Jesus, using the title Christ or Messiah, was that signifying that He was anointed by God to be the King. And they were looking for that King to come anointed by God. "Thou art the Messiah, the Christ."

And he charged them that they should tell no man of him (Mar 8:30).

The time has not yet come to reveal Himself to the world. He's revealing Himself now to His disciples, but He does not yet reveal Himself to the world.

And he began to teach them, that the Son of man (Mar 8:31)

And notice, He did not tell them about His crucifixion until after He told them who He was. It is because they had a totally different concept of the Messiah. They were following the commonly accepted concept of the Messiah, that the Messiah was going to establish God's Kingdom, that the Jews were again going to reign over the earth, that He was going to overthrow the yoke of the Roman government and of their oppressors, and once again God's kingdom was going to come to the earth through Israel, and they would rule over the earth again. And because that was the common concept of the Messiah, Jesus, as soon as Peter acknowledged, "Thou art the Messiah," began to teach them that the Son of Man, which is a title of the Messiah given to Him in the prophets, especially in Daniel and in Ezekiel,

that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again (Mar 8:31).

So, now He began to prepare them for the fact that He was not going to perform as they expected the Messiah to perform in immediately setting up the kingdom of God. "But I'm going to crucified; I have to be rejected." The prophecy of Isaiah said, "He is despised and rejected of men." That has to be fulfilled. Isaiah said, "He would be numbered with the transgressors in His death." That had to be fulfilled. David, in the twenty-second Psalm, described His death by crucifixion that had to be fulfilled. And so, Jesus is telling them, "Look, it's not what you think it's going to be. I'm going to have to be rejected." Daniel said, "But the Messiah will be cut off." That had to be fulfilled. "And not receive the kingdom." That had to come to pass. And so, He's seeking to prepare them. "I'm going to be rejected; I'm going to be turned over into the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and they're going to kill me. But after three days I will rise again." Now, somehow when Jesus said, "They're going to kill me," this was so shocking to them, so far from their concept of the Messiah, that their brains just shut off and they didn't hear the rest of what He said. They didn't hear Him say, "I'm going to rise again the third day." It was just so shocking when He said, "They're going to kill me." "Woo! I-yi-yi-yiiii!" And they didn't hear, "In three days I'm going to rise again."

And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men (Mar 8:32-33).

As Peter was rebuking the Lord for declaring that He was going to be crucified, that He was going to die. Peter was only expressing really his own personal feelings as a man who loved the Lord and didn't want Him to talk about His death. But Jesus rebuked Peter really for lack of discernment; he doesn't really understand the things of God, he only understands the things of man. If he understood the things of God, he would know that the Messiah would have to be cut off, that the Messiah would have to be slain, that the Messiah would have to rise again from the dead.

And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Mar 8:34).

The three requirements for discipleship: first of all, is to deny himself. How far this is from the world's position today. The world today is saying, "You must assert yourself." And they even have created now assertive classes, where you can learn how to assert yourself. You don't have to take anything from anybody if you'll just learn to assert yourself. And I understand the women are crowding to these classes, as if they needed it. Jesus said, "No, if you come after Me, you have to deny yourself." Paul tells us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled Himself and took on the form of man" (Philippians 2:5-7). Denied Himself, in order that He might be obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He denied Himself that place with the Father in order that He might come down as a servant and die on the cross. "So if you're going to come after Me," Jesus said, "you too will have to deny yourself and take up your cross, and follow Me.

For whosoever will save his life shall lose it (Mar 8:35);

That person who is looking for life, doing everything he can to find life, its meaning, its purpose, and following his ambitions, his goals, seeking to save your life, you'll lose it.

but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? (Mar 8:35-36)

Now tonight, think for a moment of the greatest ambition that you have. If you could be...play that game for a moment. If you could be anything you wanted to be, if you could have anything you wanted to have, what would be the greatest ambition of your life? What would you choose? Now, if in achieving that goal you lost your own soul, would it be worth it? "What would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul?" If you gained the whole world, how long do you think you could hold it? Now, someone said something to me the other day that absolutely astounded me; I'd never thought of it that way. And it just really blew my mind. This fellow said, "I just celebrated my sixtieth birthday, which means I have lived 1% of the time since Adam." Man! That just shocked me to realize I've almost lived 1% of history, of the time of history since Adam. Man! What a shocking thought. So, if you gain the world, how long do you think you could hold it? How long could you enjoy it? A hundred years? Do you think you're going to live to be a hundred years old? Do you think by the time you were ninety-eight you'd still enjoy it? You see, the Lord is talking about eternity now. "What would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul?" That's eternal. The gaining of the world is only for a short time. Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the children of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, because he knew that sin is always limited. That pleasure in sin has its definite time limitations. But that walk with God is forever, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What will you take to trade for your soul? I am amazed at the things that people give in exchange for their souls. I'm disheartened. You know, they say the Indians over here were taken advantage of by the people coming from the Old World, by these early traders trading them these little baubles, glass beads, for expensive gold and silver artifacts. You think, "Oh, those poor Indians. They were taken advantage of by those white men coming in." And they were, unfortunately. They traded those expensive golden artifacts for just beads. How foolish. Wait a minute. What are you trading your soul for? What kind of a deal is Satan offering you for your soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul? Some men, just for foolish pride; some men, for a few moments of pleasure. Satan is holding out these little baubles, and says, "Your soul, man, your soul."

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (Mar 8:38).

Now, Jesus is saying, "Look, I'm going to die. I'm going to rise again." And now He's saying, "I'm going to come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels." So, the Messiah is going to come in glory and power and establish the kingdom of God, but not this trip. This trip the Messiah is going to be rejected, turned over to the scribes and Pharisees, killed, but on the third day, rise again. "But I'm coming again one day in the glory and in the power of the Father with the holy angels."

