**Matthew 1:1**

**“The Book Of Jesus, The King”**

**I.) Intro**

**II.) Vs. 1 Son of David Son of Abraham**

**I.) Intro** It is in many ways fitting that we start the book of Matthew after we have just completed Genesis as these are perhaps the two key books in the Bible. This book bridges the gap between the O.T. & the N.T. The O.T. is quoted or alluded to 129 times. In the final two verses of the final chapter of the O.T. we are told by the prophet Malachi that the Lord “..will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." Between this event spoken by these words 400 years of silence as far as scripture is concerned has passed. The world has changed from being ruled by the Medo-Persian Empire, through the Grecian world dominance to now the Roman period to which the N.T. is written. Radical changes have taken place with in Gods people Israel as well, they have gone from idolatry to legal holiness as the law becomes an idol to them. The language changes from Hebrew, to Aramaic, to Greek. The nation is ruled with out by Rome, ruled with in by warring political factions, (Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, & the Herodians.) Literary has increased & the scriptures have been translated by six members of each of the twelve tribes called the Septuagint to the Greek language as most spoke & read it above their native language.

 With that introduction as to the timing of this book let me move on now to the Author, & reasons for it’s writing. Without tipping my opinion yet, we can clearly see that who ever wrote this book had to be from the area as he was will acquainted with the geography of the region. He had to be Jewish as he was familiar with the history, customs, & classes of the Jewish people; as well as the fact that he knew the O.T. He had to be familiar with money as he uses terms for money that no other N.T. writer uses, he was familiar with accounting procedures, as he refers to them with special words not used else where. Who, then fits those criteria for writing this book? Matthew! To further boaster this position it has been held by all from the first 4 centuries, to by none other then the Apostle Matthew, this being so it is the only book out of the synoptic gospel written by an apostle, John was but it is not a synoptic (to see together) gospel. I will go out further on a limb & suggest to you that I believe that it is the first gospel written & not Mark as many have said, & it could have been written as early as 50 to 70 AD. Most of the reasons for putting Mark in front of Matthew is based upon the opinion that Jesus could not of predicted the fall of Jerusalem, which as he writes is still standing 24:15, 27:8, 28:15 Mark 13:14. Not to mention that Matthew was an eyewitness of the events of this book, in fact it was at his house that a banquet was held, (9:9-13), why would he borrow from Mark? Truth be told, Mark was considered as coming from Matthew until the early part of the 19th century. So who was this tax collector, slash disciple of the Lord? Well we will read of that later on in chapter 9, but let me just tell you he is called Levi in both Luke & Mark, & it is an interesting personal touch in the book that bares his name changes it to Matthew & no longer goes by Levi. From the moment he opens his heart to Jesus, at His words “follow Me” he is forever changed. He then opened his home for that banquet I mentioned, from there he is used by the Lord to write this gospel.

 Note: I like that! We are forever wishing we had the talents of others, striving to be like “Mike” or someone else, but God he takes us right where we are at, & use the talents He has given us. With Moses it was his staff, David it was his slingshot, Peter, was a fisherman, & Jesus made him as fisher of man. Matthew is a tax collector, good at keeping records, his tool was a pin, & you see God puts him to work with that pin.

 We can often get a picture as to the reason for written by doing a word study or a phrase study to see how many time these are repeated. If you did so you would find as I did that he uses the words “**might be fulfilled**” are mentioned some 15 times, the word “**spoken**” in reference to the O.T. prophets is mentioned 15 times, “**kingdom of Heaven**” occurs 32 times & the word “**Kingdom**” 56 times. So what does this show us? Matthew’s main theme is *to show Jesus as the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy, in other words He is the long hoped for King, the Messiah*, thus as John the Baptist & Jesus both said; “ "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." As Matthew pins this book he is not so much interested in presenting a chronological order as he is that Jesus is the Messiah thus he presents this book topically. There are five main sections in this book each having a body of teaching (**discourse**), how Jesus worked that out practically (**demonstration**), & how the people responded to the above (**debate**).

There are many ways to outline this book, but the one that seems the best I have stole from John Courson, where he divide’s it the following way:

**I.) Chapters 1-10 The King Revealed. Here he writes about the Kingdom, & the King**

**II.) Chapters 11-13 The King Resisted. This is the section where we see the opposition to Jesus.III.) Chapters 14-20 The King Retreating. Here we see Jesus take His disciples & pull them away for personal instruction.**

**IV.) Chapters 21-27 The King Rejected. This is where the people say that they don’t want Jesus over them.**

**V.) Chapter 28 The King Resurrected. Here we see the King victorious in the beginning of His kingdom.**

**II.) Vs. 1 Son of David Son of Abraham**

Vs.1 As we start this section of genealogy, 1-17, I have divided it into three sections, & we shall see that Jesus’ birth answers the failures of each of these so called 14 generations.

Why do we look at another genealogy? Simple, because the whole accuracy of the claim of Christ rests upon the fact that Jesus is from Abraham & David.

 Note: The words, “**The book of the generation**..” appears only one other time in the Bible that is Gen. 5:1 where we are given the generations of the sons of Adam. All of us are in the family of Adam, how did you get into that family? Why, you were born into it, & you know what we have taken on his characteristics, further more we are told that in Rom. 5:12 that because of our likeness to him we all die.

Adam’s record is a record of death. So how do you get into the family of Jesus? Why, the same way, you are born into to it by **new birth**, John 1:13, 3:3. It is Gods desire that all of man kind can be born into this “new family”, but He won’t force you it’s your choice!

 Note: We are right here told that “ Jesus Christ, is the Son of David, the son of Abraham.” Why does Matthew tell us that? Well, every King must be able to show that he has the right to be King which has to be passed on through the ancestors.

 What Matthew does here is show that Jesus is rightful heir royally through Gods promise to David in 2 Sam. 7:12-16 where God says through Nathan “I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.” You say, “now wait a minute here didn’t Matthew know that Abraham came before David, & didn’t Solomon fulfill this prophecy?” Yes, Matthew did know that Abraham came before David, but he seeks to establish Jesus as the One whom the Kingdom of Heaven on earth will be established. Solomon was to some degree the fulfillment of this prophecy, for he did build a temple. His name meant “peaceful” & that was true of his reign, his two great works were that of wisdom, & the building of the temple. But with that said, his story & reign is one of great disappointment & failure. The key thing about David was his obedience to the Lord, this is seen in the closeness of his walk with Him, we are told in Acts 13: 22 that "..David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.” That was not what we see in

Solomon his son, but it is true of Jesus “the Son of David.”

 Notice as well that the word “seed” is used not “seeds” in other words this is speaking of Jesus as the One whom would come & fulfill “..the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.” Now, we come to the fact that Jesus is called the “son of Abraham”. That would put Jesus’s right to the throne racially, He is from the father of the founder of the people. It is here that we look back & remember the promises of God to Abraham in Gen. 12:3, & 22:16-18 right after Abraham took Isaac up on the mount to sacrifice him the Lord said "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Again we see the word “seed” & not “seeds”, Isaac was not the one in whom all the “the nations of the earth shall be blessed”. He was week, unlike his father; whom we are told in Rom. 4: 9 “..that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.” The crown characteristic in Abraham’s life was his total reliance upon God, so to with Jesus he would say in John 5:30 “..I can of Myself do nothing.” The nation had not produced, what it so desperately need, the natural heirs did not bring about this, thus Matthew proclaims Jesus. What about you? What are you looking for? Are you still trying to make it on your own? Are you still missing something? Grace has appeared as we are told in John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” .

**Matthew 1:1-17**

**“Jesus, Son of David, Son of Abraham”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 2-6 From Abraham to David**

**III.) Vs. 7-11 From Solomon to Captivity**

**IV.) Vs. 12-17 From Captivity to Joseph**

**I.) Intro.**

As we noted last week at the start of this book, Matthew is concerned with Jesus as the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy which looked forward to the Messiah coming & establishing His kingdom. So he sets out & tells us that Jesus is the true son of David & the true son of Abraham, in other words he has a right to the throne royally & racially.

 This week we move on & look at the rest of this genealogy. As some of you are aware Israel is looking for the Messiah to come even today. If you drive around the city you will see signs speaking of the coming of the Messiah. Yet with that said they have a problem, for you see they don’t have any accurate genealogical records, all the books of their generations were destroyed in AD 70 when the Romans sacked Jerusalem. There is not a Jew in the world today that could prove that he is a descendent of David. No problem though because this genealogy & the one in Luke traces Jesus’ roots back to David both by way of his step father Joseph, & by way of his mother Mary. Further more they are the only preserved Jewish genealogies in the world today.

 Now, as I just mentioned we have in the N.T., another genealogy that traces Jesus Christ back to Adam. And as you read the genealogies in Matthew and in Luke, you'll find that there are differences in the genealogies. In Matthew's genealogy we are tracing the line of Jesus back to David through Solomon, but as you read Luke's genealogy you'll find that it traces the genealogy actually not of Joseph, but of Mary. She also goes back to David and to Abraham, but she comes through David’s son Nathan. So that Mary also was of the tribe of Judah and a descendant of David, but not through Solomon and his line, but through David's other son Nathan. In Matthew' gospel, Joseph is actually a descendant of David through the kingly line, (Solomon) & as you read the Kings of Judah you find that they are listed in the descendants of Joseph, thus he was the rightful heir.

 With that said, there is a real problem to Joseph being King in Israel because his line goes back through the kings of Israel which includes Joconiah, of whom the Lord cursed through Jeremiah the prophet saying that "none of his seed would sit upon the throne of Israel forever." (Jeremiah 22:30) So that kingly line that came through Solomon was disallowed from sitting on the throne, because of Joconiah's sin there in Jeremiah 22:30. Jesus, being the son of Mary, still has a claim to the throne of David, but not through Joconiah who was cursed as not being able to rule or any of his descendants to rule upon the throne. So if Jesus were the son of Joseph biologically, He could not reign upon the throne of David because of that curse in Jeremiah 22; that is why we read in verse 16 that Joseph was the “husband of Mary” & not the father of Jesus. But being the son of David through Nathan, and through a different line, He has the right to the throne, coming from Mary. So why trace His genealogy through Joseph? Because, as far as the Jewish nation was concerned, they would recognize Joseph as the kingly line, and thus the eldest son of Joseph (considered to be the eldest son of Joseph, though He was born of the Holy Spirit) would then have a right to the throne. This then is His legal lineage not His blood lineage.

**II.) Vs. 2-6 From Abraham to David**

Vs.2 In this section which covers Abraham to David & a little over 800 years, we are given the names of the rulers that led up to David. Having just completed Genesis we recognize several of these names, & there is not much need to comment on them. By the way Mary’s genealogy in Luke 3 is the same as Joseph’s from Abraham to David, but it starts Mary then goes backward where Matthew starts with Abraham & goes forward.

Vs.3-6 We have listed something quite unusual in genealogies, women, four of them in fact & all of them were gentiles, two of them Canaanites, one a Moabite, the other a Hittite. To the Jewish men of that day they had a favorite prayer that went like this: “God, I thank You that I was not born a Gentile, a dog, or a woman.” I don’t think they would have said 1 out of 3 aint bad. This would have been a real shocker to those that read this in that day.

 So why does the Lord see fit to bring His Son through this line? I think it is because God is saying that He is going to do something that goes against what society thinks ought to be. Christianity is radical from it’s roots folks, all to often we interpret based upon our culture what we think truth is, instead of what the word of God says. We are all to quick to judge something based upon our own cultural hang-ups. God just like to get us to look at Him, & nothing else.

 1.) The first mentioned here is **Tamar**. You will find her story in Gen. 38, she was the daughter in law of Judah, who had some awful things happen to her. First, her husband Judah’s oldest boy Er sinned & died before they could produce an heir. The next in line Onan, the second son was obligated to take her as wife, but the offspring was to go to Er’s lineage & inheritance. Onan wanted the pleasure of sex with Tamar with out the responsibility, & he was judged by God & died. With these two gone Judah was not about to let the youngest boy Shelah go, so he told her to wait until he got older never attending to let him marry her. So she took matters into her own hand, dressed as a prostitute & went to the place where they all hung out knowing that Judah would show up, which he did. She asked for & received his staff & signet as pledge & took off. Months latter Tamar was pregnant with her father in laws twin children, Perez, & Zerah. Here she is right here in this genealogy, with the truth of her background known. You see God chose her, & His choice was not based upon her righteousness but His.

 2.) Next is **Rahab**: You will find her story Joshua 2, where we find out that she is a prostitute. As the spies came into to her city Jericho take a look at the defenses, the people became aware & she took them in & hid them. She is placed here, as well as in Heb. 11 fro her faith & trust in a God she risked her life believing that the God of Israel was the true God & not the god that her people followed. She was a sinner that was saved by faith.

 3.) Then we are told of **Ruth**: You can find her story in the book that bares her name. She was a Moabite, & we are told in Deut. 23:3 that they were excluded from ever entering into the temple because of Gods judgment upon them. And yet here we see Gods grace. With an interesting twist Rahab was Boaz’s mother who then takes Ruth as his wife.

 4.) The last woman is called the wife of Uriah, whom we know as **Bathsheba**. There are two men in Jewish history that they are most proud of Moses & David. Yet here with David comes this heir through his double sin of adultery & murder.

 So the Lord put into this genealogy these four gentile women, to display His grace. I didn’t know anyone who does not fail, & at times feel that we ought to be excluded from His love & grace. Let me assure you that He does not wish to exclude anyone from His love & grace, & that He has already made a plan by which to include you one in which He has set up from the foundations of the world. Maybe you are like me & you got a past, your life has been a failure, why you have failed from day one, & you just never seem to make it, let me tell you that God only chooses failures! He included these four women to remind us of that truth. Jesus was a friend of sinners, don’t you know that he died to set you free!

**III.) Vs. 7-11 From Solomon to Captivity**

Vs.7-11 Here we are given the Kings from Solomon to Jeconiah, at the time of the captivity to Babylon. This list is not remarkable for who is their but for who has been left out. The 17th verse of this chapter tells us that Matthew divided this into three sets of 14, & if we go back to 1 Chron 3 we will find out that he left out some folks. Specifically, **Ahaziah, Joash, & Amaziah**. So who were these three kings? They were the sons of Athaliah, who was the daughter of Jezebel and Ahab, that wicked king and queen of the northern kingdom whose sin actually sealed the fate of the northern kingdom. Athaliah had sought to kill all the royal seed of David, but one of the children escaped and, of course, later became king. But, the descendants of Athaliah are left out of this record and I am certain deliberately so, by Matthew. All he does is point out the landmark names; skipping generations was a common practice in ancient genealogies. This three sets of 14 would of helped in memorization as well.

**IV.) Vs. 12-17 From Captivity to Joseph**

Vs.12-15 Not much to note in these names as they trace the line from after the captivity to just before Joseph. Again there are names left out, & that it was not a mistake for he has the same record that we have.

Vs.16-17 The last thing Matthew does here is show that Joseph was not the father of Jesus. We read that “Jacob begot Joseph the **husband of Mary**, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.” You see we have already been told in the O.T. in Isa. 7: 14 that "..the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. “ Also we read in Jer. 31:32 “..For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth; A woman shall encompass a man."

**Matthew 1:18-25**

**“The Birth Of Jesus”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 18-19 Earthly Situation**

**III.) Vs. 20-23 Heavenly Pronouncement**

**IV.) Vs. 24-25 Loving Obedience**

**I.) Intro.**

We now come to the birth of Christ, a story most are quite familiar, or are we? As I have said already Matthew a converted tax collector uses his pin to give us a extremely important history lesson as to Jesus entrance into humanity. There are over 300 prophecies in the O.T. about the First Coming of Jesus, but many of these are repetitious of each other, & when you cut all those out you are left with 108 specific prophecies all fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth. Of those 108 fulfilled prophecies 39 of them appear in the book of Matthew, more than any other book. So what you may say! Well in a book titled “Science Speaks” Peter Stoner calculated the odds of any one man that has ever lived fulfilling just 8 of those specific prophecies as 1 in 10 to the 17th power, (Texas silver dollar story). Then he looked at 48 prophecies which the odds were 1 in 10 to the 157 power. Out of all of these Prophecies perhaps the most important of all is the virgin birth, for truly only one person in all of history can say this of themselves, Jesus.

 The story is told of a 1936 a radio broadcast transmitted to America from England, just before the voice of King Edward VIII was to be heard, someone stumbled over a wire in the control room of WABC, New York and snapped the only line of communication between the two great countries. The engineers were frantic, with only a few moments remaining before air time a quick-thinking apprentice grasped the two broken ends of the wire and bridged the gap. Seconds later the King addressed the nation. In a real sense, his words were being transmitted through the body of that man! That’s the story of the birth of Christ, Gods words being transmitted through the body of a man, He alone is that bridge, this then is the story of that bridge!

**II.) Vs. 18-19 Earthly Situation**

Vs.18 Luke’s gospel gives us information not recorded here in Matthew, mainly of how the angel Gabriel came to inform Mary of what was about to take place in her life. We shall take a look at that when we get to Luke, but now we are interested in the story that Matthew tells us.

 1.) First we are told the time of Mary’s pregnancy: “..After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together,” What we don’t perhaps understand is the cultural importance of the Jewish marriage. There were three stages to it:

 A.) First there was the engagement period. This was not at all like our engagement time. In this time marriages were arranged by the parents at a young age. Perhaps the parents knew each other & decided that their two children should one day be married, so they would make an agreement with each other. They may only be 2 or 3 years old but as soon as they could talk they could tell you who they were going to marry. There are a great many parents today that would not mind at all picking out the future mate for their children.

 B.) Then came the espousal or betrothal time which lasted a year. They were considered during this time legally married, although the relationship would not be consummated until a year latter at the marriage festival. It is interesting that the couple was dedicated to each other during this time yet they were not living together, in either a practical since or a physical since. Usually during this time they were both readying themselves for marriage, he would be building the place in which they would live, she would be learning how to take care of the home. By the way they were most likely 15 -16 years of age by this time. Now during this time if the couple decided they could not be with each other they would have to obtain a divorce, & the betrothal could not be broken except by a divorce. Again, I see some wisdom here, there were no children involved yet, no sex had happened they were both able to go on to another relationship. Think of the advantages of this folks!

 4.) Lastly, there was the marriage it’s self. On the wedding night the father of the bride would take signs of his daughters virginity & keep them in case there was ever a question as to her being a virgin. Now under Jewish law, if their was infidelity during the second stage it was thought of as adultery, & was punished by taking the perpetrator to the center of town placing them in a box of manure until they were up to their knees, & the people of the city would throw rocks at the person until they fell face down into the manure dead.

 It was at the second stage that we are told that “..before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.” That is before sexual intercourse, suddenly Mary finds herself pregnant & we know through Luke (1:31-35) that she was told that it was by way of the Holy Spirit.

 2.) Here is the second thing we notice about this, namely that the pregnancy was super-natural. There are a great many who wish to take away the virgin birth of Jesus, some say that it is not all that important as to the rest of the gospel. I could not disagree more, take away the virgin birth & Jesus plainly is not who He claimed to be, & if He is not who He claimed to be then we all are still in our sins! The virgin birth points out the deity of Jesus. You can have a great teacher in Jesus if he was a liar. But what does Jesus say of His own birth? Well lets look at John 8:23-24 “You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." Look carefully at verse 25 for a moment, who’s first born son was Jesus? It does not say theirs but hers. We will take this up more in a moment, but let us look at Joseph for a time.

Vs.19 Not much is known of Joseph except what we have here, but think of this a moment the turmoil he must of went through? He loved her, & Mary comes to him & tells him she is pregnant. Now Joseph is a far better man than I am, for as soon as Donna would of told me that I would of said; “Your what?” “How could you do this to me?” “I have saved myself for you, I thought you loved me as much as I love you?” Then you could here her say; “It’s OK Dale it’s not yours, & it’s not another mans, it’s Gods!” Picture two 15 or 16 years olds in high school today, & this conversation taking place. Who would believe this? It does not appear that Joseph believed it, yet with that said, I am totally amazed at how he handles it.

 1.) We are told that he was a just man. That is better said a straight or true man. He was not cold, or hard, he did not react out of anger toward her as he could of. No he just wanted to see how he could let her go with out ruing her emotionally, & physically. You single ladies, this is a great guy, for it is clear that Joseph was concerned with truth, but not at the expense of mercy! Most of us are either moral or merciful, but Joseph was both. Now it appears that he was seeking a solution that would allow the moral character to live with the merciful character.

 Note: Before we go on with this glorious story might I take a side road & share the rest of the story of this young couple? It appears that Joseph died early in Jesus life some time after their return from Egypt & the 12 year old Jesus’ trip with His parents to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, for we are told in Luke 2:41 that He went with “His parents”. We also know that they had other children, after the birth of Jesus. The words of verse 25 that Joseph “..did not know her ***till*** she had brought forth her firstborn Son.”, certainly does not mean that he ***never*** knew her. The obvious fact is that he did not have sexual intercourse with Mary until after Jesus was born. The dogma of the Catholic church of the perpetual virginity of Mary is clearly false. We are told in Mark 6: 3 "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So it appears that Joseph lived long enough to have four sons & some daughters. The dogma was developed to elevate Mary to the status of deity, & was not introduced into their teaching until 5 centuries after Jesus’ death along with, Mary’s immaculate conception, that is to say that she was virgin born a well, that she rose from the dead as Jesus did, & that now she is the mediator of all believers. Clear this is what Mary would say to all who will listen, John 2:5 “Whatever He says to you, do it." As to the rest of this there is according to 1 Tim 2: 5 “..one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,”, it does not say Mary! There seems to be two mistakes made when people deal with Mary:

 1.) They exalt her too greatly beyond being blessed to the place of worship.

 2.) They do not honor her as they ought as being the most blessed & honored woman that has ever been.

**III.) Vs. 20-23 Heavenly Pronouncement**

Vs.20 The angel, perhaps Gabriel, prevents Joseph from making a tragic mistake. Notice that this is not “THE angel of the Lord”, but “AN angel of the Lord”. In all of this Joseph was in a dream.

 Note: The angel addresses Joseph from the stand point of his legal lineage, (son of David). Thus this was assurance against fear, as well as announcement of the miraculous birth by way of explanation. All of which was accepted, with out questioning. Again this speaks to Joseph’s character. What greater thing can we husbands here than that are wife’s are totally sold out to the Lord? What’s happening in her is of Gods work. Wow! Men don’t get all worked up when your wives come back from a retreat 7 want to start going to more Bible studies, because believe when I tell you this you are the ones that are going to get the benefit!

Vs. 21 Here we are told the name in which they are to call this child.

 1.) First, he is told that Mary is going to have a Son.

 2.) Next, they are told that they are to call Him, Jesus. This was a common name for boys in that day, it is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means **“God is salvation**.” Now many people think that His name is *Mr. Jesus Christ*, but Jesus is His full name, Christ is official title, & it means “**Anointed One**”. There were three groups of people in the O.T. that were anointed with oil, **prophets, priests, & Kings**. Jesus was the only person who was all three, this He is the only “**Anointed One**.”

 3.) We are told why he is to have this name, “for He will save His people from their sins." Now lets look at this a moment.

 A.) “He will save His people”: He is given a common name of the people, he is identifying with them, born in time when they were under the yoke of Rome. A people devastated because of sin, that is where you find Him, they are His people. I love this, He reached down to the human condition & calls us His people. Now you may be here & you don’t to be identified with Him, but He was identified with you, He is your friend, you may not be His, but He is yours! He is coming to suffer, but because of His suffering He is going to be able to SAVE, His people. Now do you want to be one of His people? And what does He save they from? Is it not themselves, that is their own sins? Look now at this time, listen won’t you to these words, they are hope for all that receive them.

Vs.22 Matthew jumps in right now & tells us that all this was being done in fulfillment of the Lord as He spoke through the prophet. 2 Tim 3:16 tells us the same thing where we read that, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” From the beginning the plan has been laid out that man needed a savior & that savior had to be Immanuel, “God with us.”

Vs.23 This is a quote out of Isa. 7:14. Now in some of the versions the word here for “virgin” in Isa. is rendered “young maiden”, but if you go back to this passage you will find the context which is “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign:..” What kind of sign is it if a “young maiden” shall be with child, this happens all the time. The guy that translated it young maiden did so because he did not believe in miracles, even though every where else it is translated “virgin”. This then is a descriptive title of Jesus, of His earthly ministry, “God with us”. Listen to what the apostle John would say; “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth**.”

**IV.) Vs. 24-25 Loving Obedience**

Vs.24-25 Notice the prompt obedience. He at once married her, not only in obedience, but in tender love. Next he did not have sexual relations with her until after Jesus’ birth. Lastly they call the child as they were told.

 Note: let me conclude with some observations about His name:

 1.) Phil. 2: 5-11 “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

 2.) Acts 2:12 “12 "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

**Matthew 2:1-12**

**“Where Is He”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-2 Wise Men Still Seek Him**

**III.) Vs. 3-8 Troubled By Jesus**

**IV.) Vs. 9-12 Worship Him**

**I.) Intro.**

In this chapter we have the record of the fulfillment of four specific prophecies which are:

1.) Mic. 5:2 = That He would be born in Bethlehem

2.) Hos. 11:1 = That He was to be called out of Egypt.

3.) Jer. 31:15 = That He would cause weeping in Ramah.

4.) Isa. 11:1 = That He would be called a Nazarene.

 Thus more parts of the puzzle are being put together for us by Matthew. We shall only be interested in the fulfillment of the first of these prophecies here this morning. There are also here recorded four groups of people associated with the birth of Jesus, & each of them respond different towards Him. 1.) Wise men 2.) Herod 3.) All of Jerusalem 4.) Chief priests & scribes.

 With that said I think you will find it interesting that people still respond towards Jesus the same way today. I came across this the other day concerning Jesus second coming:

 *Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house not a creature was praying , not one in the house. Their Bibles were lain in the shelf without care in hopes that Jesus would not come there. The children were dressing to crawl into bed, not once ever kneeling or bowing a head, and mom in her rocker with baby on her lap was watching the late show while I took a nap. When out of the East there arose such a clatter I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter, away to the window I flew like a flash tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. When what to my wondering eyes should appear but angles proclaiming that Jesus was here. With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray, I know in a moment this must be THE day. The light of his face made me cover my head It was Jesus! Returning just like he said. I thought I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth, yet I cried when I saw him in spite of myself. In the book of life which he held in His hand was written the names of every saved boy, girl woman and man. He spoke not a word as he searched for my name when he said; “ It not here”, my head hung in shame. The people whose names had been written with love, he gathered to take to his father above. With those who were ready he rose without a sound, while all the rest were left standing around. I fell to my knees, but it was too late I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate. I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight, oh if only I had been ready tonight. In the words of this poem the meaning is clear the coming of Jesus is drawing near. There’s only one life and when comes the last call well find that the bible was true after all*.

**II.) Vs. 1-2 Wise Men Still Seek Him**

Vs. 1 The first thing we note is the fact that Jesus was born in “**Bethlehem of Judea**.” Bethlehem means “House of Bread” now I ask you in light of Jesus’ words in John 6:35 “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst*.”, where else could He of been born? What is even more curious is that there are two Bethlehem’s in Israel, this one that lay some 6 miles outside of Jerusalem, in the region of Judea, & the second one was in the land of Zebulun some 15 miles NW of Nazareth.

 The second thing we are told by Matthew is that His birth took place, in days that Herod was the appointed king. Here then is our first, person who reacts to Jesus. First a bit of back ground on this guy would be most helpful:

 This is Herod the Great, a short little monster; (a little over four feet tall. It's significant that everything that he did was big). He was born about the year 73 BC and was a son of the desert, well adapted to the political intrigues of ambition, lust for power, and efficiency at warfare. He was not a full-blooded Jew, but a descendant of Esau. His reign began as “king of Judea” in the year 40 BC With the aid of the Romans the territory was extended to what had been unparalleled since the reign of Solomon.

 His taxation of the people to support his building activity was extensive, he virtually rebuilt every city in the land, even constructing entire cities from the ground up. He also built many palaces for himself. The then nearly four hundred-year-old Temple of Zerubbabel was pale in contrast to the magnificence of his new palaces and structures in Jerusalem. In the year 19 BC he embarked on an extensive remodeling of the Temple, which captured the imagination of the world of that day. It was frequently said that if one had not seen Herod’s Temple, he had never seen a truly beautiful building.

 Yet, he was also horribly cruel and paranoid. He thought that his sons and his wife, Miriam, were plotting against him, so he had them put to death. Then he began to miss Miriam, so he built a big Monument to her. Caesar use to say, "It's safer to be Herod's pig than to be his son." Apparently he was a very insecure. In time, he realized that as the result of his own cruelty, no one would weep when he died. Not being able to stand that, he gave orders that when he died all of his top officials were to be executed thinking, "They won't mourn for me, but they will for all of these popular officials." Fortunately when he died, they had enough sense to disregard his orders. The officials were not executed and thus Herod went unmourned. He died in (4 BC), at seventy years old, a man racked with ill health and mental deterioration. He had reigned for 37 years since his confirmation by the Senate and 34 years since his capture of Jerusalem

Herod had several wills. His final one designated Archelaus to succeed him as king of Judea (Matt. 2:22), another son Antipas to be tetrarch (governor) of Galilee and Perea, and another son Philip as tetrarch of the Northeastern Districts. The Romans banished Archelaus after a ten-year rule, and the kingdom was then transformed into an Imperial Province of the Roman Empire. Antipas continued to rule Galilee and Perea and was the one who had John the Baptist put to death (Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:16-29; Luke 9:9). Also, Jesus appeared before him during his trial, as Pilate the procurator sent Jesus to him for a possible decision (Luke 23:6-12).

 So it was during the days of Herod’s reign as King that Jesus was born, & as we are further told that the “wise men” came from the East to Jerusalem. Here then is the second group of people associated with the birth of Jesus, the Magi:

 We get our word “magician” from this word. They were a priestly group of ancient Medes & Persians. You will notice two things missing in the text that most of us have in our nativity scenes:

 A.) First, it does not say that there were three of them. The number three came in much latter in the 7th century & was put there because of the three gifts that they brought. Why you can go to Cologne today & find the skulls of these three they have named “Melchior, Gaspar, & Balthazar”.

 B.) Second, it does not say that they were kings. That was added by the 14th century from Armenian myths & not only had these three been named but they were also three Kings from three countries, Aribia, Persia, & India.

 So with that out of the way here is what we do know of this group of men called Magi. We do not know how many of them there were , but judging upon the response of Jerusalem in verse 3 there had to be quite a few of them. It is thought that this group was started by none other than Daniel, who at one time held the title of “Rab-mag” or chief of the Magi, (Dan. 4:9) What we are certain of is that these Magi were considered experts of interpreting dreams & the study of the stars to find the future. Interestingly they were often given the role as “Magistrates” & were given the role of electing the King of the realm. They were monotheistic , in their beliefs as we are as well.

Vs.2 Now much has been made of the “star in the East” & there are several things that have been written about it. There is even an organization called the “Eastern star”, but the star was not in the East it was in the West, the text just says that they came from the East, & that is where they saw the “star”. If the star was in the East & they followed that star they would of wound up in China, not Jerusalem. Second, we are not even sure what this sign was, some say it was conjunction of planets, others say a comet, but we need not settle with these. The fact is we are not told, but here is what we do know:

 1.) These Magi came from a region, in which Daniel came from. And 500 years prior to this Daniel wrote down of Prophecy concerning this event. In Dan. 7:13-14 13 we read that Daniel *"..was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed*.” They had his writings they knew, this event was going to happen. Further more, they were from an area where there was another prophecy given by a gentile named Balaam. Now you will remember old Balaam he was the guy that was hired by the king of the Moabites to curse Israel, & every time he went to do so a blessing came out. Well one of those blessings is found in Num. 24:17 where we read; “17 "*I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult*.”

 Is that not great! Here is a bunch of guys from the East who interpret dreams, & they go back & look at Daniel’s dream. They, look at stars to tell the future, & look at Balaam’s prophecy about the star of Jacob. And just at that time they see some supernatural sign in the sky & follow it. God is always trying to reach people where they are at, & he uses what they are familiar with to reveal who He is. That is what Isa. 60:3 3 says “*The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising*.”

 Note: We are given their words as well; “*Where is He*..” In the first book of the O.T. in the second chapter verse 9 we have recorded a very similar question*, “Where are you*..”, that was spoken by God to man after he had chosen to sin. Now here in the 2nd chapter of the first book of the N.T. we read the question of these wise men from the East, “Where is HE..”. Is it not interesting that at first God was looking for man, & now we have man looking for God. There never would of been a second question if there had not been the first one. I would like to suggest to you now several facts concerning the wise men’s inquiry:

 1.) They asked where is **He**. They were not looking for a system, theory, religion, no they were looking for a person! So many people today are searching for something to govern their lives. They go to seminars, read books of philosophies, even try organized religion, & for the most part they are disappointed at what they find. May I make a suggestion to you? What is missing is a person! And I am here to tell you that the person is none other than Jesus!

 2.) Second, they asked for one that was **born**. That is they looked for a child. They looked for a child that was a King. They wanted not someone appointed but rather born to reign. The simplicity, of a child King. Jesus would after say that we must be like children to inter the Kingdom of heaven. We make things so complicated, as adults. All the rules, & regulations, but the Lord, just put all your trust in Him, & none in your self & your in.

 3.) Third, they looked for a **King**. They were looking for a person who would rule over their souls. Might I again just interject something, their is always something ruling over your soul the only question is who?