Mark 9:1-50 (AMP)

1 AND JESUS said to them, Truly and solemnly I say to you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste death before they see the kingdom of God come in [its] power. 2 Six days after this, Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves. And He was transfigured before them and became resplendent with divine brightness. 3 And His garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller (cloth dresser, launderer) on earth could bleach them. 4 And Elijah appeared [there] to them, accompanied by Moses, and they were holding [a protracted] conversation with Jesus. 5 And Peter took up the conversation, saying, Master, it is good and suitable and beautiful for us to be here. Let us make three booths (tents)—one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah. 6 For he did not [really] know what to say, for they were in a violent fright (aghast with dread). 7 And a cloud threw a shadow upon them, and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the [most dearworthy] Beloved One. Be constantly listening to and obeying Him! 8 And looking around, they suddenly no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus only. 9 And as they were coming back down the mountain, He admonished and expressly ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man should rise from among the dead. 10 So they carefully and faithfully kept the matter to themselves, questioning and disputing with one another about what rising from among the dead meant. 11 And they asked Him, Why do the scribes say that it is necessary for Elijah to come first? 12 And He said to them, Elijah, it is true, does come first to restore all things and set them to rights. And how is it written of the Son of Man that He will suffer many things and be utterly despised and be treated with contempt and rejected? 13 But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and [people] did to him whatever they desired, as it is written of him. 14 And when they came to the [nine] disciples, they saw a great crowd around them and scribes questioning and disputing with them. 15 And immediately all the crowd, when they saw Jesus [returning from the holy mount, His face and person yet glistening], they were greatly amazed and ran up to Him [and] greeted Him. 16 And He asked them, About what are you questioning and discussing with them? 17 And one of the throng replied to Him, Teacher, I brought my son to You, for he has a dumb spirit. 18 And wherever it lays hold of him [so as to make him its own], it dashes him down and convulses him, and he foams [at the mouth] and grinds his teeth, and he [falls into a motionless stupor and] is wasting away. And I asked Your disciples to drive it out, and they were not able [to do it]. 19 And He answered them, O unbelieving generation [without any faith]! How long shall I [have to do] with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to Me. 20 So they brought [the boy] to Him, and when the spirit saw Him, at once it completely convulsed the boy, and he fell to the ground and kept rolling about, foaming [at the mouth]. 21 And [Jesus] asked his father, How long has he had this? And he answered, From the time he was a little boy. 22 And it has often thrown him both into fire and into water, intending to kill him. But if You can do anything, do have pity on us and help us. 23 And Jesus said, [You say to Me], If You can do anything? [Why,] all things can be (are possible) to him who believes! 24 At once the father of the boy gave [an eager, piercing, inarticulate] cry with tears, and he said, Lord, I believe! [Constantly] help my weakness of faith! 25 But when Jesus noticed that a crowd [of people] came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, You dumb and deaf spirit, I charge you to come out of him and never go into him again. 26 And after giving a [hoarse, clamoring, fear-stricken] shriek of anguish and convulsing him terribly, it came out; and the boy lay [pale and motionless] like a corpse, so that many of them said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took [a strong grip of] his hand and began lifting him up, and he stood. 28 And when He had gone indoors, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we drive it out? 29 And He replied to them, This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting. 30 They went on from there and passed along through Galilee. And He did not wish to have anyone know it, 31 For He was [engaged for the time being in] teaching His disciples. He said to them, The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will put Him to death; and when He has been killed, after three days He will rise [from death]. 32 But they did not comprehend what He was saying, and they were afraid to ask Him [what this statement meant]. 33 And they arrived at Capernaum; and when [they were] in the house, He asked them, What were you discussing and arguing about on the road? 34 But they kept still, for on the road they had discussed and disputed with one another as to who was the greatest. 35 And He sat down and called the Twelve [apostles], and He said to them, If anyone desires to be first, he must be last of all, and servant of all. 36 And He took a little child and put him in the center of their group; and taking him in [His] arms, He said to them, 37 Whoever in My name and for My sake accepts and receives and welcomes one such child also accepts and receives and welcomes Me; and whoever so receives Me receives not only Me but Him Who sent Me. 38 John said to Him, Teacher, we saw a man who does not follow along with us driving out demons in Your name, and we forbade him to do it, because he is not one of our band [of Your disciples]. 39 But Jesus said, Do not restrain or hinder or forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in My name will soon afterward be able to speak evil of Me. 40 For he who is not against us is for us. 41 For I tell you truly, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to and bear the name of Christ will by no means fail to get his reward. 42 And whoever causes one of these little ones (these believers) who acknowledge and cleave to Me to stumble and sin, it would be better (more profitable and wholesome) for him if a [huge] millstone were hung about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. 43 And if your hand puts a stumbling block before you and causes you to sin, cut it off! It is more profitable and wholesome for you to go into life [that is really worthwhile] maimed than with two hands to go to hell (Gehenna), into the fire that cannot be put out. 44 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if your foot is a cause of stumbling and sin to you, cut it off! It is more profitable and wholesome for you to enter into life [that is really worthwhile] crippled than, having two feet, to be cast into hell (Gehenna). 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble and sin, pluck it out! It is more profitable and wholesome for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell (Gehenna), 48 Where their worm [which preys on the inhabitants and is a symbol of the wounds inflicted on the man himself by his sins] does not die, and the fire is not put out. 49 For everyone shall be salted with fire. 50 Salt is good (beneficial), but if salt has lost its saltness, how will you restore [the saltness to] it? Have salt within yourselves, and be at peace and live in harmony with one another.

And Jesus when he heard that, said unto them, Those that are whole don't need a physician, but those that are sick. But go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice (Mat 9:12-13): Now in the book of Hosea, the Lord talking to Israel said, "Look, I want mercy not sacrifice. I want you to start showing mercy. I'd rather you show mercy than offer sacrifices to me" (Hosea 6:6). And so Jesus is quoting them one of their scriptures out of Hosea. And he says, Go and learn what that means when the Lord said, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for Jesus said I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Then came to him the disciples of John, and they said, Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast e salt within yourselves, and be at peace and live in harmony with one another.

often, but your disciples don't fast? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they shall fast (Mat 9:13-15).

So while Jesus was with his disciples, was not the time for fasting. "The days will come when I will be gone, when I will leave and those will be the days when they can fast." And then Jesus talks about really, the worthlessness of reformation.

No man puts a piece of new cloth onto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up will take from the garment, and the tear is made worse (Mat 9:16).

Now in those days they didn't have Sanforize materials, preshrunk materials. And so if you would take an old garment that had been washed many times and you would sew a new patch into that old garment, the new patch would not have yet been shrunk. And so the first time you would wash the garment that new patch you put in would shrink and rip out the -- make the tear worse. And so Jesus is saying, "Look, you don't try and patch up the old garment with new material".