 4.) Lastly, they did not come to debate Him, they came to lay down their lives before Him. They had not come to get something from Him, or to manipulate Him, they did not even come for what He had done for them. No! They came simply to worship Him for who He was!

 May I invite you this day to come to Him, allow Him to rule over your lives, & simply worship Him?

**III.) Vs. 3-8 Troubled By Jesus**

Vs. 3 Now we move to the three other groups of people that are associated with Jesus’ birth.

 1.) First there is Herod. Now we have already seen what kind of man he was. And we note his response, “he was troubled.” This word means to agitate as boiling water. There were several things that no doubt led to this agitation.

 A.) There were the wise men’s presence. They were from Persia, & thus from the Parathion empire. And there was a constant warring between Rome & Parathions, the main buffer zone between these tow countries being right here in Judea. Most of Israel would have liked better to be ruled by Parthia them Rome.

 B.) Second, he was no doubt troubled by the words of these men. Especially the words “born King of the Jews”, for as we have already noted Herod was appointed king of the Jews by Mark Anthony, & he was an Edomite not a Jew. Plus he was a terribly insecure little man who killed his own children so that they would not displace him as king.

 So it is to this King, that these King makers come. Herod’s reaction was fear that produced hatred. Today there are people who don’t want to talk about anything to do with Christianity, they become agitated, & angry. They worry that the things they are into will be said are wrong. That they can’t continue on in the life styles that they are into. They are cleaver in their attempts to rid themselves of this plague called Christianity.

 2.) The second group of people are found in the third verse as well. Simply put it is the reaction of “all of Jerusalem”. We are told that they too were agitated. I believe they were agitated because it would upturn the apple cart. They just did not want to be bothered by any more changes. Because if some of the people began to worship this child King then, Rome might want to come down hard upon them. This group was not worried about the future they were concerned about the here & now. There are a great many people today that don’t want anything to do with Jesus because it would just be an inconvenience. They just don’t want anything to upset where they are now. They are the ones that say things like, “I don’t discuss religion & politics.” Why, You ask? Don’t want anything to do with it. The underlining truth is that they are concerned that the discussion may bring about some needed change in their lives & they don’t want to do that, so they become agitated with you when you bring up Jesus.

 3. Vs. 4-6 The third group is the “chief priests and the scribes”. First, note that Herod did not ask these men their opinion, he demanded they search for the answer. What still more amazing to me is that they knew the answer. These religious leaders knew the prophecy of Micah 5:2 saying that the “Bread of life” was to born in the “house of bread”. These were men of learning, yet they were men of indifference. They knew, but they did not go to worship Jesus themselves. Here then is another group of people, the majority of which I believe now live in America. They now a lot about Jesus, & they are quite religious you know. They even have Bibles, some go to church, but they are self righteous folks who think they don’t really need Jesus. Jesus is for sinners & I’m a good person. They are indifferent towards Him. They make no attempt to investigate personally what it means to worship Him. Instead they are all caught up in formalism, & rituals. How unfortunate it is that the majority of people who reject the claims of Christ do so because of the witness of this group! They knew Micah all right but they did not finish the text for if you do you will find this, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, ***Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting***." Might I ask you a question? “If Jesus came right now into this church service & you knew exactly without any doubt who He was, what would you say as He came over to you & said; “It’s to for you to go?” Would you feel uncomfortable? Would he be interrupting some bad behavior? Would you tell Him Lord this is not a good time right now? That is what these religious people wanted.

Vs.7-8 It is most likely that based upon Herod’s words here that Jesus is over a year old. Verse 8 tells us that he was looking for the young child, not baby. We also know that he orders the killing of all the male children 2 years & under, verse 16. They had traveled for months perhaps a year in search of Jesus, bring their hearts of worship & gifts of adoration. Again note the irony of it all as Herod claims to want to worship Jesus but what he really wants to do is kill Him. He attempts to use deception, to accomplish his plan, but of coarse God is in control & Jesus will not die for Herod or any other by way of accident, He would say in John 10:17-18 "*Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*.”

**IV.) Vs. 9-12 Worship Him**

Vs.9-10 Here we have the forth response of people towards Jesus, & I pray that it is yours! It seems as though this star had disappeared & now reappears as they set off to find Jesus. It did not come over to where the manger was, or over to where the baby was but rather to where the young child was. Again this star must of been some super-natural event.

Vs.11-12 I love the simplicity of what these wise men do they come to the house where the star had led them, come into the house & worship Jesus. Notice that it does not say that they worshipped Mary & Jesus, truly if there was ever a time that she would of been worshipped it would of been then, but they don’t, & neither should we. Can use see these wise men here bowing with their faces towards the ground to this little child. I have heard it said that wise men still seek Him, & this is true, but wise men do more than still seek Him them worship Him!

 Note: They present Him with gift’s:

A.) Gold, because He is the King of Kings

B.) Frankincense, which is a perfume used in the priesthood, because He is the fragrance of life.

C.) Myrrh, which is used to bury people, because He will one day die for the sins of the whole world.

In Isa. 60:6 we read that at His second coming the world will bring Him two of these three gifts, “*They shall bring gold and incense, And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.”* No Myrrh, because His death was final & complete on our behalf.

**Matthew 2:13-23**

**“From Homage To Hatred”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 13-15 Flee To Egypt**

**III.) Vs. 16-18 Weeping For The Children**

**IV.) Vs. 19-23 Home To Nazareth**

**I.) Intro.**

 I heard of a prayer that those of us who hosted Christmas get together’s could probably relate to about now. It seems that one family was in the habit of inviting a great deal of people over for dinner every year during the holidays. As all the people sat at the table the father turned to their six year old child & asked if she would like to say the blessing over the food. “*I don’t know what to say*,” she replied. “*Just say what you hear Mommy & I say*,” came back the answer. So the little girl bowed her head & said; “*Dear Lord, why on earth did we invite all these people to dinner*?”

 Last week I told you that this chapter was best divided into four sections that correspond to the fulfillment of four prophecies:

1.) Mic. 5:2 = That He would be born in Bethlehem

2.) Hos. 11:1 = That He was to be called out of Egypt.

3.) Jer. 31:15 = That He would cause weeping in Ramah.

4.) Isa. 11:1 = That He would be called a Nazarene.

Now, we have seen last week that Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem, & that was not negative. The rest of these three prophecies are negative in there fulfillment’s as we shall see. Yet with that said they all come out to the praise of His glory.

**II.) Vs. 13-15 Flee To Egypt**

Vs. 13 The Visit of the wise men must of occurred sometime after the presentation of Christ in the temple recorded by Luke in 2:22-24, for Jesus was already in a house, as well as the fact that they would of been able to offer a lamb instead of the minimum two turtle doves.

 So here Matthew tells us that the events which he records after this took place after the magi departed. This then is the second time Joseph has been spoken to by an angel in a dream, & he will again be spoken to twice more in dreams though it does not say by an angel in the last occasion, verse 22. Joseph is told where he is to flee too, Egypt

how long they are to remain there, & the reason why they are to go.

 Note: Again we are told that Jesus was a young child, most likely about a year & a few months old. It is wonderful to see their prompt obedience. Suppose they had delayed, & not listened? How many things in our lives would today be different had we chosen to trust & obey?

Vs. 14 Curious that they are told to go to Egypt. Egypt is a type of the world, it was a place with a history as far as Israel was concerned, a place of oppression & slavery, yet it is here that they were told to flee. It was about 60 miles from Bethlehem & like Israel was a Roman province. There were many Jews there, as well as synagogues, but what is even more important it lay right outside of Herod the great’s jurisdiction. His territory went right up to the border of Egypt. This is the only time in the earthly life of Jesus that He was ever outside of Israel. The land that Israel was delivered from would be the land in which the Savior would be delivered to. Just like Moses, He would lead all who trust Him out of the world of slavery, & oppression. In this brief statement we have the truth of the gospel, God the Son coming to the world of sin & oppression (Egypt) to lead us out of it into the land of promise!

Vs. 15 We are not told the exact length of time that Jesus remained in Egypt but it was not to long. Herod died some time between the second year & the forth year of Jesus’ life. This is a prophecy of Hosea, which was written in response to the failure of the nation as she committed spiritual harlotry with other gods. In the first part of the 11 chapter is where we have recorded this prophecy. It is there that God is telling the nation of how He loved Israel so much that He brought them out of slavery & oppression. It is this quote that Matthew records in light of Jesus. He is saying, “I loved you so much I brought you out, of slavery.” This was the great Exodus, the delivering of the people out of the physical oppression of Egypt. But what happened to the people? Well, they were out of physical slavery, but not out of spiritual slavery. Yes. they were no longer under the cruelty of Egypt, but they still battling sin in their lives, & this was a battle that could only be won through the incarnation. The trouble with Israel was always compromise with foreign nations, even after God drove them out they still compromised. Do not miss the beauty of this! This is the second, Exodus! Have you experienced the second exodus? You can know of this if you will follow him out of Egypt!

**III.) Vs. 16-18 Weeping For The Children**

Vs. 16 We are not given any outside historical help on the murder of the male children in Bethlehem. Several reasons, for this:

A.) This act as horrible as it was, is some what small in comparison to his other deeds.

B.) The order was most likely a secret one, not known by the other historians of the day. It was a crime committed in a small insignificant town.

 It was not that the Magi deliberately did this to mock Herod, but that they had been warned not to go back by way of Herod, verse 12. At any rate this infuriated him. His original plan was to just kill the baby Jesus, but now that he can not accomplish that he puts to death all male children that are into their second year & under to most likely a year old. All told, by best guess in a town of this size say 2 to 3 thousand this meant about 30 children. Herod took no chance, making a sweep of all the area of Bethlehem & it’s districts.

Vs. 17-18 Here Matthew tells us that this too was in fulfillment of prophecy, which we find in Jeremiah 31:15. Ramah lay some 5 miles north of Bethlehem. In Jeremiah, the prophet is speaking to a nation of the verge of being led away captive to Babylon. All the captives were gathered together at Rama, Jeremiah himself was in chains. The king was brought forward along with his sons, who were then murdered in front of him just before they put out his eyes. Then they were marched off to slavery leaving behind all that was dear to them. This then is what, Jeremiah spoke of concerning Rachel weeping for the descendants of her children, Rama being a town of Benjamin, it’s name means “eminence”. The picture is of Rachel weeping over the fallen hope of the nation, & the ruin of the nation because of failure.

 Now don’t miss the beauty of this prophecy either. What is the ultimate failure of mankind? What is the ultimate captivity? **Is it not sin & death**? If you read the next two verses of Jeremiah you will see the hope, 16-17. “*Thus says the LORD: "Refrain your voice from weeping, And your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, And they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the LORD, That your children shall come back to their own border.* “ Death of these children was permanent, yet One child did not die, no He was protected, saved & through Him we will all “*Refrain our voice from weeping, And our eyes from tears.”*  We will come back, “*from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the LORD”.*

**IV.) Vs. 19-23 Home To Nazareth**

Vs. 19-21 Again this was probably not all that long after the massacre of the children while the young Jesus was in Egypt.

 Note: The young child Jesus is given the preeminence in the story.

Vs. 22-23 Archelaus was as evil as was his father, he reigned some 10 years being exiled after he put to death 3000 people on Passover. So this young family ends up where they started. This then fulfills the prophecy spoken by Isa. 11:1**. The word Nazareth means sprout or branch**. This town had the reputation of insignificance. You will remember the words of Nathaniel right after Philip found him when he said "*We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote; Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." And Nathaniel said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see*." In other words this was a word of contempt. Jesus did not come from a good city, but rather from “bean town”. This town had a reputation for obscurity, & lowliness. This is not the same as being called a “Nazirite” which had to do with being separate. In Isa. 11:1 we read concerning Jesus that He would be; “*There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots*.” That is the same word “netzer”, which means a twig that has come up out of a tree that has been cut down. Now if you go to Nazareth, you will find a little town off the beaten path at the foot of some mountains. So how does this relate to Jesus? Well, we are told that Jesus will belong to a city that is not worth naming, he will be a man off the highways of life, knowing nothing of the great events of world life. In other words Jesus will come up from this great tree, a little shoot, a sprout that nobody will think of value, someone that people will laugh at & make fun of. Perhaps your here & your thinking all this Jesus talk, I just don’t get it how can this baby in manger help me? Why, I have real problems, big ones that some cute little Christmas story can’t help! Let me tell you the rest of the words of Isa. 11:1-5 “*The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist*.” The sprout, this person of Jesus held in contempt, despised is the savior! He alone is able to save to the utter most. The Psalmist would say in 142:4 that he “*looked on my right hand and see, For there is no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; No one cares for my soul*.” Yet we read in 1 Peter 5:7 *“cast all our cares upon Him, for He cares for us*.”

**Matthew 3:1-12**

**“The Herald’s Anthem”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4 The Voice In The Wilderness**

**III.) Vs. 5-12 Preparing The Way Of The Lord**

**I.) Intro.**

 Phrases of old sayings, are interesting to me. Have you ever wondered where we come up with sayings? May I give you one? “*Honeymoon*”, those of us who are married most likely went on a “*Honeymoon*”, but where did we get the word? It comes from an old Babylonian practice dating some 4000 years ago. It seems that for a month after the wedding the bride’s father would supply his son-in-law all the mead beer he could drink. Mead beer is a beer made from honey, & the Babylonians based their calendar upon the lunar month, thus this time became known as the “*honey month*” or as we say today the “*Honeymoon*”. This morning we are going to get further insight into stories that, like some phrases, are very familiar with, but often don’t know where it comes from.

 All of the sudden here John the Baptist walks onto the pages of Matthew. We left off with Jesus at about 2 years of age living in a little town called Nazareth, & here some 28 years have passed with nothing recorded. Luke 2: 41 records for us the time when Jesus was 12 & went to the temple with his folks, but other than that we are not told anything else. There are other outside stories concerning the early life of Jesus, & some fanciful things about Him going to India, but nothing historically correct. So what did happen with Jesus during these 28 years? Will Luke does tell us again in the second chapter prior to His episode when He was 12 that He “..grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.” I just believe that the same thing took place after He was 12 as it had before He was 12.

**II.) Vs. 1-4 The Voice In The Wilderness**

Vs.1 The first words of Matthew is quite striking, “*In those days*..” What days? 28 years have passed & Matthew dose not record one event then he starts with, “*In those days*..” I believe that what Matthew refers to is found in the last verse of the second chapter where we read that they “..dwelt in a city called Nazarerth”. In other words in the days that Jesus dwelt in a city called Nazareth John the Baptist came preaching. It is not possible that John started preaching 28 years earlier for he was only 6 months older than Jesus, (Luke 1: 36). All this verse tells us is that John started preaching while Jesus was still in Nazareth.

 Now we can cheat here & go to Luke’s account & find out all about John, but seeing we are not in Luke, but Matthew we need to ask ourselves why Matthew does not include the story?

 1.) First, it is important to know that for 400 years the Jews had not heard a single prophet saying a word from the Lord to them. The last word they were told was in Mal. 3:1 where we are told, "Behold, I send My messenger, **And he will prepare the way before Me**.” After this word 400 years of silence, than we are given this news of John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness.

 2.) Second, it is clear that the point of the messenger was to **prepare the way before the Lord,** so what was important is not the messenger, but the message. Perhaps at Christmas the U.P.S driver came by to drop off a package for you, I bet you didn’t go over to him & ask him his background, or where he came from, you were not interested in that you wanted to get into what he brought you; the package is what was important not the one who dropped it off.

 3.) Third, we are told that he came, “*preaching in the wilderness of Judea*.” John came to an area described as a wilderness, which is a place situated along the dead sea to the east of Jerusalem. It does not mean that it was not populated, but it does mean that there was not a large population. The word preaching means to proclaim as a public cryer. You have probably seen movies with these guys who would cry out to the public the message of the King; that is what the word means. Do you not find it a bit interesting that John went to a sparsely populated area to give out the message? I find it symbolic, John came to the wilderness, a dry land, a place where not many people were, because that was where Israel was at the time. They were dry spiritually, & there was only a small remnant that were following God, so john goes out to the little villages. We are so impressed today with large works, but you know God is into the small as well.

Vs.2 Here we are given his message, which is two fold.

 A.) The first word was “repent”. It does not mean just to feel sorry, but rather to change one’s direction. In the original it means to change one’s mind, but the truth is if a person has really changed their mind then they have changed their direction as well. I light of what we often see today as the gospel I find it interesting that John’s message was simply put repent. We are so afraid of being called judgmental today if we dare tell people to change directions in their lives. Would you be a self righteous jerk or a hero if you got out of your car to try to stop a another car from going the wrong way on a one way free way ramp?

 B.) Second, John told them the reason why they needed to have this change of direction, “*for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.” This phrase occurs 32 times in this gospel & is not found any other place in the N. T. Remember that Matthew was writing to the Jews, so they understood this no doubt to be what the prophet Daniel spoken of in 2:44 where he said that; *“..the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever*.” John was telling the people that the rule of heaven over the earth was about to begin. You can not have a kingdom with out a King, so what John was telling them is that the kingdom was going to be present in the Person of the King.

 The “kingdom of heaven” is the rule of Jesus over the world. That is not happening today, that is to say we do not yet see the whole world under His rulership. In Rev. we are told in chapter 5 that He has the title deed to the earth, than in 11:15 “we read that “..there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" Then finally at the seventh bowl of judgment upon the earth we are told that “It is done!”, (16:17). It is clear by our present day circumstances that Christ is not reigning in a physical realm, yet He is reigning on a spiritual realm, in the hearts of those who have acknowledged Him as King. We are told this in Col. 1:13 that “He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,” We belong to Him now & are already seated with Him in heavenly places, (Eph. 2:6).

 Do you see what John is telling you, that you better have a change of direction in your life because the King is here. Oh, He may not be knocking heads yet but that does not mean that He is not the King. He has come, to purchase the world back which man gave over to Satan. Folks you are either serving one of to kings, the ruler of this world or the King of Kings!

Vs.3 We are told by Matthew that all of this was done as the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah, 40:3. All John was, is one preparing the hearts of the people for Jesus. He was making the road of peoples hearts straight so that the salvation from sin that Jesus would offer would be easily received.

Vs.4 Here we are told what he wore & what he ate. Now why do you think that is

important? Will, no doubt he was a strange sight, clearly one that was very much separate

from a life of luxury & worldliness. But I think there is another reason for this as well.

 Lets look for a moment at Jesus’ words in 11:7-14 “As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You. Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. **And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come**.”

Do you see that? Jesus is clearly painting a picture of ministry connection between John & Elijah, & if you read 2 Kings 1:8 you will see that they dressed alike, “He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist." But more than that their ministry was a like. John was a man born into a priestly home, yet he was simple, his heart is revealed by what he wore, camel’s hair, it was rough a cloth worn by the prophets of old. His food was of a humble nature.

**III.) Vs. 5-12 Preparing The Way Of The Lord**

Vs. 5-6 Here we are given the positive effects of his ministry. Two things stand out here:

 1.) The great response of people to the message. Notice that crowds went out to him. If you wanted to know what was going on you went out to see. What this reveals is a great work of the Holy Spirit. The hearts of the people were ripe. Though it says “all” the people it is clear that it means a great amount went to see & hear.

 2.) The response of the hearts of the people. You will not find the ordinance of baptism in the O.T. associated with repentance for the Jews. Jews began baptizing Gentile converts about the same time as John, but circumcision still remained the primary entrance rite into Judaism. So for these people to come out to be baptized was radical. It shows that they had a great awareness of sin, & they were broken to the point of wanting to symbolize a change in their lives. They confessed their sins, & were baptized showing repentance.

Vs.7-12 John clearly accuses them of wanting to appear anxious for the Messiah, but not truly repenting & preparing their hearts.

 A.) Vs.8 So he declares that they must show repentance in a changed life not mere words.

 B.) Vs.9 Next, then warns them to quite trusting in their heritage. They can’t trust on another mans repentance it must be their own. There are a great many today who if you ask them if they are going to go to heaven will say; “Why, yes! because I’m Catholic, or Presbyterian, or Calvary Chapel.”

 C.) Vs.10 John now tells them that God was going to judge them for not producing fruit. The tree must have the right kind of root to produce the right kind of fruit, thus the ax was at the root. Now, I’m about to get rid of this willow tree that is in my back yard, & several guys are going to come over & chop that tree down, but that won’t kill it. They say I’m going to have to get at it’s roots to kill it.

 D.) Vs. 11 John’s baptism was an out ward sign of a changed life, but John is here saying that this just prepares a heart. He is not the one that changes a life, why he is not even worthy to be the lowest of His servants as to carry His sandals. Simply put John does not consider himself to be any better than the ones he is preaching. Folks that is true to day this morning, I’m not any better than you all. All I can do is point you to Jesus.

 E.) Vs.12 The “winnowing fan” was used to blow the wheat chaff from the nut that remained on the floor. They would come with these fans & whip them over the threshing floor to cleanse the floor from the waste, so they could gather the grain.

 Folks, lets here Johns message, the time is now soon Jesus will be coming, the signs are all around. It is time for us to have a change in our lives it is time for us to turn around. Your going in the wrong direction.

**Matthew 3:13-17**

**“The Kings Coronation”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 13-15 The Baptism**

**III.) Vs. 16 The Anointing**

**IV.) Vs.17 The Voice From Heaven**

**I.) Intro.**

I came across this information this week for any of those skeptics. A news article by Bill Hendrick from the Cox News Service (1/7/98). Titled “*Do the math: Several new scientific books offer up mind-numbing numbers backing the belief in a 'creator' of the universe*.” The article goes on to say, much to the disappointment of Mr. Hendrick that

according to the mathematical equations of a new book by Washington scholar Dean Overman that they prove beyond reasonable doubt that there is a ``creator.'' He goes on to say that; “*The Bible didn't tell him so, but probability theory did, as well as new discoveries in microbiology and the exquisitely precise laws of physics*.” Overman is a 54-year-old member of MENSA, an international society of geniuses, & he explains in detail what only scientists could fathom when he concludes in “*A Case Against Accident and Self* *Organization”*, better known as “evolution”. He further states, *“that the odds that life evolved by random chance are infinitesimally small*.” How small? “*Smaller, he says, than the odds that a tornado swooping over a junkyard could accidentally construct a 747 from debris sucked into its vortex; smaller than the odds that a monkey with a typewriter could, in a few billion years, randomly type out the sonnets of Shakespeare; smaller than the odds of hitting a housefly on a wall on the other side of the universe with a single unaimed rifle shot*.” Hendrick in his article goes on to say; “Overman, who has studied at Harvard, Berkeley and the University of Chicago and holds degrees in science and law, is far from alone in insisting that math and physics can prove what theologians ask us to take on faith: that the universe that spawned life could not be a product of mere chance. Dozens of books are being published around the world by physicists, biologists, neurologists and other scientists, all offering “proof” of what they call “intelligent design.”

 All to often the world is looking for reasons not to believe instead of reasons for trusting in Jesus. As we come upon the baptism of Jesus many people question the reason for it. G. Campbell Morgan says this; “The value of His dying depends upon the virtue of His living.” Folks it is my prayer that as we look at this event you will fall all the more in love with Jesus.

**II.) Vs. 13-15**

There are three specific events recorded by Matthew concerning the baptism of Jesus, **The baptism, The anointing, & The Voice from heaven.** This event has been a mystery to some which we will clear up. The great question of this event is even mentioned by John the Baptist in verse 14 where we read, “John tried to prevent the baptism, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” ***Why did the Sinless Jesus need to be baptized with the baptism of a repentance***? You will remember that “***repent***” means a change of mind which results in a change of direction. Jesus was not going the wrong direction; mankind clearly is, but not Jesus. So why was He baptized?

 Note: Before we look at this individually, let us look at this together in light humanity. When we elect a president, there are three things that take place on the day he assumes office the same is true of a King.

 A.) **First**, he accepts responsibility for the people of that nation or the subjects of the kingdom, it is safe to say that in so doing he identifies with the people, & their great needs. Usually there is an oath he takes or something of that sort. (**The baptism**)

 B.) **Second**, he is empowered or crowned with the authority to execute his office. After he has agreed to take the responsibility of the people he is crowned or empowered to do what is necessary for the good of the nation or people. (**The anointing**)

 C.) **Third**, there is a declaration of the powers that be that the president or King is the right man for the job. Again this follows the first two, & it is the statement from the representatives of the people that this is the ruler of the people, & he is ready to set out on the mission to which he has been appointed too. (**The Voice from heaven**)

Having said this, perhaps you can see the importance of the three aspects of Jesus’ baptism. Jesus was the King, coming into the beginning of His earthly reign, ***thus His baptism is His coronation***! And as Matthew writes the events down, they clearly show just that.

**The Baptism**

Vs. 13-15 Here we have recorded the event of the baptism of Jesus.

 A.) Vs.13 First note the word, “***then*** Jesus came from Galilee”. What this word does is connect us to time. Jesus came to be baptized by John at a time when there was a great moral awaking in the nation. People were coming out to John in a great move of God as they were coming to the understanding of personal sin & failure. It was at this time that Jesus came. A voice had cried in the wilderness & people had responded in an overwhelming way, they acknowledged publicly that where they were at was the wrong direction for it was not the way that God had intended man to live, thus they wanted to change directions in their lives. Jesus had lived in seclusion 28 years, & it is now time for Him to assume His office. In Luke 4:43 Jesus said this, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."

 B.) Vs.13 Next, note that His coming at this time was for specific purpose; “to be baptized by John.) He did not come to listen to John, nor was He just curious as were some, no, He came to be baptized, that is why he left the secluded life of Nazareth. Again we often say this of our public officials that they are now in private life after they retire. Jesus was at this moment leaving behind Him forever “private life”. Why He would say later in Matt. 8:20 “Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” That was His public life!

 C.) Vs.14 Just for a moment imagine this seen. John had baptized thousands in that river, he had looked into their repentive faces each of them & with out hesitation baptized each one of them. Now here comes Jesus down by the edge of the water, & John looks into His eyes & saw absolute perfection. Folks we read in John 1:26 that Jesus had been there standing in the midst of them & they did not know it. There was nothing outwardly that distinguished Him from all the others, yet He was very different inwardly for He was without sin.

 1.) So far as the human life of Jesus was concerned; clearly what John was looking at, there was no place for baptism in Jesus’s life. In fact it was John according to his own words that needed to be baptized by Jesus. Baptism declares the superiority of the spiritual realm over the physical realm. There was nothing Jesus needed to repent of, nothing out of order in His spiritual life it was superior over the physical realm. So why did Jesus get baptized? Clearly baptism **did not** have a place in the **life** of Jesus! So if not in the life of Jesus, as John notices, what place did it fit?

 2.) Vs.15 Here we are given the answer by Jesus, in the first words spoken by Him in this book.

 A. Note, first that Jesus does not deny the truth of what John said, “permit it to be so now..”, tells us that. In other words Jesus is saying “Your right John this baptism has no place in My earthly life.

 B. Next Jesus tells us in what place this baptism did belong, “..it is fitting for ***us*** to fulfill all righteousness.” What this reveals is that what they were about to do in the baptism was something that they were both to do, & that it’s purpose was for the fulfillment of righteousness. So what did this baptism show?

 C. Namely that of His identification with the people. Read what Paul’s tells us in 2 Cor. 5:21, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” In Isa. 53 we read of the Messiah that he was numbered with the transgressors. Here then we see the King coming on that great day of His coronation, accepting the responsibility for the people over whom He was to reign, meeting them in their deepest need & failure. Notice as well that this was understood in the scriptures as to what the King would do, “*to fulfill*”, that is in accordance with the scriptures. The King could not save the people unless He could come down to where they were at. By going to where the people were at; their failure, Jesus acknowledges their need & at the same time proclaims the remedy. By Him submitting to the plan of the Father going down under the earth He will bring up those who trust in Him. ***So by Jesus going down into those waters where the people had acknowledge their sins & failures He alone takes the responsibility for their failure & commits Himself to the cause of saving them***! Folks that is the baptism of Jesus, that’s what it is all about, identification.

**The Anointing**

Vs. 16 It is an interesting fact that the High Priest, upon the day of his coronation was first ceremonially washed with water, (baptized), then he was “anointed with oil” which is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is to this anointing that we now turn our attention.

 Immediately after Jesus’s baptism we see the anointing. There is little doubt that the only ones aware of the anointing of the Holy Spirit were John, & Jesus. But the greater question is what is the meaning of this?

 A.) First, this was not the first time Jesus & the Holy Spirit were together. There is of coarse was a permanent relationship between them, for they had been together for all of eternity.

 B.) Second, according to 1:20 His incarnation was a result of the Holy Spirit. That is to say Jesus as in no other person was Born of the Holy Spirit. We are born “***again***” of the Holy Spirit, but Jesus was “conceived, begotten” physically of the Holy Spirit.

 C.) Thirdly, according to Luke 2:40, 52 Jesus’s development, physically as well as spiritually had been under the control of the Holy Spirit. We read that, “..the Child grew and became **strong in spirit**, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

 So when Jesus came to the baptism He was a Man of the Spirit of God more than any other man that had ever been. He was a man that lived totally dependent upon the Spirit of God, in complete fellowship with Him at all times. He lived under the Spirit’s power, & illumination. Therefore, without question this is a special anointing a public one as He entered His public life.

 1.) The Spirit of God never appears under the figure of dove anywhere else except here. The dove, like the lamb, were gentile creatures, but more than that they are both types of animals used for the sacrifice. In the book of Leviticus we read of the types of sacrifices that were used for sin-offerings. In Lev. 5: 6-7 we are told that the people were to bring a “trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin. And if he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD, for his trespass which he has committed, two turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.” You see the dove was the lowest possible sacrifice, if you did not have a bull you could offer a lamb, but if you did not have a lamb you could offer a dove.

 2.) So upon hearing of this or reading this dove descending upon Jesus the Jew would think of the sacrifice for sin, the lowest offering for those who could not afford anything else. The Holy Spirit full of “Power” coming upon Him equipping Him for the purpose of sacrifice. This was an anointing not for preaching but for living in order that He might be sacrificed for our sin offering, not just for the wealthiest, but for those who could not afford anything else. Here then Jesus is crowned with power to be our sacrifice! That is the meaning of the Holy Spirit like a dove coming upon Him.

 **The Voice From Heaven**

Vs.17 First, it is important to see that the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit were all manifested at the same time. The Holy Spirit descending, upon Jesus the Son, while the voice of the Father is heard. Now according to Deut. 6:4 the foundational teaching of Judaism we read, “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is* ***one***!” The word “one” is a compound unity 1x1x1. Not three gods, but One God existing in three persons, seen hear.

 1.) The moment the Jews would of heard this they would of thought of the 2nd Psalm, verse 7 where we read, “I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, **'You are My Son**, Today I have begotten You.” Here in this Psalm Gods King is asking for the nations for an inheritance. It is here that this prophecy is fulfilled on the banks of the river with people around the Father declares the truth that His son is going to posses the nations as an inheritance. Do, you see how? Why, it is because of His sacrifice for our sins that He will posses them again. Eph. 1:18 tells us that we have become Gods inheritance because of Jesus sacrifice.

 2.) Secondly, this is not the son of Joseph & Mary, no Jesus is the Fathers Son. The world was waiting like today for the coming of Christ, Jesus is the Fathers only choice therefore He is our only choice. The Father is marking out His choice for King, He is setting Jesus out on the mission that for all eternity He was called to, winning back those that trust in Him.

 3.) Thirdly, the Father says He is well pleased! The Father is saying that Jesus is the only sacrifice that will be accepted. Jesus has done what no other had ever done or could do, live a life without sin. Now if your here this morning & you have never sinned then you don’t need Jesus, but if you have never sinned then you have truly come to the wrong church because we are all a bunch of sinners. So in come her you have just sinned in that you have come here.

 4.) Lastly, the Father is well pleased with the fact of Jesus being baptized, taking on the role of the sacrifice for our sins. Here the cross is in view by the Father, & though it will be yet another 3 years the Father is already saying it will be accepted.

 In conclusion, in this baptism Jesus assumes responsibility, for sinning mankind; He is anointed or crowned with power to be that sacrifice, & the Father declares that He is the only right choice for that office.

**Matthew 4:1-4**

**“Led By The Spirit, Tempted By The Devil”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-2 The Circumstances of the Temptation**

**III.) Vs. 3-4 The Lust of the Flesh**

Last week we saw the coronation of the King, this week we see the testing of Him. Jesus identified with sinful man, He was empowered for the work & set forth for the task by the Father, but how can we be sure He is up to the task? Before any new car is released on the market it must be put to the test to see how it will handle the job it was designed for. Usually the test is for more abusive then the normal driving conditions, but the manufacture must be sure that the car can handle any thing you & I will put it trough, such is the case here. Heb. 4:15 in the ASV. says this, “***For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin***.” It such a comfort to know that Jesus understands all that we week humans go through, but more than that he has shown us the way through our weakness, trust in His word. As we look at these temptations you will notice that they are the same ones faced by us & that the answer is always found in our surrender to His Word. There is something equally fascinating to me that as you consider the first Adam & the second Adam (1 Cor. 15:15) they were both tempted by Satan yet the surroundings were vastly different, as was the outcome.

 Adam was tempted in a beautiful garden.

 Jesus was tempted in a barren forsaken desert.

 Adam ate freely of all things in the garden except one tree.

 Jesus ate nothing for 40 days.

 Adam was in perfect health, (no effects of sin)

 Jesus was on the verge of death.