You don't put new wine in old skins: the new wine will burst the old skins: but you get new skins (Mat 9:17).

Now basically Jesus is talking against the religious systems that were established at that time and there's no reforming of them. I haven't really come to reform Judaism, to sew a new piece of cloth into this old garment or to put new wine in these old skins.

I do believe that there is also an application to this in the present times. I do believe that when God is desiring to do a fresh work that God often times has to go outside of the boundaries of the organized religious systems. I really don't know in history where we have any record of a true revival in a denominational group. Usually the great revivals ultimated in a whole new denomination being formed. It seems like the old skins get set, and so we see this marvelous work of God here.

But it is my personal conviction that God had to sort of raise up new skins for the work that He was wanting to do. And so I found myself personally in that frustrating position for many years of trying to put the new wine into the old skins and I was just ripping things apart. I was known as a rebel and as a nonconformist and every other thing that they could say, because I couldn't see going along with just the traditional things of the denomination. Why don't we just get back to the Word and follow the Word of God. And it seems simple enough, but the old skins just can't handle it; they're already set in their ways.

There are many people today who are still involved in the process of carefully pouring the new wine in the old skins, always trying to pour it in such a way that we don't split them, you know, don't burst them. But ultimately, people come to the conclusion that it's not an easy thing to do if it is at all possible.

Now while he spoke these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay your hand on her, and she shall live (Mat 9:18).

Say, this fellow was understandably very desperate at this point, but look at this tremendous faith. Worshipping Jesus he said, "Look, my daughter's dead: but I know if you'll come and lay your hand on her, she'll live".

And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And, behold, there was a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood for twelve years, and she came up behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole. And Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; your faith has made you whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour (Mat 9:19-22).

Now, I wanna point out something that I feel is very important and very significant in this. And that is that this woman had set a point of contact for the releasing of her faith. Now I think that many times we have faith that God is able to do a particular thing but we never come to the place of actuating that faith. And I do believe that there is a value of actuating faith and it's important to actuate faith. It's more than just well, I know God can do it. Well, yes I believe the Lord can do it. It is I believe the Lord is doing it or the Lord will do it now or at that point when I am really actuating then the faith that I have.

Now this woman in her mind had set a point to actuate her faith; that point being the moment I touch the hem of His garment I know I'm gonna be healed. So that having set the point for the actuating of her faith, the moment she touched his garment, she actuated her faith and in that moment she was healed.

Now, I think that herein lies the value of having the elders lay hands on you, as the Bible tells us "If there are any sick among you let them call for the elders of the church. Let them lay hands on them, anoint them in the oil and the prayer of faith will save the sick"(James 5:14). I think that that laying on of hands is a tremendous place for the actuating of faith. I know that when I'm anointed with oil and the elders lay hands on me, God is gonna heal me because he's promised to. And it gives a point for the actuating of a person's faith. As soon as they lay hands I know God's gonna heal me, you know. Jesus realizing that the miracle had been wrought, turned to her and said "be of good cheer, your faith," not My faith, "your faith has made you whole" and the woman was in that very hour.

And when Jesus came to the ruler's house, he saw the minstrels and the people making noise (Mat 9:23),

A, it is a custom many times, more in pagan lands, when someone is very sick or dying to gather together a great crowd for making a lot of noise, minstrels and so forth, to make a lot of noise, to drive the evil spirits away.

Jesus said unto them, Move aside: for the maid is not dead, she's only sleeping. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put out, he went in, and took her by the hand, and she arose. And the fame went abroad into all that land. And when Jesus departed from there, there were two blind men who followed him, crying, and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus said unto them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? And they said unto him, Yes, Lord. And he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, Don't let any man know this. But they, when they departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. And as they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man who was possessed with a devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never like this in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He has casting out devils through the prince of devils (Mat 9:24-34).

Notice that, because we'll be getting to that in a few moments as we move on and deal with the unpardonable sin they're beginning to get close.

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. And when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. And then he said to his disciples, The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest (Mat 9:35-38).

And so the ministry of Jesus. And notice how that Jesus does not formulate a pattern. How often we are trying to formulate patterns for God, define the circles in which God can move and develop the methods and develop the means. And we get all of these little, sort of, canned approaches to dealing with the problem. Let's see, what is your problem? Oh yeah, that's solution number seventeen. Let's see here, and you know, number one, two, three, four and we go down this little, you know, routine. We, so often like to routine God, put him in a box, combine him to a method and especially if, if that method has worked at one time.

And I'm guilty of this. I know that, you know, you think now what did I do, you know it worked that time. Now what did I do that was different you know. And you know, you try to get the same feeling or whatever you know, as though it was something to do with me rather than God's divine sovereign work.

And so with some, Jesus challenged their faith. But surely this little girl that was dead didn't have any faith. And you can't say, well it was her faith in Jesus, but immediately afterwards with the two blind men he said do you believe that I can do this? They said Oh yes, Lord. And he said, well, according to your faith be it done and their eyes were opened. The woman who had this hemorrhaging condition said I can just touch his garment and he said, "Woman, be of good cheer; you're faith has made you whole". Her faith.

So, you see there's no patterned way of God's working in a person's life. But when someone has the same thing that we have, we go and say now how did it happen? You know, what did you do? And, you know, I wanna learn the formula; I want to learn this little secret way so that I can follow, you know. But the Lord doesn't confine himself to a routine or to a pattern but he is diverse as we are diverse and he deals with each of us according to our own diverse need. And I love the Lord for his beautiful adaptability in being able to minister to me according to my own personality and my own need.

God is so glorious because I relate to him in such a personal way. He understands my own individual quirks and characteristics and he understands me and loves me just like I am and he deals with me according to my own personality and all, and thus he deals with each of us on that individual basis. And it is wrong for us to attempt to pattern God to, you know, well this is the way he did it for me and so if he doesn't do it for you that way well then hey, you, you know, don't quite have it, you know. If it wasn't done to you just like it's done for me, and so you form your denomination and I'll form mine and well, you know, and the lepers.