**II.) Vs. 1-2 The Circumstances of the Temptation**

Vs.1 Again we have the word “then” which tells us the timing of the testing. It was right after His coronation that the testing took place. There are several things to consider:

 1.) **The timing** of the test right after Jesus baptism & blessing. Testing seem to happen that way in my life as well. It is often right after some great blessing or victory that spiritual battles come. Your on a high than “wham” your hit with something.

 2.) **The circumstances** of the test:

 A. “led by the Spirit....tempted by the devil..” Here then is what every believer in Christ faces daily in our experience, whether we are going to be led by the Spirit or led astray by the temptation of the flesh. Here then we see perfect Man dealing with what we face on every day life. Humanly speaking He was “led by the Spirit” in other words this was not something He went on His own. In 6:13 as the Lord was teaching His disciples to pray He said; “And do not lead us into temptation”. How many times do we go head long into temptation? Not so with the Lord, this was not where He wanted to go, yet He did so in obedience.

 B. **The place of the temptation**, the “wilderness”, this was the barren Judean desert. A place of solitude & sever conditions. Folks again, we ought to remember this as we are being tempted to go after some thing in the flesh, that though it may appeal to our flesh it is in fact a barren waste land void of any value.

 C. **The person of the temptation**, the devil. Satan is the author of sin & the father of lies, Jesus therefore in winning here would show forever His ability to overcome evil.

 Note: This ought to settle the issue for us to which James 1:13 addresses, “Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am ***tempted*** by God"; for God cannot be ***tempted*** by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.” The Hold Spirit did not tempt Jesus, but He lead Him to a place where He would be tempted, not so He could grow, or to prove anything to the Father but rather to reveal Who He is & how we can through Him overcome temptations. The word “tempted” here “pi-rad'-zo” means to test, scrutinize, entice, discipline:--assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt, or try. It appears 41 times in the N.T. & is the same word here as in James 1:13. It carries two ideas:

 A.) To seduce or entice to do evil or sin. For this to be true it would require the person being seduced to have a something in their nature that could be lured into yielding to the bate. Jesus said in John 14:30 that the devil had, “..nothing in Me.” So the temptation of Jesus was different then what you & I face.

 B.) The second idea of the word is to test, or assay, to prove. Again we can be proved, not for Gods knowledge, but for our own. So the testing of Jesus was not for either of their benefits, but rather for ours.

 D. Vs.2 **The condition of the person being tested**. The 40 days & 40 nights is a familiar period of time for testing in the Bible. In the days of Noah, & Israel yet in both cases mankind failed the test. After 5 days of a fast most people lose the sense of hunger & they do not experience it again until they begin to starve to death. The fact that after the 40 days & nights Jesus was hungry tells us that His body was dying, He was starving to death. Now if you are like me if I miss a meal I begin to say something to the effect that I’m starving to death, because I feel hungry.

 I remember when I was in Bible school we did a 7 day hike in death valley in May. We had on these 25 pound packs & were hiking through Marble canyon. When we got on the other side around day 5 we had a time alone for two days with nothing but water. No one around for a 1/2 mile or so. Man could you here things. In one since I was week & vulnerable, but in another way I was closer to the Lord than at any other time. Our eyes alone are sending pictures to our brains at 18 frames a second. Our minds are busy interpreting, smell, hearing taste, & feeling. We are going through sensory overload. What would happen if you were in a place completely void of these experiences? Why I believe you would be much more open to the voice of the Lord there would be no detractions. This is where Jesus was at alone with the Lord. You would be weekend physically, but strong spiritually, this is when Satan came.

**III.) Vs. 3-4 The Lust of the Flesh**

Vs.3 Notice the word “when” the tempter came, it is not an “if” but a “when. He will come. Every year people go dear hunting, trying to find spots where people don’t go, why? Because those dear they have some way of telling each other that it’s dear season & the hunters are coming. The dears that get killed are the ones that didn’t listen.

 Note: It is important not to think that Jesus was only tested 3 times during these 40 days, he was being tested the whole time but we have only 3 of them recorded.

 1.) "***If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread***." The word “if” is actually better translated “since” here. There was no doubt in Satan’s mind as to who Jesus was. In Luke 4:34 the demon said; “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us***? I know who You are; the Holy One of God***!" What the devil is saying here is why don’t You use your divine powers to satisfy your own fleshly appetite. I am told that in this region the ground is covered with loaf shaped rocks, so Satan comes & uses this to tempt Jesus. We often think that the temptation is something that is far from us & we will see it coming, but more than likely it is something right under your nose.

 A.) In 1 John 2:16 we are told that; ***“..all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world***.” You will notice these three baits in the temptation of Jesus & ultimately in or own experiences as well. Every temptation we face will be in one of these three categories.

 The first of which we see here "***If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread***." is  ***the lust of the flesh.*** This test was on the **physical** level, & tested the ideals for the kingdom. This test was a test of loyalty & was aimed at getting Jesus to question the Fathers **PROVISION**. It is Satan saying; “**Since you are the Son of God, why is the Father allowing you to starve**.” “Go on use your divine powers to satisfy your own needs, you’ve got the power do it, & He is not doing anything about your need!”

 We face this one all the time. “Look, at all of those bills piling up! If God loves you so why are you so broke?” You better go out there & take another three jobs, because He is not going to help you!” Or perhaps your single & you really want to married, but you just haven’t meet any one. So Satan comes in & says, “Hey, look God is not concerned with this, so why not just go out with that none believer he won’t care, just do it in your own power.” So what’s the answer?

 B.) Vs. 4 This is found in Deut. 8:3 in fact all of the scriptures Jesus quotes from are found in Deuteronomy. It was the summary of the law & was written by Moses to a new generation so that they might obey. So what is Jesus saying? He is saying greater than any need I have in the physical realm I have an even greater one in the spiritual realm & that is fellowship with God. And fellowship with God can not happen if I am disobedient.

 Note: Jesus says “every word” not just the ones that we agree with but every word is inspired. I believe not only in the inspiration of scripture, but I believe in the sufficiency of scripture. So many today turning to al sorts of things to try to find the answers, but they are not turning to the word of God. Even some churches & pastors are putting adds out in the news paper trying to sell people in coming to church say, “Contemporary messages, or relevant Bible teaching.” Why they are appealing to is the thought that some have the Bible is out dated, that it does not have any thing to say to my real needs. Folks, the problem is not that it doesn’t not have anything to say, but rather what it has to say makes us uncomfortable sometimes.

 So Jesus, here says no the best of my existence is found in relationship with the Father & I trust Him for everything. As we conclude this morning may I give you this as part of how to deal with temptation Ps. 119:11 “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You!” It does you know good just to know the word you must apply it in your life. In other words, if all we do is say “Man, does not live by bread alone...” it does us no good. We need instead to say “I’m not going to live in the material realm having the physical appetites rule over the spiritual ones, No I’m going to live the way God has made me dependent & trusting in Him alone to meet my needs!

**Matthew 4:5-11**

**“Away With You, Satan!”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 5-7 The Pride of Life**

**III.) Vs. 8-11 The Lust of the Eyes**

**I.) Intro.**

The story is told of a man who received a free ticket to the Superbowl last year from his company. Unfortunately, when he arrived at the stadium & got up to his seat he realized that he was closer to the blimp than the football field. Well about halfway through the first quarter he noticed an empty seat 5 rows off the field right at the 50 yard line. So he decided to take his chances & made his way through the crowded stadium around all the security to the empty seat. As he was about to sit down he asked the gentle next to the empty seat; “Excuse me, is anyone sitting here?” “No!” replied the man. “Wow, this is great,” exclaimed the man. “But who in their right mind would give up a seat like this at the Superbowl?” The man next to him replied, “Well, actually the seat belongs to me. I have been coming to these Superbowl games since I got married in 1967 with my wife, but she passed away & this is the first time I have ever gone without her.” The man then said, “That’s awful, I’m so sorry for your loss, but couldn’t you still find someone else to go with you & take this wonderful seat?” To this the widower replied, “No, I tried but they’re all at her funeral!”

 This story has absolutely nothing to do with our text on temptation, or maybe it does? This week we shall look at the last two temptations. As a key to understanding these temptations let me again refer you to 1 John 2:16 “*For all that is in the world; the* ***lust of the flesh****, the* ***lust of the eyes****, and the* ***pride of life****; is not of the Father but is of the world*.” As I said last week these are the three baits in the temptation of Jesus & ultimately every temptation we face will be in one of these three categories.

 The first of we saw was, "***If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread***." & is concerned with  ***the lust of the flesh.*** The test was on the **physical** level, & tested the **ideals** for the kingdom. It was a test of loyalty & was aimed at getting Jesus to question the Fathers **PROVISION**. Satan is saying; “**Since you are the Son of God, why is the Father allowing you to starve**.” “Go on use your divine powers to satisfy your own needs, you’ve got the power do it, & He is not doing anything about your need!”

**II.) Vs. 5-7 The Pride of Life**

Vs.5 Now we look at the second temptation which falls into the category of, ***the******pride of life.*** This is a spiritual temptation & is concerned with the **laws** of the kingdom. It is to get Jesus to doubt the Father’s **PROTECTION**. Lets look at the location of this temptation, as it will reveal how Jesus was being tempted.

 A.) First, we have those curious words, “The devil ***took*** Him..***set*** Him..” The word “took” literally means to accompany or to lead. The word “set” is rendered “had him stand” in the N.I.V. version & I think it carries the thought better. It does not mean that in some super natural way Satan bore Jesus up in the air & set Him on a spire, nor does it mean that Satan compelled Jesus to go against His will. There is no evidence in scripture that Satan has the power to do either of these two things. Simply put, Satan accompanied or took Jesus to Jerusalem to the temple with himself.

 B.) Second, we have location or the setting of the temptation:

 1.) The Holy City, called thus because of the temple was there. Jerusalem was the center of all cultural life for the Jewish people & it all revolved around the temple. Now remember for a moment that Jesus is the King, that is how Matthew is showing Him, the King is there in His capital city.

 2.) He was standing on the “pinnacle” of the temple. When we read this our minds think that He was on the top of some very tall tower, but it is here that the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus helps. The word “pinnacle” literally means a little wing. There is nothing in the word that says that Christ was placed on the top of a spire. The Herod’s temple was on the top of Mount Moriah & it had two wings the northern & the southern. The southern was the most grand of the two both with it’s decor “Solomon’s Porch”, as well as scenic beauty, it over looked the valley of Kedron some 700 feet below. Josephus says that one could not looked down with out becoming dizzy. It is most likely to this spot that Jesus was taken, but **why** & **what** does it have to do with the temptation?

 A.) To understand the **why**, we only need go back to the first temptation. There Jesus declared the superiority of the spiritual over the physical. Jesus said, “*In My kingdom the greatest need of man is fellowship with the Father, it is greater than any other need, even greater than My hunger*.” So here Satan takes Jesus to the center of spiritual life for His kingdom the temple in Jerusalem.

 B.) Vs.6 tells us **what** it has to do with the temptation. Right upon the heals of that victory over the temptation to place the physical above the spiritual, Satan comes with these words. “*If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone*.” This is partial quote or a misquote from Psalm 91:11-12. Again the word “if” is better rendered “since”. So Satan has with this temptation countered by saying, “***OK, since the spiritual is over the physical & you trust Gods provision for you prove it!” “You say You believe Gods word, then why not prove that You trust one of His promises, say the one in Psalm 91:11-12***?”

 Note: Can you imagine this seen for a moment Jesus 700 feet above the canyon, people looking up. The King, the Messiah, & Satan asking Jesus to do something “**spectacular**” in front of the crowd proving both Gods love for Him & proving that he really is the Messiah. That is the temptation. ***“You don’t need the cross & suffering just trust God & by doing this you will demonstrate that your the Messiah in front of all these folks***.”

 Might I suggest to you that the moment we begin to test God as to His love for us we show that we do not trust Him. Perfect trust just waits, the moment we need some sign or some proof we show we don’t trust.

 Suppose now I just stepped out in front of a speeding car to push you out of the way saving your life, but the car hit me pretty good. In fact it hit me so hard that I’m near death lying in Mercy Hospital. Finally I come too & you come to visit me. And you say to me, “*Dale I sure appreciate you saving my life & all, but I want some proof of your love for me, is there not something you could do to show me you love me? I mean perhaps you could pay my bills for a few months, or maybe you could hook me up with some single person because I have no one*.” Now I will be honest, I most likely would ask you to get out of my room. But we do this all the time to the Lord, show me your love, do this for me do that for me. Don’t you know that He showed His love for you on the cross dying for you what more proof do you need?

Vs.7 So here we see how Jesus answered this temptation again with the word of God out of Deut. 6:16. If we were to go back to Psalm 91:11-12 you will see that Satan leaves something out of his quote. “*For He shall give His angels charge over you****, To keep you in all your ways****. In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.”* Satan deliberately left out that little phrase, ***,”To keep you in all your ways”.***

 To many people today here some person quote scripture & they think it must be OK because they quoted from the Bible. But they didn’t check out the context. **Any text apart from the context is a pretext**. Jesus new that Satan left out the fact that God was promising to keep His promise as we keep His ways. Be careful claiming promises to support foolish actions when we have either taken the promise out of context or have not met the conditions of the promise. You here of people all the time taken up rattle snakes in Kentucky misquoting Mark 16:18 where it says that, “They shall take up serpents.....& shall recover.” But they ought to compare scripture with scripture, clearly this verse here that Jesus quotes is the answer. To do something without the Bible’s authority is to sin, to tempt God to dare Him to intervene & rescue us when we have been deliberately disobedient is a good way to find yourself in a bunch of trouble. Jesus is saying, “*Yes the Father will protect Me, but I don’t need to put that to the test to satisfy the truth of it to you or anyone else, for scripture says that you are not to put God to the test*.” Folks. don’t test Gods love for you by seeing how close to the world you can live & still be called a Christian. That’s just stupid! But if people are around you outside of your control living for the world you don’t need to move to a monastery, ask God to shine through you to them, don’t compromise & become like them impact them with Christ’s love.

**III.) Vs. 8-11 The Lust of the Eyes**

We come to the third of the temptations which deals with **The Lust of the Eyes.** Here Satan attempts to get Jesus to question the Father’s **PROMISE**. This is concerned with the plans of the kingdom.

 You will see that the common element in all of these temptations is **compromise**! And all of them deal with doubting God in some way, whether that is His, **PROVISION, PROTECTION**, or **PROMISES**. Also in every instance Jesus always goes back to the Word of God. Satan’s attempt is to get Jesus, (as well as us), to use the circumstances & situations of our lives to interpret who God is, & Jesus’ answer is always the opposite always using who God is to interpret the circumstance or situation.

Vs.8 Here again we have the setting of the temptation, however we are not told upon what mountain Jesus was taken. There are several mountains in the vicinity of Jerusalem which when atop of them you could survey a great amount of Israel. In Deut. 34:1-3 we read of one of them that, “*Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar*.”

 A.) Vs.9 Jesus came to win these kingdoms back, by going to the cross. Jesus had just won the victory on the spiritual realm by declaring that there was no need to put God to the test. So Satan here says; “***OK, no need to put the Father to the test, here is what you have come for here are those kingdoms they are yours, & I will make it easy for you, why you don’t even need to die just acknowledge that gift I’m giving You & show your gratitude towards me***.”

 1.) Several things here to understand the temptation:

 A.) First, of which is who owned the right to the kingdoms? This is best understood by the text, Jesus does not refute Satan’s claim as to who had ownership of them just the means to obtain them.

 B.) Second, this being so when did Satan gain control of the kingdoms of the world? The answer is way back in Gen. 1:28 where God gave dominion over all that He created to mankind through Adam. When they fell in the garden, the title deed went over to Satan. In John 14:30 Satan is called the prince of the world, so Satan has been given a certain amount control over the kingdoms, 2 Cor 4:4 tells us that his main deal is to blind the minds of the people to the truth concerning the gospel. Now Psalm 2: tells us that these kingdoms have been promised to Jesus, but they are only won by way of the cross verse 6.

 Note: This is the reason the world is in the shape that it is in. People are always blaming God for the pain & suffering in the world. The fact is that the world is under the rule of Satan & is in rebellion against God because of mans sin. So all the pain & suffering in the world today are a result of rebellion against God. When Jesus comes back there will be no more suffering, hunger, pain. or disease.

 Note: It is quite revealing that Satan would rather have worship & recognition than all the kingdoms of the world & their glory. He is still the same as he was in Isa. 14:13-14 where we read “*I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;*

*I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High*.”

Vs.10 Now we move to Jesus’ answer again from Deut. 6:13. In essence Jesus says that He will never compromise with evil. “I will get these kingdoms from the Father, His way.”

 Note: The words “Away with you Satan..” You offer Me the kingdoms of the world if I acknowledge you by paying you homage; I will take these kingdoms by kicking you out. Folks what ever god we serve we are worshipping! You can not serve to masters! If you are serving the systems of world, pleasure, power, & popularity then you are worshipping the wrong god. Only One that is worthy of worship the Savior of your souls. Don’t be fooled by the lure of shinny things, there is nothing brighter than the “old rugged cross”.

Vs.11 We are told else where that Satan left Him for an opportune time. He was probably back the next day. Folks the keys are here we do battle with the enemy by staying in constant fellowship with God. we do this by meditating upon His word, & ordering our lives by it. communion

**Matthew 4:12-25**

**“He Came To Galilee”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 12-17 The place & reason of service**

**III.) Vs. 18-22 The call of His cabinet**

**IV.) Vs. 23-25 The order of His service**

**I.) Intro.**

It is important to realize that Matthew does not follow a chronological order in this report. First of all Matthew leaves out about one year between verses 11-12 that is included by the other gospel writers. Remember that each writer presents Jesus to a different segment of people, Matthew has written to Jewish people steeped in their own culture which centered around religious life. So he clearly writes to those that would be entrusted in Who Jesus was & how that fit into their religious life.

 So what happened during that year? It appears that after His temptation He stayed some days near where John was baptizing for John testifies as to what he saw at Jesus’ baptism, (John 1:29-34). A day latter Andrew, Peter’s brother, is with John when he hears him say of Jesus that He is the Lamb of God. Andrew goes & gets his brother Peter saying that he has found the Messiah. The third day Jesus finds Phillip, who in turn finds Nathanael, (John 1:35-51). From there they leave Cana which is in the area of Galilee where He changes the water to wine. Then He goes back to Jerusalem & cleanses the temple. While there He caught the attention of a very important teacher named Nicodemus where they met at night. From there He went back out to Judea with His disciples & they baptized there while John was at Salim. After John the Baptists imprisonment Jesus leaves to go to Galilee, this is where Matthew picks up the story. Now, on the way there He goes through Samaria, where He speaks to the woman at the well. He teaches a while in Galilee, goes back to Cana where he heals the noble men’s son, then to Nazareth, where He is rejected, chosen rather to go to Capernaum. All of this is found in John’s gospel from 1:19-4:42 & fit right here after 11.

**II.) Vs. 12-17 The place & reason of service**

Vs.12 It is safe to assume from a practical basis that Jesus left for Galilee because it was better for Him to do so, as far as success & less danger were concerned. Yet with that said Matthew tells us from heavens perspective it was all in accordance to the word of God.

 A.) Galilee is a region which covered an area about 60 miles by 30 miles. Josephus tells us that it was populated by some 204 villages with none having less than 15,000 people. All totaled that would give this area a population of around 3 million. It was known as the “region of death” by the Jews because it was the portion of country that was most attacked by warring nations. Consequently, there was a strong gentile population there.

 B.) Vs.13 Here we are told simply that He left Nazareth & came to live in Capernaum. Now you will remember that Nazareth was His home town, yet He leaves it & Matthew does not tell us why. Luke tells us why He left in 4:16-31, it was there in the synagogue that He opened up the scriptures & taught out of Isa. 61. which they could not receive because He had grown up their; they were going to throw Him off the cliff out side of town yet He just slipped through them. **So He left their because of unbelief**.

 C.) Vs.14-16 From the perspective of the King in His kingdom, Matthew quotes as to the reason why Jesus came to this region. He shares from two spots in Isaiah, 9:1-2 & 42:6-7. Matthew had already quoted from Isaiah 7:14 speaking of the virgin birth, now this is out of the same prophecy where we see that the child born shall have the government upon shoulders. The prophet Isaiah was standing on a mountain peak looking out at the darkness of the condition which he lived & saw the coming of the Messiah. He saw the lands most afflicted by the Assyrians the place most ravaged by the affects of sin in the nation & he proclaimed to them a great light was coming their first.

 Note: When Jesus comes into hearts He comes only to those who have need of Him, now all have need of Him, but those who see their need welcome Him! This was a place of half breeds, outcasts. They had funny accents & people looked down upon them, this is where Jesus starts His public ministry. These people sat in darkness that was their home, it was what they had been accustomed to living with, & here He is the light, He came to dispel the darkness that is what light always does. Jesus made His home where the people were the darkest. Don’t miss this! He came for the unworthy, outcast, darkest people in all of Israel. Jesus loves sinners, the person who is the worst of all is the one He which to make His home with! I just came back from S.F. I don’t know if there is a darker place in all of the US then S.F. & I believe that if Jesus were to come to a place that is where He would come to live.

 Note: With that said, when the “Light of the World” comes to dwell among you it is great responsibility for those whom He dwells. It was here as we shall see in verses 23-25 that many of His miracles were done, but there was little response. In chapter 11:”20-21 He pronounces this upon them, “He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: "Woe to you, Chorazin!” So many darkened hearts say, “If He would just show Himself then I would believe.” Would you? Where there is greater light there comes greater responsibility. If you stumble in the dark you need light, if you stumble in the light your blind!

 D.) Vs.17 Here we are given the message of Jesus. Jesus’ gospel began right where John the Baptist’s had left off. Might I just say **that good news always starts with a changed heart**! Remember, Jesus came to the darkest area of Israel but He did not come to tell them how they could obtain a better social standing, He came to bring them to the Father. The only way He could bring them to God was with this word, “**REPENT**”. “*Change your mind as to what you believe & how you live, which will result in a change of direction*.” That is what Christ said to this darkened land. Why should they want to have this change, **“..for the kingdom of heaven is at hand**.” These words are used 32 times in Matthew. The Jews were looking for a physical kingdom based in Israel that is why Jesus used these words instead of the words, “Kingdom of God” which occurs only 5 times. The “Kingdom of heaven” is larger than just Israel it is not concerned with physical location but the location of a repentant heart. Jesus is saying to this devastated people living in darkness, “***Make room for a new way of life is hear now”. “You are wrong in your surroundings because you are wrong in your heart. The darkness is not around you it is in you. Admit that by agreeing with me & you will come to a new lighted world***.” That was His message. Today so many teachers want to apologize for that message they say if we tell people that today that won’t want to come to church they will be offended by the message so we want just to make people feel better about themselves. Can you imagine Jesus coming to Capernaum & saying, “*Nice darkness you have here, you all must have terrible self-esteem that is why I have come to make you just feel better about your darkness so that you can appreciate the emptiness of your lives*.” Folks that could never be the message of the King, but if it sounds familiar to you it is the message of Satan!

**III.) Vs. 18-22 The call of His cabinet**

Vs. 18 This is the second of three calls to these men**. SEEK John 1:35-42, FOLLOW Matt. 4:19 , GO! Matt. 28:19**

 1.) The first took place in John 1:35-42 where they came ***to*** Jesus **seeking** Him as the Messiah. The word rendered “followed” in John means that they accompanied Him. It is then that He asks them, “Whom do you **seek**.” They then say, “Teacher, where are you staying?” “Come see”, Jesus says to them. They have seen Him as who He is, but they have not yet continued with Him. They had their encounter with Jesus, but they go back to their old lively hood, changed, yes, but there is still more work. I can relate to this in my life when I met Christ, I was changed but I was not committed to Him. I went to church read my Bible & prayed, but there was a deeper call yet. That is where some people leave it, there is no further goings in their lives. That is not for me, but it was about a year after that I knew that there was something else.

 2.) That brings us to the second call here in Matthew 4:18-20. Several months have gone by & they are back doing there old work. They knew Jesus , but now they are being asked to become a “**disciple**” that’s just a fancy word that means student. How does a person become a student of Jesus? Simple, “**Follow Me**”. “Come after Jesus, learn of Him. He did not send them to some school in Jerusalem, nor did He tell them to read some book, instead He told them to “**Hang out with Me**!”

 Note: When I first got married we moved to Carmel, because I got a job offer to be a “apprentice” goldsmith under one of the top designers in the world. It was not a formal education as in some school, but in two years of hanging around with the master & watching Him I started to become like Him. When He hired me he said, “*Dale, you want to become a great Jeweler, watch me & do exactly what you see me do*.” In other words sit down & shut up. I was 21 years old & Ron would call me over to his bench to watch him. He gave responsibilities, like sweeping up the shop & for 6 months that’s all I did. I’ll never forget the first real piece of jewelry I made it was a cameo locket. It had three places for pictures & was spring loaded, every bit of it was hand made. Every step of the way Ron told me what to do. When I finished I looked at that piece of jewelry & I realized that Ron had built it through me, it was my hands but his knowledge & power. I don’t know who was more proud of that piece him or me. That’s what Jesus is calling these men too, become My apprentice.

 Note: Jesus does not say that they were going to be “fisher of men” ***instantly*** it was to be a process, they were “**to become**” this. How is that accomplished? “**I will make you..”** Is that not great? Under His guidance, imitating Him they will learn to be fishers of men. And what was the work? “To catch men alive!” **They had been employed catching live fish & bringing them to death, now they were going to catch dead men & bring them to life**!

 This then, is a call to a new employment, “**follow**” is the key word here. But what of their responsibility to this call?

 A.) Vs. 20 They “**immediately left their nets & followed Him**.” They surrendered everything, their equipment & family to full time permanent obedience to the Master. No reservation, nor change of heart the fishers of men were hooked on Jesus. I’m a firm believer that God calls all of us to follow Him this way. Some of you perhaps will have to empty your hands & leave your nets & family to answer this call, others of you will not have too. All I can say is that there came a time in my life when I could do nothing else with my life & He said to me a Jeweler out of 2 Chron. 2:6-7 “..who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him? Therefore send me at once a man skillful to work in gold and silver,..” That is when I knew that all I could do is leave my profession empty my hands & follow.

 Note: Peter was out casting a net to catch fish & three years later on the day of Pentecost he would cast another net the net of the gospel & 3, 000 would get saved in that net.

 Note: Vs.21-22 John & James were in their boat not to far away & they were mending nets, & Jesus called them that same day later on John would be know as the Apostle of Love. He was always trying to mend people like those nets.

 The point being that God uses the natural ways our personalities work turning the natural into the supernatural by way of the Holy Spirit. People are waiting for some dramatic move taking something completely foreign to us & then placing that gift in us. That is highly unlikely, more often God takes what we are already & retools us fitting us for use for His glory.

 3.) The last call is found in Matthew **Matt. 28:19** with the word **GO!** That is where they are called to be ambassadors for His kingdom. Again they were out fishing we He came to them. He sends those who have sought Him, then followed Him, to a foreign land to be His ambassadors. That is what we are all called too. So many of us stop at the seeking stage just content to know about Him, others move on the hanging around Him stage, & a very few move all the way to where Paul was when he said in 1 Cor. 11:1 “**Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ**.,”

**IV.) Vs. 23-25 The order of His service**

Vs. 23 Here we have shown us Jesus’ method of reaching the dark world & if we are to follow Him we ought to pay close attention.

 Note: First before that look at the fact that He “went about all of Galilee..” He was never idle, never standing still people were His mission & they were every where He sought them out.

 1.) **Teaching**: The synagogue was the place He did this. This is where He laid down the principals & precepts of the Word of God, explaining them. The primary work of Christ as to His earthly ministry was that of teaching never miss that. He was a teacher who did miracles to illustrate His message.

 2.) **Preaching**: This was the good new of the kingdom. Proclaiming & stimulating the people. I would say that this would be evangelism, reaching people with the goodnews.

 3.) **Healing all kinds of sickness**: This was the manifesting of His power over the physical. Jesus was showing that what He proclaimed was authentic as to have power over the damage done by sin. He had power over the enemy who tormented man.

Vs.24-25 Here we are given the effects of this ministry:

 1.) His **fame**: Went through out 100 mile radius to see Jesus.

 2.) He healed them, **faith**: That is people trusted Him with their lives.

 3.) They **followed** Him: Through out Galilee, from the ten cities area (Decapolis), Jerusalem, Judea, & beyond the Jordan.

 Jesus impacted every persons life that He came into contact with, the greater question is, How are you responding to His touching your life?

**Matthew 5:1-6**

**“Kingdom Character part 1”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-2 The Setting for the Sermon**

**III.) Vs. 3-6 The Need of our Hearts**

**I.) Intro.**

We come now to what is commonly called the Sermon on the mount, & it is Jesus’ Declaration of Independence, for the believer. In our U.S. constitution the citizens of this country are guaranteed the right of the pursuit of happiness. Those outside have no promise given to them; so to with Jesus’ declaration. This sermon on the mount does not concern it’s self with what the citizens are to do but rather with the character of who they are. Who they are is summed up with one word, “**Blessed or Happy**” the rest of these beatitudes describes the character of the person who is happy or blessed. You will notice that these are not the **Do-Attitudes**, simple put these attitudes describe the state of being that all that are in Christ’s kingdom should look like & in so looking like this they will find the most Joy! Jesus came to teach His disciples, us, that **character is before conduct**. He did not say a word about policy, or government, not one condition of this blessing has to do with us doing anything it is all pronounced upon our “**BEING**”.

 With that said Jesus taught them that nothing is of greater importance than the making of character that is what the Kingdom of heaven is all about. President Harry Truman used to like to say this quote: "***Fame is a vapor, popularity an accident, riches take wings, those who cheer today may curse tomorrow, only one thing endures -- character***."

**II.) Vs. 1-2 The Setting for the Sermon**

Vs.1-2 The occasion of this message is found right in the first four words, “*And seeing the multitudes*,..” You will remember that last week in verse 25 we read that of His fame went through out a 100 mile radius & “great multitudes” followed Him where ever He went. Fame followed Him, but He did not follow fame! People thronging Him wanting Him, listening to Him. Folks that is need, these people whom He came to were in great need, that is the picture you need to grasp here. He saw the multitudes, their needs & they were willing to follow Him with hopes of having those needs meet & we were told that He had done so, but now seeing the same thronging multitude He goes up on to a hill side & calls just those whom are “hanging around, apprenticing” under Him to Himself to teach them. What’s the point?

 A.) The greatest need people have is to come to Jesus. People get all raped up in their circumstances & they are looking for some way out, with out coming to Christ or they make coming to Christ conditional upon getting out of their circumstances. You know what blesses me is that some times because He is so loving & merciful He does take care of them, but most of those won’t want to “hang” with Him after their circumstances have been changed. Folks don’t miss this now, this message was not for those multitudes. Oh, I’m certain that they heard some of it, but He was talking to only those that were His followers, those that had trusted their lives to Him.

 B.) The only way to meet the need is to equip others. The need, is over overwhelming where do you start? You start with 12 who are committed, & you teach them not to focus on anything but a changed heart. Oh, you should go out & feed the hungry & heal the sick but what is lasting is a changed life! These attitudes that He is going to share characterize the state they were now in as citizens of the Kingdom. In other words bring them into the kingdom & they will be blessed no matter what their circumstances.

 Note: That Jesus taught them. Teachers would sit when they would speak that is how they taught, & they would stand if they were announcing something.

**III.) Vs. 3-6 The Need of our Hearts**

Now before we look at these blessings individually let us look at them together. There are three words repeated each & every time. Understanding these three words will cause you to understand the character that is blessed! They are, **BLESSED, ARE, & FOR**.

 1.) **BLESSED:** This word is translated “blessed” 43 times & “happy” 6 times. The general thought is that is should be expressed “**Oh how happy**”. It describes a conscious condition rather than something bestowed from without. This is Gods intention for all of human life. ***Happy***, is the first word of the character of the child of the King. The apostle John wrote something similar in 1 John 1:4 where he says, “*And these things we write to you that your* ***joy may be full***.” There it is, Gods design for all is “full Joy”. The great tragedy of human life in the world is that full joy is conditional upon outward things not an inward heart. **The King does not bestow gifts to make men happy, He creates a condition within the human heart, which enables them to find joy everywhere**. Jesus does not create joy by new surroundings, He creates new surroundings by Joy! Jesus takes us & makes us joyful by changing our character. Then we put our hands on everything & our environment has changed. So hear set the disciples surrounded by a down trodden multitude who to some degree or another were saying; “***Oh, if only I had these circumstance or those circumstances than I would be happy***.” And He tells them Happiness, Joy, has it’s root not in favorable circumstances but rather in a changed character!

 2.) **ARE: Here we see that the Joy I spoke of above is not conditioned upon doing, or possessing, but on “being”.** “Oh, how happy **ARE**...”; that is what Jesus declares here, not “Oh, how happy are they that **Do** or **HAVE**..” A person is described as being full of Joy based upon who he is not what he does or have. Do you get this?

 3.) **FOR: Here Jesus declares that character creates conditions by which a person experiences Gods ideal for them, “full joy**”. By way of illustration Jesus **does not** say here that the kingdom of heaven will be **given** to the man that is “poor in spirit”. Instead He says, that the “poor in spirit” is full of joy because he has the kingdom of heaven. Notice the word “is”! Do you see this? We are now ready to look at these individual traits of character in those children of the King.