Another time there were ten lepers that came to Him. Jesus didn't touch him. He just said "go your way, show yourself to the priest". So, if they got together with this one that we read about tonight, oh, you mean he didn't touch you, ahem. Well you didn't get it like I did, man. He touched me. You can't belong to my church. I'm of the touch-me church. Well, we're of the touch-me-nots.

Yes, there is room for variety, as much diversity and variety as we have in people here tonight for God to work in our lives. Don't try to pattern God. Don't try to look for the same experience that someone had. You just relate to God in your own personal, unique way and God will relate to you in a very personal, unique way; and you'll have your own special walk and experience and relationship with God. So often times we give up, you know, they said that this happened, no it hasn't happened to me and no, you know, I don't have it. I guess because it didn't happen like it happened to them. The method by which God works in our lives are infinite in their varieties. Well, we got two chapters done, we're improving. That's hundred percent. Next week, we'll start at ten. Who knows? Um, we'll try and take ten, eleven and twelve. I want to uh, get into the parables and spend time in the kingdom parables which begin in chapter thirteen, and that's not a good place to start, I mean that's not a good place to come in to at the end of a study; it's a place to start. So, we'll just aim for ten, eleven and twelve next week and uh, so, uh there's, there's a lot in that. Especially I want to spend some time on an issue that a lot of people have difficulty with and that's the unpardonable sin that Jesus brings out in our study next week, chapter twelve. Shall we stand? We are so grateful for the marvelous work of God's love and His spirit within our lives, overwhelmed daily with the goodness and the blessings of God. God is so good. It's such a privilege being here with you. I thank God for this privilege. Every once in awhile I have a nightmare that I'm pastoring someplace else. Man, I'm so glad when I wake up in the morning. There's no place I'd rather be than just right here because of God's glorious work and the witness from this place that's going out to the world. May the Lord bless you, continue to bless you. May the Lord's hand be upon your life this week. May you experience God's power working in your life in a very special way. May you be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus. May you experience a time of growth this week as the Lord draws you into closer fellowship with Himself, in Jesus' name.

Mark 10:1-52 (AMP)

1 AND [Jesus] left there [Capernaum] and went to the region of Judea and beyond [east of] the Jordan; and crowds [constantly] gathered around Him again, and as was His custom, He began to teach them again. 2 And some Pharisees came up, and, in order to test Him and try to find a weakness in Him, asked, Is it lawful for a man to dismiss and repudiate and divorce his wife? 3 He answered them, What did Moses command you? 4 They replied, Moses allowed a man to write a bill of divorce and to put her away. 5 But Jesus said to them, Because of your hardness of heart [your condition of insensibility to the call of God] he wrote you this precept in your Law. 6 But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. 7 For this reason a man shall leave [behind] his father and his mother and be joined to his wife and cleave closely to her permanently, 8 And the two shall become one flesh, so that they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has united [joined together], let not man separate or divide. 10 And indoors the disciples questioned Him again about this subject. 11 And He said to them, Whoever dismisses (repudiates and divorces) his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12 And if a woman dismisses (repudiates and divorces) her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. 13 And they kept bringing young children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples were reproving them [for it]. 14 But when Jesus saw [it], He was indignant and pained and said to them, Allow the children to come to Me—do not forbid or prevent or hinder them—for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive and accept and welcome the kingdom of God like a little child [does] positively shall not enter it at all. 16 And He took them [the children up one by one] in His arms and [fervently invoked a] blessing, placing His hands upon them. 17 And as He was setting out on His journey, a man ran up and knelt before Him and asked Him, Teacher, [You are essentially and perfectly morally] good, what must I do to inherit eternal life [that is, to partake of eternal salvation in the Messiah's kingdom]? 18 And Jesus said to him, Why do you call Me [essentially and perfectly morally] good? There is no one [essentially and perfectly morally] good—except God alone. 19 You know the commandments: Do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother. 20 And he replied to Him, Teacher, I have carefully guarded and observed all these and taken care not to violate them from my boyhood. 21 And Jesus, looking upon him, loved him, and He said to him, You lack one thing; go and sell all you have and give [the money] to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come [and] accompany Me [walking the same road that I walk]. 22 At that saying the man's countenance fell and was gloomy, and he went away grieved and sorrowing, for he was holding great possessions. 23 And Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, With what difficulty will those who possess wealth and keep on holding it enter the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were amazed and bewildered and perplexed at His words. But Jesus said to them again, Children, how hard it is for those who trust (place their confidence, their sense of safety) in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. 26 And they were shocked and exceedingly astonished, and said to Him and to one another, Then who can be saved? 27 Jesus glanced around at them and said, With men [it is] impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God. 28 Peter started to say to Him, Behold, we have yielded up and abandoned everything [once and for all and joined You as Your disciples, siding with Your party] and accompanied You [walking the same road that You walk]. 29 Jesus said, Truly I tell you, there is no one who has given up and left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands for My sake and for the Gospel's 30 Who will not receive a hundred times as much now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 But many [who are now] first will be last [then], and many [who are now] last will be first [then]. 32 They were on the way going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking on in front of them; and they were bewildered and perplexed and greatly astonished, and those [who were still] following were seized with alarm and were afraid. And He took the Twelve [apostles] again and began to tell them what was about to happen to Him, 33 [Saying], Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be turned over to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn and sentence Him to death and turn Him over to the Gentiles. 34 And they will mock Him and spit on Him, and whip Him and put Him to death; but after three days He will rise again [from death]. 35 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, approached Him and said to Him, Teacher, we desire You to do for us whatever we ask of You. 36 And He replied to them, What do you desire Me to do for you? 37 And they said to Him, Grant that we may sit, one at Your right hand and one at [Your] left hand, in Your glory (Your majesty and splendor). 38 But Jesus said to them, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism [of affliction] with which I am baptized? 39 And they replied to Him, We are able. And Jesus told them, The cup that I drink you will drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized, 40 But to sit at My right hand or at My left hand is not Mine to give; but [it will be given to those] for whom it is ordained and prepared. 41 And when the other ten [apostles] heard it, they began to be indignant with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them to [Him] and said to them, You know that those who are recognized as governing and are supposed to rule the Gentiles (the nations) lord it over them [ruling with absolute power, holding them in subjection], and their great men exercise authority and dominion over them. 43 But this is not to be so among you; instead, whoever desires to be great among you must be your servant, 44 And whoever wishes to be most important and first in rank among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to have service rendered to Him, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for (instead of) many. 46 Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a great crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, a son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. 47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have pity and mercy on me [now]! 48 And many severely censured and reproved him, telling him to keep still, but he kept on shouting out all the more, You Son of David, have pity and mercy on me [now]! 49 And Jesus stopped and said, Call him. And they called the blind man, telling him, Take courage! Get up! He is calling you. 50 And throwing off his outer garment, he leaped up and came to Jesus. 51 And Jesus said to him, What do you want Me to do for you? And the blind man said to Him, Master, let me receive my sight. 52 And Jesus said to him, Go your way; your faith has healed you. And at once he received his sight and accompanied Jesus on the road.