 A.) Vs. 3 “**Poor in spirit**”: Poor means to have a lack of something which is not usually associated with happiness or joy. If you were driving to church this morning & you had a lack of gas in your car & don’t think you would walk in this door with a joyful heart! However if you got in your car this morning & recognized that you were on empty you could go & get some gas, you most likely would be glad you did. A person who is poor in spirit is one that recognizes that they are empty, bankrupt spiritually. It describes the condition of the heart that has recognized that it has nothing to offer it is empty of pride & self importance. They are insignificant as to value in & of themselves. It is the agreement that we are sinners devoid of any spiritual assets. It is only the empty, broken person that can truly experience the kingdom of heaven. Why? Because as long as a person still thinks that they can get to God on their own self effort they are never going to make it. So much for the “I’m OK, your OK!” attitude. So how does one become poor in spirit? Becoming into the presence of the Holy God, than you like Isaiah will say “Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips..”

 B.) Vs. 4 “**those who mourn**”: These are progressive aren’t they? A person who recognizes their own poverty of spirit will be mournful of their own sinful condition. They will be conscious of their own failure. This word for “**mourn**” does not mean casual sorrow for the consequences of our sin, it is a deep grief over our falseness before God. Sin has destroyed our lives & separated us from a loving God & it’s all our fault, & we are broken up over it. Helpless on our own to resolve this condition before God. That is what is meant here. To that person who is lost in grief over their failure & sin, Jesus says they will be comforted. I like watching those rescue shows, where ordinary people do the dumbest things & get themselves in life threatening circumstances, floundering out there in their own failure until some brave person rescues them risking their own lives to do so. That is the picture here!

 C.) Vs. 5 “**the meek**”: Meekness is not weakness, but rather strength under control. The word “meek” was a word used to describe a powerful stallion who was broken & rideable. It describes a person who has recognized their own poverty of spirit, who has grieved over their failure, experienced the presence of the Lord in spite of themselves. In other words they are humble, willing to relinquish their rights & privileges. To the person who rests in the Lord everything is his. The earth, what the world strives for which is only won by Christ’s victory on the cross is theirs. Why? Because to that person they only want the Lord to rule, they are not bucking the Lord they are strength under control!

 D.) Vs. 6 “**those who hunger & thirst for righteousness**”: Here the word for “hunger” & “thirst” describe a longing that can never be fully satisfied. And what is it they who are blessed are craving? “Righteousness”! That is wanting all of Him & nothing of the world. No mere snack will do, not just enough of Him to soothe a guilty conscience. To many Christians are craving what the world has, power, success, comfort, but how many are just wanting more of Jesus? To those that crave more of Jesus they will be filled, but with a filling that leaves you wanting more of Him!

**Matthew 5:7-12**

**“Kingdom Character part 2”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 7- 9 The Response of our Hearts**

**III.) Vs. 10-12 The Reaction of the World**

**I.) Intro.**

As we saw last week these attitudes describe what a child of God looks like, they are his **state of being**. And as such they come from a persons true assessment of who they are before God; “Poor in spirit”. *The result of that understanding of their sin & failure will be cause them to mourn in deep grief over our fallenness before God. This will lead as to a meek heart, & then a hunger & thirst for all of Him who alone can satisfy the emptiness of life with out the Lord. Those that have this are promised to be His children, comforted by His presence, inheriting all the privileges as His children, filled with all of Him*. All of this speaks of a **conscience need**. Those that are the most full of joy are the ones that have come to understand this. I heard a story of a little boy who wanted $100.00 badly so he prayed for several weeks but nothing happened. He then decided to write a letter to God requesting the money & sent it. The postal authorities got the letter addressed to God USA, & decided to send it on to the president. The president was so impressed with the letter he instructed his secretary to send the little boy $5.00 thinking that this would seem like a lot of money to the little boy. When the little boy got the $5.00 he was very excited & sat down to write God a thank-you note which read; “Dear God, Thank-you very much for sending the money, however, I noticed that for some reason you had to send the money through Washington D.C. &, as usual, those jerks took $95.00 in taxes.” I wonder how many times we Christians are looking for other things to fill our joy & like this boy we feel ripped off because God has not given us something that we wanted to make us happy? Gods design for us is “full joy”, He does not give gifts to make us happy, He creates a condition with in our hearts which enables us to experience joy now matter what our situation is!

 Now we move to how these traits display themselves in everyday life, & lastly how the world will react to them when they see them in us.

**II.) Vs. 7- 9 The Response of our Hearts**

Here in the next three verses we are the further progression of character in the believer, let me say again that any attempt to make this something that we do or have instead of something that we are is out of context.

 1a.) Vs.7 “**Blessed are the merciful**”: We have already looked at the words **blessed** “Oh how happy” & **are** “which tells us that the state of being in full joy is not conditioned upon us doing or possessing but rather on who we are.” So here Jesus says; “*How full of joy are they that are merciful*.” But what does that mean? Does it mean as some think today that it describes a person that is easy going? You know, the person when someone breaks the law rip’s something off & just says; “What does it matter lets not do anything about that, just forget it.” What ever we may say about this term it must be consistent with two things:

 A. It must be consistent with the character of God for this is one of His attributes. Ps. 116:5 says of God*; “Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is merciful*.”

Does God just wink at wrong doing? No! For He is holy, righteous, & just so what ever definition of mercy we come up with must include this.

 B.) It must be consistent with mercy as shown in scripture. Perhaps the best scripture in the Bible that illustrates mercy is found in Luke 10:29-37 the story of the “Good Samaritan”. You remember the story of the man who was on his way to Jerico & on the way there was beat up & robbed. A priest went by him saw him, & crossed over to the other side of the road, likewise a Levite, but when a Samaritan saw the man he had compassion. Later on Jesus asks the lawyer that asked the question “Who is my neighbor?”, which one of these three acted as a neighbor to the man? To which the layer replied “*The one who showed* ***mercy*** *on him*.” The essential meaning of mercy then is twofold. **It is pity plus action**. Grace describes us getting what we don’t deserve, but mercy is not getting what we do deserve. It is more than feeling bad for someone’s situation it is feeling bad enough to go across the road & do something about the situation.

 Mercy does not gloss over the situation, but rather looks at the ravages of sin in the human life, knows what that sin has done in their life, pities the person who has wronged them & goes to help them. That’s mercy. This is how; because of our changed life we now view the people of the world both Christians & none Christians. Victims of sin, we know this because we two are victims of sin. That is what Eph. 2:1-3 tells us we were all dead in our sins. The person who has been forgiven & cleansed of their sins should not be self righteous but merciful! In other words it is the attitude from personal experience that is sorry for every sinner even though that sinner has effected you, so much so that you have to do something about their condition. And what is it that you can do? Why, share what has set you free, Jesus!

 1b.) Vs. 7 “**For they shall obtain mercy**”: It appears here from a simple reading of this that we will only receive mercy if we are merciful. If that is true than am I only forgiven if I forgive, as Matt. 6:14-15 seems to say; "*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses*.”

 A.) If any of us were judged based upon these terms then no one would obtain mercy nor would they have forgiveness.

 B.) Second, this would contradict the clear teaching of grace in the N.T. which says that we have been saved by grace not of works least any man boast. As well as the fact that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Thus we must interpret scripture in light of scripture, the difficult by the clear.

With that in mind let me first offer you how Wuest interprets this section, “Blessed are the merciful, for they are the ***OBJECTS*** of mercy.” If I have truly been forgiven then I will forgive that is what Jesus is saying. So here if you have been the objects of mercy then you will be merciful. How full of joy are they that are reaching out to those who are suffering in sin, because they have found relief from that suffering already in Christ. That is the picture here. Jesus would go on to say; Mat. 10:8 “**Freely you have received, freely give**.” I have found this to be true in me; the more right I am in my walk with God the more merciful I am with other even if they wrong me, & the more critical & harsh I am the further away from Him I am. How about you?

 2a.) Vs.8 “**Blessed are the pure in heart**”: I find it so important to say here in dealing with Gods plan for man “full joy” that it is with the heart of man that God is interested in. So much of the time we are concerned with the outward things but God is interested in our hearts. The Christian life is not concerned with our intellect or understanding of doctrine it is a condition of the heart! But is meant by pure in heart? The heart in scripture is the center of mans being, that would include his emotions, his thoughts, & his actions. That is what a person is! The pure means clean, but it also means whole! The best example of that would be Jesus. To be pure in heart is to be like Jesus, His whole being was clean, not just what we saw on the surface anybody can do that, but all the way through a single cleanness. Living in & for the glory of God in every thing. The supreme desire of our lives being to know Him & glorify Him. That is “pure in heart”. There is a difference between having a clean heart & being pure in heart. Soap is clean by it’s very nature, but it may not be pure it may have color added as well as perfume. That would not be pure but it would be clean. It is only to the pure in heart that we see the blessing.

 2b.) Vs.8 “**For they shall see God**”: How do we see God? Can any one see Him in this body? No! So we have a partial understanding of what it means to “see God”. It is speaking of greater intimacy, greater clarity. When we are single hearted towards Him we will experience more of Him. The more we experience His presence in our lives the more we will want nothing but Him.

 Do you realize that you will one day see God? I mean really see Him face to face? Does that bring terror & fear upon your heart or Joy? If you have fear it is because you don’t have a pure heart. The apostle John said this concerning seeing the Lord in 1 John 3:2-3 “*Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in* ***Him purifies himself****, just as He is pure*.” Folks soon we will be ushered into His presence, what a great motivation to remain pure in heart.

 3a.) Vs.9 “**Blessed are the peacemakers**.”: Obviously this is not talking about a natural disposition, but a condition of the believers heart. So what is a “peacemaker”? It carries two main ideas:

 A.) A peacemaker is a person who is at peace, or if you will is a rest in the state of being at peace.

 B.) Secondly, a peacemaker is a person who is not quarrelsome. Not only that they are actively seeking to bring that state of peace or rest into where ever they are. 2 Cor. 5:18-20 describes what a peacemaker is, “*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God*.” The bring together of two that have been at odds with each other. That is what Christ has done at the cross in His body paying for our sin bringing together God & us. And clearly we have been called to do the same. Rom. 5:1 further tells us “Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ**,”

 3b.) Vs. 9 “**For they shall be called the sons of God**.”: The idea is that we shall look like the one in Whom has brought us peace. We will be as to our very nature peacemakers because we have been peace partakers! There is No peace unless we Know

Him who is peace!

**III.) Vs. 10-12 The Reaction of the World**

In verse 10-11 we have the reaction of the world to our changed character, it is not popularity.

 4a.) Vs. 10 “**Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake**.”:

First does not say that we are to most joyful if we are being persecuted for being objectionable, loud & quarrelsome. We have not right what so ever to hide behind this badge if we are being jerks! Neither do we have any right to claim this when people begin to make light of us or our Christianity if we are not walking in obedience to His word. Simple put if you are out there getting drunk or living with someone that you aren’t married too, & people start mocking you about what you believe, you can not call that persecution. Persecution is for only right living. If you are living right & then people begin to go after you this verse applies.

 4b.) Vs. 10 “**For theirs is the kingdom of heaven**.”: Simple put if they are treating us like they treated Jesus then it is a fact that we are living under the principals of the Kingdom of heaven!

 5a.) Vs. 11-12 Again the key is for His name sake! The Christians life is to be dominated by Christ & when it is you will be miss understood & hated. You are in great company for they have done so to the prophets before us. But again notice that the speaking evil against us is false. We have again no right to say we are being reviled & persecuted if what people are saying about us is true! Weirdness & sin does not count. If I like some gals in San Jose a few years back did, take off my clothes & spread mustard on myself in order to illustrate that we are to have faith like a mustard seed, then get arrested. I can not claim that as being persecuted falsely nor was it for righteousness sake.

 5b.) However if it is falsely we are to “leap for joy”. Because the characteristic here above described are happening in our lives. And great is our reward. Folks that is hard for me to comprehend! Being rewarded for allowing Jesus to have all of me by which these characteristics are manifested in & through me. Wow! What a great God we serve!

 Let me conclude with this: Gods ideal for every person is full joy, & to the portion that you realize these characteristics in your lives you will experience this joy! Those who are in the world they shall not experience the joy of the Kingdom, they will never find comfort, they shall not inherit the blessing in Christ, they shall be hungry & thirst & will never be filled, their hearts will be corrupted & they won’t see God. Oh how tragic that is. How many today want full joy? It is your in Christ!

**Matthew 5:13-20**

**“Character’s Influence”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 13-14 Blessed That We Might Be a Blessing**

**III.) Vs. 15-16 Our Calling and Purpose**

**I.) Intro.**

Let me again remind you of the setting of this message of our Lord. He had left the multitude that had pressed around Him in need; to instruct those that were belonging to Him. He tells them who they are now by nature & what effects that would have in the world in which they were placed. Believers would be what God wants for all of man kind “**blessed**” or if you will full of joy. This would come about by a changed heart. A heart that sees it’s depravity therefore is in His presence. Grieves over it’s failure therefore finds comfort in the Lord, & so on. Now His focus is upon this new characters influence in the world, & in so telling them this He reveals how the world really is. Further more, He tells them what they are to do & how they are to do it. Full joy will always have an impact in the world in which we are placed & consequently we can always see what kind of effect we are having upon the world by the condition of the world in which we live.

 The story is told of Joe Roberts A young pastor in 1883, he was called to minister to the Indians of Wyoming. Soon after Joe Roberts arrived, the son of the chief was shot by a soldier in a brawl, and the Chief vowed to kill the first white man he met. Roberts decided to take action. He sought out the chiefs teepee, fifteen miles away in the mountains, he stood outside and called the chief's name. When the chief appeared, Roberts opened his shirt. "I have heard of your vow," he said, "I know that the other white men have families, but I am alone. Kill me instead." The chief was amazed and motioned him into his tent. "How do you have so much courage?" he asked. Joe Roberts told him about Christ, His death, His teachings. When Joe left, the chief of the Shoshones had renounced his vow to kill and resolved to become a Christian. The chief had seen love in action. Every person who calls themselves Christian must decide what they should do to make love visible in the home, church, community, and world. For unless love becomes visible it is not love at all. Paul Harvey said, "***Too many Christians are no longer fishers of men but keepers of the aquarium***."

**II.) Vs. 13-14 Blessed That We Might Be a Blessing**

 We are going to look at these verses from several angels so we might get a full picture of the meaning.

 **1.)** First, before we see How we are to effect our surroundings, what does Jesus say are surroundings are? **What is the sphere of our influence**?

 **A.)** Vs. 13 “**The earth**”: The word here literally means the soil or ground. It clearly describes the material world in which we live. We are to live in the midst of the people of the world in the same conditions that they are. If you will we are to be in the world but not of the world. So the sphere in which we are salt is to be found effecting the conditions of the people. There was a thought by some in the church that for the church to be living the Christian life they needed to separate themselves from the world in which they were placed. Go live in a monastery, & contemplate God, but clearly that is against all that Jesus teaches. Peter says the same in 1 Peter 2: 9 *“..you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light*;”

 **B.)** Vs.14 “**The World**”: Here the word Jesus uses is the word “cosmos”. He did not say that they were to be the light of that time, or age, but of the whole of order. The Christian is to so live as to show mankind the principals to full joy, to show that where man now finds himself is not where God intended him to be. Every Christian is to be an illumination of Gods glorious order. The founder of Mac Donald’s wanted to create order in the fast food industry. His principal idea was that every time a person went into Mac Donald’s & ordered a Big Mac it would be the same. That’s the idea here every time a person runs into a believer it ought to be like running into Jesus the same characteristics that He displayed we display. That is what Paul said to the Corinthians, “*Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ*.”

 There you have it, we are to effect the **conditions** of the people in which live, & we are to radiate Gods **order,** **His plan** to those we dwell with. The Christian life is not to be lived in isolation the above beatitudes are to be displayed before the world in so doing it will arrest the conditions of the world & bring order to it. Influencing the multitudes as to the realization of His kingdom is what the sermon on the mount is all about. Don’t you see He has blessed us in order that we might be a blessing to those who at this moment are outside His kingdom?

 **2.)** Second, carefully notice the words, “**You are**” salt, & light. What He does not say is; “***Dispense salt, turn on light***!” It is only what a person is in his character that will have influence to those that are around him. Not one Christian will ever have an impact upon the world in which they live by trying to be something or do something that in their very character & nature they are not. You can write your congressman, picket the government & so on but that will not change a thing if by our very nature we are not Christ like. The influence that we have upon the world in which we live will be from what we are not what we tell them they ought to be. We can not say to the world do as we say, vote this way, but don’t do as we do!

 Folks, are society is decaying it is rotten & dark & the church as been very vocal in it’s denunciation of the condition. We have indicted our society & critiqued our political leaders, but the simply fact is that we have not been what we called others to be. We are not what we say we are & there is only one thing we can do, (2 Chr 7:14 NKJV) "*if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land*.”

 **3.)** Now we move to the twofold picture of what the Christian is to be in society. This then is how we are to influence the world in which we live.