Shall we turn now in our bibles to the tenth chapter of the gospel of Matthew?

In the beginning of the tenth chapter we find Christ sending His disciples out, telling them to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But in the fact that He is sending them to go, in the first part of chapter ten, makes the last verse of chapter nine quite significant. For in the last verse of chapter nine, Jesus said to His disciples: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Mat 9:38). And having told them to pray that the Lord will send workers into the harvest, the next thing He says is, "Go."

So many times as we pray, the Lord speaks to our own hearts. So many times we see a need and we think, oh what a need. The church really should be trying to fulfill that need, and we become all concerned with the need. And the Lord says, "Pray about it." And as we pray about it, suddenly we realize that God has called us. He has shown us the need, because He wants us to plug ourselves into the filling of that particular need. Many times the very fact that God has made you conscious and aware of that particular thing, is the beginning of the call of God upon your own life for that particular field of service.

So the Lord says pray, "Because harvest is plenteous, the labourers are few; pray that the Lord of harvest, will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Mat 9:37-38). Then in the very next section, the Lord says, "Now you go out into this harvest." And so praying so often prepares us for going. It is while I am praying that the Spirit of God can really get a hold of my heart.

As I've said, I do believe that prayer changes things, mainly me. I don't think that prayer changes God. I wouldn't really want prayer to change God. I think it would be extremely dangerous if prayer could change God. I think that God knows best in every situation. And I would not want to convince God, if I could, I can't, but if I could, I would not want to convince Him to see things my way. I would rather that through prayer the Spirit of God be able to get hold of my own heart and mold me, and shape me, into that which God has purposed, in that which God has designed. So often as I say, "Oh Lord, send forth workers into the harvest." Then I hear the call of God, "Who will go?" And I answer, "Oh Lord, here am I, send me."

And so Jesus said, "Pray the Lord of harvest," and then He says now you go.

And when he had called unto him the twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease (Mat 10:1).

Jesus is first of all empowering His disciples for that work before He sends them out to do the work, empowering them against unclean spirits, giving them the power to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

Now the names of the twelve apostles, and here they are first called apostles, because of the fact that He is sending them out. The word "apostle" means "one who is sent". Up to this point they have been disciples, they've been learning of Him. They have been following Him and learning as He taught, but now the time has come for them to go out. They are now being sent by Him, and thus the change from disciple, a follower, to an apostle, one who has been sent.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican [or tax collector]; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him (Mat 10:2-4).

"Simon the Canaanite", that word translated Canaanite is actually Canaanin. We are told in Luke's gospel that he was Simon the Zelotes (Luke 6:15).

Now Josephus tells us that the Zelotes were the extreme patriots. These were men who valued freedom above life itself. These were men who were willing to sacrifice their own lives, or even see their own families martyred, in order that they might be free. They preferred freedom to life. They were willing to do whatever is necessary to obtain freedom. They were the ones who rebelled constantly against the Roman government. Simon the Zelotes.

Matthew, a publican, was considered a quisling by the Jews. He was one that had more or less sold out to the enemy, because he was collecting taxes, for the hated Roman government.

Now had Simon and Matthew met under any other circumstances, Simon would have done Matthew in. I mean here you've got a Zelote, one who hates the Roman yoke, one who is willing to fight to overthrow it, and you have another one who was almost in league with Rome, a turncoat so to speak. It's interesting though how that Christ takes people from many different backgrounds, even adverse backgrounds, and brings us together in a loving fellowship.

Now it is also interesting to me, that as the Lord names these apostles, there aren't really any great marvelous people among them as far as the world is concerned. None of them are highly educated. None of them are prominent or wealthy. In fact, they are just common ordinary people. Four of them were fishermen, and one was a tax collector. We are not really given much of a background on the others, but they were just plain common people. That always interests me, because these men that God is preparing to send out to do His work, are just plain, common people like you. And when God has a work to be done, He doesn't really go to the universities to select those with the highest grades, and IQ's and all, but God chooses and calls just plain ordinary people like you.

It is wrong for any of us to excuse ourselves from serving the Lord, because of the fact that we are just so ordinary, because that is the kind of person God seeks to use for His glory. If God used the highly talented, highly developed kind of an individual, then we would all be saying, oh, but don't you know he's got his doctorate. Don't you know he was so brilliant? Don't you know he-- and we would be putting the emphasis upon the ability of the instrument, rather than upon the One who has used the instrument. We would have a tendency then to glory in man, or man's educational processes.

So the Lord has chosen the simple things to confound the wise, and the foolish things to put to naught the wisdom of this world. And God uses just plain common ordinary people like Raul Ries, Greg Laurie, Mike Macintosh, and Chuck Smith to do His work, just the plain ordinary people to do His work.

I love to hear Raul on the radio. I have to sacrifice listening to myself, because I am on KYMS at that hour. I heard Raul this week as he was describing his condition when he was in the Marine Corp. He had been such a vicious killer, and had killed so many people, that he was brought back and put in the hospital in Vallejo for the mentally deficient. And he said, "The psychiatrist said, 'Man, I was far and above beyond gone.'" That's a typical Raul-ism. He is ordinary, and yet anointed by the Spirit of God and used by God to do His work.

So not many wise, not many great, not many notable of the world, but just those plain ordinary people who He sent out as apostles to represent Him.

These twelve Jesus sent forth (Mat 10:5)

That is what made them apostles.

And commanded them saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans do not enter. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Mat 10:5-6).

So by telling them not to go into the way of the Gentiles, He was restricting their area of ministry. They were not to go south into Samaria. They were not to go west over to Tyre and Sidon. They were not to go as far north as Damascus, but they were to go only around the region of the Galilee; not even to the cities of the Decapolis, but only to those Jewish communities around the Galilee. So in the first sending out of the disciples, it was a very restricted area that He gave them to work in. They were to be forerunners of His coming; for He was going to follow up and to go into each of these villages. And they were more or less the forerunners of His own coming to these villages. So they were sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Paul the apostle said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: it is the power of God unto salvation to those that believe; to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16).

Jesus came to the Jew first. And as He was sending them forth now, it was very limited, only to the Jews, not to be going to the Gentiles or to the Samaritans. However, He Himself later was to reveal Himself to that Samaritan woman. He was to heal the daughter of the Syrophenician, and finally He was to tell His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). But it was important in God's plan that the Gospel come first to the Jew.

And so there was first of all that restricted ministry of the disciples when He was first sending them forth. It was not to the world at this time; it was just among the Jews, not even into the Samaritans, but only to the Jews at this point.

Later, He said, "When the Holy Spirit comes upon you: you will be witnesses unto me not only in Judea, but also in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8). But now restricted to the Galilee region, only to those Jewish communities: the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Notice it doesn't say, "The ten lost tribes of the house of Israel." Ten lost tribes is not a Biblical term. There are not ten lost tribes. God knows exactly where they are and who they are. He has never lost them. And when the time comes, He is going to seal 12,000 from each of the tribes to be preserved during the great tribulation period.

I discount the attempt to make a Jew out of me, because of my English heritage. The business of Denmark being of the tribe of Dan, or Danmark, so they are called the Dan-ish people. The word "ish" in Hebrew is "man", so Dan's man or Dan-ish, Brit-ish, Engl-ish, fool-ish. Just because it has an "ish" on the end, doesn't make it Jewish.

Now as Jesus sent them forth, He said,

Go, and preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mat 10:7).

What is the "kingdom of heaven," this glorious phrase? Well, we'll be getting parables about the kingdom in our next study as we get into Matthew thirteen and fourteen, these parables of the kingdom. What is the kingdom of heaven? Jesus said when you pray, say, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:10). What are we praying for when we pray for the kingdom of heaven? Now Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is among you, rather than in you. But in reality God's kingdom has come to every man who has acknowledged Jesus Christ as his Lord and King. And if you tonight have acknowledged the Lordship of Jesus Christ, if He is the King of your life, you are already a citizen of the kingdom: the kingdom of heaven has come to you. And as a citizen of the kingdom, there are many tremendous benefits for the citizens of that kingdom.

As a citizen of the United States I have many benefits. Even when I travel in a foreign country there are certain protections that I have as a citizen of the United States. Should I get into trouble there are always those embassies to which I can turn who are there to help the citizens of the United States out of whatever difficulty they might find themselves in. And those within the embassies in these foreign countries will seek to help those citizens of the United States, that's just one of the benefits of citizenship. Just because I am a citizen, they'll go to bat for me, and they'll speak up for me, and they will pull strings for me, because I am a citizen of the United States. And the United States has an obligation to guarantee its citizens certain rights, certain privileges. So I enjoy being a citizen of the United States, because of those rights and privileges that I have as a citizen. But I am also a citizen of a kingdom, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. And I tell you, the rights and the privileges that I have as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven far exceed the rights and the privileges that I have as a citizen of the United States. Wherever I go, I have protection. I have authority, the authority of the kingdom of heaven behind me.

Jesus is saying, "Now you go out and preach saying, herald it, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And they were to demonstrate the aspects of the kingdom of heaven by Healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead, and casting out the devils (Mat 10:8). We read in the prophecy of Isaiah thirty-five, some of the aspects of that kingdom age; where the lame will leap for joy, the dumb will sing praises unto God, the blind will behold the glory of the Lord, and the gospel will be preached unto the meek, to the poor. So Jesus is telling them to demonstrate the aspects of the kingdom by setting men free from the kingdom of darkness.

I love the commission that the Lord gave to Paul the apostle when He called him on the Damascus road. When Paul was talking to king Agrippa and relating to Agrippa that calling of God on the Damascus road, Paul said that the Lord spoke to him to go to the Gentiles, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive the forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me" (Acts 26:18). So Paul's commission as he went to the Gentiles was to deliver them from the power of Satan unto God, from the power of darkness to light. As a citizen of God's kingdom, I've been delivered from the power of darkness, and I am to bring deliverance to those to whom I come, to those who will heed the message and receive Jesus Christ as King. That is the effect: they are delivered from the power of darkness and brought into the light, from the power of Satan and made a part of the kingdom of God. There are people today who are living in the kingdom of darkness. There are two basic kingdoms in the Universe. In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth there was only one kingdom in the Universe, the kingdom of God: the kingdom of light and life. But God in His kingdom created these beings we call, "angels", and He endowed them with the capacity of choice. And one of the choicest of the angels, the anointed cherub that covered, perfect in beauty, perfect in wisdom, was lifted up by pride and decided to exalt himself and be as God; the first Mormon. And the inspiration behind the Mormons today is to be as God.

What was it Shakespeare has this statement in one of his plays, "Oh Cromwell, flee ambition for by this sin the angels fell." What was the temptation that Satan offered to Eve in the garden? "Eat of it because you will be as God, knowing good from evil" (Genesis 3:5). That bait still works. And there are those who are attempting to be as God still. Tragic.

Now in his rebellion against God, in his pride being lifted up to be as God, he formed a second kingdom in the universe, a kingdom that was an antithesis to the first kingdom, a kingdom that was in rebellion to the first kingdom: The kingdom of death and darkness. So now in the universe there are two opposing kingdoms: the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life, ruled by God; but now a sub-kingdom in antagonism to the first, rebelling against the first, the kingdom of death and darkness.

Now when God created man, and placed him here upon the planet earth, He placed man here in the kingdom of God. Adam had fellowship with God. God came down and He communed with Adam there in the garden. There was this beautiful fellowship with man and God in the kingdom of light and life.

But Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of death and darkness, came to Eve and said, Did God say you could eat of all the trees? Yes, all but the one in the middle. He told us if we ate of that tree we would die. Satan said, Oh you really won't die. That's the finest tree in the garden. God isn't really being fair to you, Eve. He is trying to hold back something good. You see that tree holds the key to knowledge. And God doesn't want you to eat that tree because He knows that when you eat of it, you'll be wise as He is, knowing good from evil. He is trying to hold that back. You really ought to try it. How do you know unless you've tried it? (Genesis 3:1-5).

And so Eve being deceived ate of it and her eyes were opened. And she gave to her husband Adam and he did eat. But in that act of disobedience to God, which was a double act, because it was an act of obedience to Satan, they left the kingdom of light and life, and they were drawn into the kingdom of death and darkness. They drew all mankind into the kingdom of death and darkness, because they could not pass on something they did not have. They had lost that place in the kingdom of God, the kingdom of light and life. "And so by one man, sin entered the world, and death by sin; for death passed upon all men, for all sinned" (Romans 5:12). So each of us born of Adam were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, born sinners by nature, and we were all by nature children of wrath, even as others; born into the kingdom of death and darkness. But there is another tree. The tree of life is still available. It is through Jesus Christ. And if you choose to come into the kingdom of light and life, you can come by the cross of Jesus Christ, using that same exercise of free choice that Adam used in leaving the kingdom of God. You can use that to come back, come back into the kingdom of God, since Jesus Christ made provision.

So the duty of the apostles was to preach the kingdom. It's possible for a man to now again have fellowship with God. You can come out of the kingdom of darkness. You can come into the kingdom of light. You can have deliverance from the power of Satan, and you can know fellowship with God. And that's the glorious Gospel that we herald today. That's the glorious Gospel we still preach. It is possible for that man who has been bound in the kingdom of darkness and death, that man that has been alienated by God because of his life after the flesh, it is possible for him to know the power of God's Spirit in his life. He can come from that kingdom of darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the sons of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, through the tree, the cross. And so a lot of people blame Adam today for their problems and they feel that it is quite unfair that they have to suffer for Adam's mistake.

I was hiking a group of kids from the High Y camp there in Arizona, coming down the backside of Mt. Lemon from an old mine. And as I was leading them down this trail I heard this yell back in the line, and so I went back to see what this horrible scream was about. This one little guy had brushed to close to an Ajoja cactus. Now the Ajoja is called the jumping cactus, and if you just barely touch it, it will break off and just clamp on to you. He had one that really clamped on to him good. He was really yelling. So I got back there and I took a couple of sticks, and I carefully worked the sticks in between the thorns and then I flipped that Ajoja cactus off of him. And as he was shaking his hand and all, he said, "That darn guy, Adam." Where do you go to Sunday school? He said, "I go to the First Baptist Church." I said, "Well, they're teaching you correct doctrine anyhow." You know that the thorns and the thistles resulted from the curse. "Cursed is the ground... thorns shall it bring forth" (Genesis 3:17-18).

So many times we're looking at the miseries that we're facing and we say, that darn guy, Adam, got us into this mess. He made such a horrible choice. When he had the choice of the tree of life, or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, why couldn't he have chosen the tree of life, why would he eat of the other tree first? That tree of life in the midst of the garden, why didn't he eat of it? How foolish. And we're prone to really come down on Adam for the foolish choice. But in reality, there are still two trees today and you have the choice. You can choose to eat of the tree of life today, for God has given to you that choice by believing and receiving in Jesus Christ you can have eternal life. Or, you can choose to disobey God, to rebel, to eat of the fruit of the world and abide in death. So you really can't blame Adam for your condition. You can only blame yourself, because you, many, are following Adam's folly not choosing to eat of the tree of life that God has made available to all men through Jesus Christ.

Now Jesus said to His disciples, Freely you have received, freely give (Mat 10:8). I wonder how that fits with these modern evangelists today. I have got on my desk a letter, I wish I had it here right now before me. It's classic. We have these Jewish friends in Israel that we've been seeking to share the truths of Jesus Christ with, but it's a difficult task sharing with them, because he is a guide and he guides a lot of Christian tours. As a guide he sees a lot of the inner workings and the background, and a lot of the rip-offs. When I go over he will start telling me about these rip-offs that he sees where these tour guides get the people over there, the famous evangelists and all, and then they really rip the people off.

He will tell me of these things, and then somehow he has gotten on the mailing list of some of these evangelists, and he gets these computerized letters. "Dear brother," and all of this junk. Have you been bothered with an ear problem lately, or maybe its the eyes or nose, or a knee, or hepatitis? I mean the guy goes down a long list, and you're bound to hit something. Somehow I've been impressed to pray for you lately, and I think there might be something wrong. Why don't you write me and share with me. Now please don't send me any money for my birthday, but I've been laboring for the Lord three hundred and forty-one nights a year and I am really tired and I am gonna take a vacation and we could use a little extra money. Our organ blew up -- and all of this kind of stuff. Here this guy is getting these computerized letters, and he is smart enough to see through them, and to him the ministry is a sham. He sees the rip-offs.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Freely you have received, freely give." They weren't to demand fees for their services. They weren't to be taken offerings for themselves. They had received freely from God, and they were to give freely. Now the Lord said, Don't provide gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses (Mat 10:9) Don't take any coins in your purses, Nor script for your journey, Don't even take two coats, nor an extra pair of shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat (Mat 10:9-10). Now you can go and it's proper that the people support you. You don't have to take a lot of money with you. It's proper that the people support you. The workman is worthy of his hire. However, you're not to go in and make yourself a burden, or lay yourself upon people. And into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, inquire who is worthy; and stay there until you leave. And when you come into a house, greet it. And if the house worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you (Mat 10:11-13).

Now in those days they really thought quite a bit about giving a person a blessing. If they would greet you, they would often greet you with a blessing of the Lord. "The blessings of the Lord be upon you and your seed." "Thank you." But then if they get down the road and think, oh, he wasn't worthy. That was a Gentile or something, and he comes back, and he says, "I take that blessing back." They felt that they had to remove the blessings that they gave if the person was undeserving or unworthy. So Jesus is pretty much saying if thy house is worthy let your peace abide, if it's not, take your peace with you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house or city, just shake off the dust off your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the Day of Judgment, than for that city. Behold, I'm sending you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore as wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Mat 10:14-16).

Now someone said, well, serpents aren't really noted to be very wise. They're not considered to be a wise kind of a creature. And I heard a professor in biology making fun of the knowledge of Christ by pointing out to the class that serpents really weren't wise, and so for the Lord to say, "be as wise as serpents," was a rather stupid thing, and showed that He had really very little knowledge of biology. One of the students spoke up in class and said, "How long do you think you would survive without any arms or legs, and you had to take care of yourself out in the dessert? So you have to give him some credit, at least they survive. That's more then we could do." The servant of the Lord, harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to their councils, they will scourge you in their synagogues [that is they will beat you]; You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not take forethought how or what you are going to say: for it will be given you in that same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaks in you (Mat 10:17-20).

So you don't have to make up for the whole speeches in advance, just let the Lord anoint you by His Spirit.

And the brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved (Mat 10:21-22). So here we have that basis for the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, which is oftentimes used as a contrast to those who would go to antianimism, to the extremes of the security of the believer. And there are those who press this side of the coin, "he that endures to the end," and the perseverance of the saints. Truth lies somewhere in the middle. But when they persecute you in this city, flee to another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come (Mat 10:23).

Now Jesus is referring to His journey that He is going to be taken among these cities. And so if they persecute you in one city, just go to the next. You are not actually going through all of these cities before I'll be right behind you. I'll be coming behind you, and I'll be ministering in these cities. He is not really referring to His Second Coming at all, but just to His ministry in these cities of the Galilee.

Now Jesus said, The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master (Mat 10:24-25). That's enough. You bet it is, that's great, if we could only be as our Lord. And He said, "Your not greater than the Lord." It's just enough that you be as the Lord. God help us to be as the Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub [or the lord of flies], how much more shall they call them of his household? (Mat 10:25). They called me names, they are gonna call you names. Don't fear them: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak in light: and what you hear [in sort of whispered] in the ear, that preach from the housetops (Mat 10:26-27). Now I've been teaching you, I've been training you, I've been telling you in these little intercessions that we have, now you go out and proclaim these truths openly. That, which you've heard in these little sessions that we've had, go out and proclaim them. And don't fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell (Mat 10:28). So He's not saying to fear Satan. Satan has no capacity of destroying your soul in hell. He is saying, fear God, don't fear man. The worst thing man can do is kill you. So why should you fear man, "To be absent from this body is to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). You should fear the one who is able to take both body and soul and cast it into hell, that's the one you really should be fearing.

Are not two sparrows sold for half of a cent? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father taking note (Mat 10:29).

Again, "your Father," and again, "your Father oversees His creation," and one of the common things of God's creation are the little sparrows. They are so common as to be almost worthless. You could buy four of them for a penny in those days. Two Sparrows sold for a half a farthing, and yet not a little sparrow falls, but what your Father doesn't know it, doesn't make note of it. How detailed is God's knowledge of you?

But the very hairs of your head are all numbered (Mat 10:30).

Now just look at all of us here tonight. Some make it easy on the Lord, but isn't it interesting the trivia that God knows about us. He knows more about us than we know about ourselves. God knows even trivia about you. That's how concerned your Father is with you. Oh, if we would only be aware of the tremendous concern that our Father has with us, His children.

For Jesus said, You are worth more than many sparrows (Mat 10:31).

If God takes note of the sparrows, and He's been saying, don't worry about if they kill you. There is not even a sparrow that falls to the ground, but what your Father knows it, if you fall to the ground in the proclaiming of the gospel, if you be killed in your endeavor to reach others with the glorious love of Christ, how much more will your Father take note. You really have nothing to fear, not man, the worst he can do is kill you.

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven (Mat 10:32-33).

This is a heavy, heavy verse, because we must all stand before God one day, stand before the creator of the universe.

Now if I have confessed Jesus Christ before men, when my name is called and I have to stand before God, Jesus will step forth and confess me before the Father. "Father, this is Chuck. He is perfect." Isn't that what Jude said, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless" (Jude 24). Why should you laugh when I say, He says, "I am perfect?" Because you know the truth. I know the truth, but I also know the power of my Redeemer. When He confesses me before the Father, and when He presents me before the Father, I will be complete in Him, "Faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

But if a person has denied Jesus before men, you're going to stand all alone before God, the books will be opened, and He who knows all things, He who knows the secrets of the heart. The bible says, "Every thing are naked and opened before him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). And there in the embarrassment of your own bare being, and everything exposed, and you might turn fervently to Jesus Christ, and say, "Lord, Lord," and He shakes His head, "I never knew you." Ah, what a heavy thing. "If you deny me before men, I also will deny you before my Father."

Don't think that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword (Mat 10:34).

The gospel of Jesus Christ unifies men, it brings together a tax collector and a Zelote, but the gospel of Jesus Christ also divides men. It divides men into two categories: those who are apart of the kingdom of God, and those who are apart of the kingdom of darkness. But Jesus divides men as well as unifies men and many times Jesus divides those within a household. A child comes into the kingdom of light, but the father continues to rebel in the kingdom of darkness, and so division comes, and a difference comes. This contention oftentimes arises over the differences of being in the kingdom of light, and the kingdom of darkness.

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes will often be those of his own household (Mat 10:35-36).

Jesus was speaking out of personal experience, for at this particular time His brothers were against Him. He that loves his father or mother more than he loves me is not worthy of me: and he who loves the son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me (Mat 10:37).

Our love for Christ has to be supreme, even above those of our family members, if they are not united with us in the faith. If they are not a part of that kingdom of light, our love for Christ must exceed even our love for those in our own family.

And he that does take not his cross, and follow after me, is not worthy of me (Mat 10:38).

When we get to chapter sixteen, we will take up the cross and what it means.

He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for my sake, shall find it (Mat 10:39).

That we'll also take up in chapter sixteen.

He that receives you (Mat 10:40).

Now you see the authority that Jesus gives to His disciples. I mean you are there representing the Lord, you should be as your Lord.

Those that receive you receives me, and he that receives me receives the Father that sent me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones even a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward (Mat 10:40-42).

So you're doing it as unto the Lord, giving as unto the Lord. Giving unto a servant of the Lord, you receive him as you receive the Lord, and as you give to him, it is, as giving unto the Lord and you will receive your reward for it. The giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, "verily I say unto you, you shall in no wise lose your reward."

(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)

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