 **A.)** **Salt**: This is to be a picture of the Christian in the condition in which he lives. Salt in Jesus’ time was a very important commodity, in fact it was so valuable that Roman soldiers were often paid with salt, that is where we got the phrase, “he is worth his salt”. It had several uses:

 **1.)** It was used as **preservative on meats & foods**. There was no refrigeration, no way to preserve food accept by use of salt. Salt used on dead things kept them from putrefying & spoiling. With that said, salt does not change decay, that is it can not change corruption into incorruption it has no power to do so. All it can do is prevent it from spreading. Jesus says we are the salt of the earth, we are the preservative to impede corruption. There is not a Christian who can take a corrupt individual & make them pure, that is solely the work of Christ. All we can do is so live among those corrupted by sin as to be the presence that slows the spread of that corruption in lives thus creating an opportunity for Jesus to change a life & make it pure & whole.

 **A.)** With that said we have Jesus’ first view of how he sees the condition of the world; **it is in a state of decay**. It is rotten. Why? Because it is a world devoid of Him who is pure.

 **2.)** It was used to provide healing. Salt was used in wounds as a antiseptic. Like the use above accept in living things not dead. So here as well the picture is that of us providing healing to those that are sick stopping the spread of decay so that healing can take place. If all we are as a church is an entertainment center to provide some sort of social center than we are not a cleansing influence. That is the hospital verses hospice idea, Calvary Chapel wants to be a hospital not a hospice. You can be sure that when you come here we are going to treat you in order that we might promote healing, not just make your stay here pleasurable until you die! Salt in a wound stings, it’s the sodium chloride upon the decaying infected wound, but that is also a sign of healing!

 **3.)** Thirdly, salt was used like today as a flavor. That is how we mostly use salt today. Salt is used to bring out or enhance the taste of foods & we Christians ought to bring out the things that promote life, that is what food is. But you know there is something that always happens when you eat something salty, it always makes you thirsty. Salt promotes the need for something to drink. As we are enhancing the things of life for those around us it ought to lead people to the source of life “living water” Jesus. He alone can bring “full joy”.

 But, what happens if we are not that influence? That is what Jesus now goes on to say, *“.. but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men*.” The Scottish interpret this word “flavor” as “***tang***” which better captures the idea. The church loses it’s tang, it’s purpose what good is it? Do the people around you know by your preserving, healing, flavorable influence that you are a Christian? This is not a question of a persons salvation it has to do with their influence. Jesus is not saying if we are not salt He will cast us out. He is saying that if we lose our tang we have lost our influence of preservation on those that we live. It’s only use then is to be thrown out on the pathways where people would walk. When it would rain it would dissolve it would kill the vegetation which would make it easier for people to walk on the pathways that they were on. **Jesus is saying that if we lose or preservation then the world will use us to be able to continue on in the paths they are still on**. Has that not been the case? When the church has stopped being salt, then the world has used it to continue on the paths they were on!

 **B.)** **Light**: The purpose of light is to illuminate. This is a positive principal in contrast with salt. Salt prevents the spread of decay, but light reveals what is present. Yes it exposes what is hidden, but more than that it reveals what might be. To live as light is to live like Jesus effecting every place He went with the possibility of “Full Joy”. We are to reveal the possibilities to every person of the joy that can only be found in Jesus. Every life surrendered to Jesus light, that is more than just a reflection it has caught fire with the flame that has lit it. But notice this, we are not **trying** to light the world we **are** the light of the world. We don’t need to illuminate the problem, we simply need to be aflame with Him which will shine all around.

 **B.)** Here then is the second view of how Jesus sees the condition of the world; they are in “**Darkness**”. The world is in a state of decay & it is in darkness. Thus if our Christianity imitates the darkness then the world will not see Jesus. Will not effect the world by becoming like the world. We are to give mankind what life can be only in Christ. This is our mission, this is what Paul told King Agrippa that he was called *to “deliver* *the gentiles from the power of darkness & bring them into the kingdom of light*.”

 Then Jesus gave this admonishment: “*A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden*.”

Above the hills of Galilee was the fortress Masada perhaps he pointed up there & said this. The higher you set light up the more it will illuminate. So here we are told our twofold responsibility as light:

 **1.)** **To be a city**: No one person can be this no person can be a city. A person can be a light house, but not a city. This speaks of unity, no Christian make a claim to illuminate with out being a part of other that illuminate. The church is a social order & reveals what Gods intention is for man to live together. Up on a hill all the area that surrounds it will be lit up.

**III.) Vs. 15-16 Our Calling and Purpose**

 **2.)** Vs.15 **To be a lamp**: This is individual in a house, that is a sphere that each of us can be. We individually can be a lamp in a house. There ought to be no one trying to keep the light hidden. If a person was to put a lamp under a basket there are only two things that could happen: a.) The basket would extinguish the lamp. b.) The lamp would set a blaze the basket. Would be that those of us who are tempted to hide Jesus’ love would catch a flame! Set that lamp no matter how small up so that it might illuminate all that is around it.

 Vs. 16 Finally, we come to our purpose. Jesus tells us to whom our light is to shine, & how it is to shine:

 **A.)** It is to shine before men in good works. We are to be examples of His love & truth to a dark world. Living out a surrendered others centered life in Full Joy. Attracting people to Him.

 **B.)** It is to shine in such away as to glorify the Father & not us. I always amazed how Jesus did His miracles in such away that people glorified the father. It is before men but yet it is to glorify the Father. We are not to let people think that we are so hot. Putting our names upon pews that we have paid for. Taking credit & glory for every good thing we do.

**Matthew 5:17-20**

**“Right Living”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 17-18 Carrying Out Scripture**

**III.) Vs. 19-20 Teaching Through Right Living**

**I.) Intro.**

On the sermon on the mount Jesus has been describing who we are in Him, then we were told what effect that would have upon the world, “Salt & Light”. So here Jesus answers the natural question; “How is this to be done, will this do away with the law?” The simple answer is no, but it will do away with the external interpretation as seen in the Pharisees & the Scribes. The Law we are told in Gal. 3:24 *“..was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith*.” In other words the law was not something that we can outwardly keep, because it revealed the sinful inward attitudes which pointed us towards Christ & His work upon the cross. How this fits is as believers we don’t obey God because of outward constraints but because of the inward life described in the beatitudes. The Law required death for disobedience, Jesus came to dye for our disobedience.

**II.) Vs. 17-18 Carrying Out Scripture**

Vs.17 To understand what Jesus is saying we need to understand what he meant by the words **Law, Prophets, & Fulfill**. Remember now He is speaking to Jews who understood these terms.

The Old Testament is divided into three sections:

 A.) The law

 B.) The Prophets

 C.) The writings

So the Jews understood Jesus saying here that he did not come to destroy the ethical code under which you have been living; I have not come to minimize morality, or in any way change what the law is for, I have cone to fulfill it.

 1.) The Law (found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers): This would be the entire law which consisted in three parts:

 A.) The moral, which included the Ten Commandments & other great moral principals.

 B.) The judicial, which was the legislative law given for the nation of Israel on how men were to behave in their relationships with others.

 C.) The ceremonial, which had to do with the sacrifices & burnt offerings in connection with their worship.

So we must assume here when Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it He must of meant all three aspects of the law that effected how the Jew on how he lived life, conducted himself towards others, & ordered his behavior in order to worship. These men thought of the Law as giving the means by which their lives were conditioned outwardly as to effect their environment to be as Isa. said in 42:6-7 “*I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house*.” That is what Jesus had just told them there on that hill about being salt & light. The Jews had failed in this, they had reduced the Law to an outward code of ethics which they broke inwardly all the time. In so saying this Jesus points out that the importance of the Law obedience. “I have come to realize all that the Law was to show.” That is what He tells them.

 You will notice if you start reading the Law that it dealt with negatives “Thou shalt not’s” Jesus turned it around to a positive “Thou shalt Love”. Being right before God is not about what we don’t do outwardly, that is not the standard, rather it is what we are inwardly which will show forth outwardly. It is “BEING verses DOING”.

 2.) The Prophets: We all know of the Prophetical books 17 books that speak to Israel. The prophets taught the Law, interpreted it & applied it to the nation. They then went to the nation & told them that the problem they had was not being obedient to it. It had to main ingredience:

 A.) To forth-tell: That is to speak the truth concerning the law & mans failure.

 B.) To foretell: That is to speak of yet future events that draw people back into obedience. To all of this Jesus Said He had not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

 3.) Fulfill: Is the word “plero” & it does not mean to complete or finish, neither does it mean to add to something that has already begun. It is better understood by the words “carry out”. In the sense of carrying out to full obedience everything that been stated in the law & the prophets. **Jesus carried out in perfect obedience every doctrinal teaching, every predictive prophecy, every ethical precept**. Jesus was not at any point a contradiction to the Old Testament He carried it out. He was not out to weaken it but to establish it to free it away from the wrong interpretations of the Pharisees & Scribes.

Vs. 18 To fully understand what Jesus has just said he explains permanence of Gods law. It is absolute & perfect. How long will it be in effect?

 A.) Till heaven & earth pass away: To the end of the age, to the end of the things the way they now are. While they are here so is the law. Will heaven & earth pass away? Yes, in Matt. 24:35 Jesus *says “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away*.” Gods ideal can not will not pass away until heaven & earth pass away. Peter tells us when that will happen in 2 Peter 3:12-13 *“looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells*.” Until the time that sin has been forever put away nothing will be altered. That is why He says:

 B.) One jot or tittle will by no means pass away: The “jot” & “tittle” were little punctuation marks that were placed here & there, in the Hebrew language, to give the vowel pronunciations. Jesus declares that not even the slightest change in the pronunciation of the law will change till all is carried out by Him. Folks Gods standard has not changed, He does not wink at sin He carried out our breaking of the smallest pronunciation of it by being obedient to the point of death on the cross.

**III.) Vs. 19-20 Teaching Through Right Living**

Vs.19 Here Jesus speaks of the relationship of believers to the moral law or ten commandments. Before we get into this you will note that Jesus is speaking of the intent of those commandments. How do we know this? Because He is going to go on through the next verses to tell us that, for instance versa 21-26 on murder, not just not killing someone but anger in your heart towards them.

 As most of you know the “ten commandments” were made up of two parts:

 A.) The first section concerns our relationship to God.

 B.) The second section comes from that & deals with our relationship with our fellow man.

 Next, note the words Jesus uses: 1.) Break 2.) Teach This then is a warning to all believers. Jesus puts breaking them ahead of teaching them. You don’t find believers teaching that you can hate people do you, but do you see believers breaking this? It is not a question of being cast out of the kingdom but sure is a question losing the rewards & benefits of that joy full life of the kingdom. Least here does not mean that the person who breaks them will not be there; “least” means “very little (small), smallest”. You get the picture? The person who so lives different than what he teaches will be very small in heaven no matter how big a church he pastors etc. **I suppose most of you when you get to heaven will want to know where you can find me, you will have to look very close in heaven to find me for I think I will be the smallest person there**!

 But conversely who ever does & teaches them, they will be huge in the kingdom. Folks the only power in teaching is what precedes it. No pastor, or Bible study person ever teaches a commandment with power that they are breaking it in their own life. Oh how we teachers need your prayers, what great hypocrites we are. The great men in heaven are going to be the doers of the word not the spectators!

Vs.20 Here Jesus summarizes what it means to be right.

 1.) What is “righteousness” : What does Jesus mean when He says that it must exceed that of the Pharisee & the Scribe? It is the standard by which a person is declared “right” before God. Now we know according to Rom. 3:20, 24 that by the deeds of the law no person will be declared right before God, & that being declared right before God is through faith in Jesus Christ. So how did the Pharisee & the Scribes declare that they were right before God?

 A.) Scribes: Were men who spent all their time in teaching & expounding the Law, they were great authorities on the Law of God. They gave their whole life to the study & teaching of it. Every person recognized then as the authorities of the Law.

 B.) Pharisees: They were famous for code of ethics in keeping the smallest detail of how they interpreted the law. The word Pharisee means “separatist” & that is what they did they separated themselves from the people. Their interpretation of the law was far more strict outwardly then what Moses had taught. When the Old testament said that a person should fast one a year these guys did it twice a week & let everyone know that they were fasting.

 Both of these two groups were obsessed with being externally religious. So their right standing in their eyes was based on what they did externally not what they were in their hearts. So here Jesus says that the right standing before God that He is concerned with is one that comes from what a person is not what he does. That kind of right standing will exceed the right standing of a person who merely trying to appear to be something. The right standing before God is what a man is when no one else is around. When you are alone with your thoughts, desires, imaginations. That is where we really see what we are! It here that I say all I am is poor in spirit, mourning over my failure & so on. The Pharisee & Scribe was trying to see himself on the bases of what he was doing to be right before God the believer will see himself right before God on what God has done for him. In this the law will cause us to come to Christ not just when we kill someone, but when we have not cared for them as Jesus would. The law in relationship to us in Christ will cause us to come to Him not when we have committed adultery, but when we have looked upon another person & degraded them to want them only for what pleasure they would give to us. Do you see now how this all works? Coming to Christ does not free us to keep ourselves in sin it causes instead to come to Him broken hearted trusting solely upon His work to cleanse & empower us to live. The great message of the Law is the gospel of grace.

**Matthew 5:21-26**

**“The Law of Life”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 21-22 The Attitude of Murder**

**III.) Vs. 23-26 The Gift of Reconciliation**

**I.) Intro.**

 As we move on from last week you will remember that Jesus made that statement of verse 20 “*For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*.” In this statement Jesus is saying, among other things, that the contrast is not between Him & the law but rather the interpretation of the law as put forth by the Scribes & Pharisees. So from here Jesus puts forth a series of six contrasts all introduced with the words; **“You have heard it said, or it has been said; but I say to you**” In verse 21-22 Jesus states the law as they had heard it told them then He interprets the heart of the law. Then in verses 23-26 He correctly illustrates how it ought to be carried out.

 Much has been said of late concerning the rise of murder & violent crime in America for instance their are 22-25,000 gang related deaths in America. Also someone is beaten, stabbed, or shot every 22 seconds. What does the Bible have to say on this? How can we deal with our anger. Someone has well said; “Anger is only one letter short of danger that’s because danger begins when you become angry.”

**II.) Vs. 21-22 The Attitude of Murder**

Vs.21 First you will notice the words*; “You have heard that it was said to those of old*,..” Remember that Jesus is speaking to His disciples when He says these words. He did not say, “***You have read..” but “You have heard it said...”.*** The reason for this is that the disciples could not read Hebrew, all they knew of the law had come from listening to the Scribes & Pharisees. From the time after the captivity in Babylon most spoke Chaldean, then Aramaic was the common language, some spoke Greek. Hebrew was just for the scholars. The common people had never read or studied the law for themselves. So many today have never searched the scriptures for themselves they just listen to someone else tell them what it says. Now don’t get me wrong it is great to turn in some radio program & listen to a solid Bible teacher, but make sure you are searching the scriptures yourself as well.

 Next: After Jesus’ statement on murder He says in verse 22 “***But I say to you..”*** Most of the teachers in Jesus day were just relying on what others said, but Jesus does not do that He goes right to interpreting the spirit of the law.

 Now we come to the Quote: “*You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.”* This is the sixth commandment found in Exodus 20:13 & the words *and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment* is a summery of numbers 35:30-31. In so combining these two verses the Scribes & Pharisees had reduced the law to being punished by the civil magistrates. The word “**judgment**” refers to the local court. So they had reduced this to “**You must not murder because if you do you will be in danger of being punished by the civil authorities**.” There was no mention of the judgment of God it was purely a legal matter not a moral matter. The deterrent for murder as far as they were concerned was the punishment that might come upon you legally.

 Murder was a capital offense under Jewish law; the death penalty could not be commuted to a monetary fine. Where it could be proved that the killing was accidental—as when a man’s axe-head flew off the handle and struck his fellow workman on the head—it did not count as murder. The killer was brought before the village elders and on the testimony of two or three witnesses & was sentenced to death. The death penalty was carried out by stoning: the witnesses threw the first stones, and then the community joined in, thus dissociating themselves from blood-guiltiness and expiating the pollution which it brought on the place.

 The Pharisees & Scribes could feel pretty good about themselves in this as long as they did not kill someone then they were OK. They had reduced this to something legal, “If you commit murder, certain consequences will follow.”

 Folks we have those same laws today, if you kill someone & are caught after a very lengthy court hearing & even a still even longer appeals process you will have certain consequences follow. Might I ask you do you think that really has stopped people from killing each other? When anger builds up in the heat of a moment do you think a person can rationally stop & say; “I better not kill that person because if I do, I will suffer the consequences of my action.”? **You see the problem with this reasoning is that adverse consequences will only stop wrong actions if they are caught early enough**! So we hear the intent of the law in verse 22.

Vs.22 Now Jesus words make more sense, “*But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment*.”

 A.) In the NKJ the phrase “*without a cause*” was added later to the Greek text, designed to make Jesus’ words more tolerable. The other man’s anger may be sheer bad temper, but mine is righteous indignation—anger with a cause. But Jesus’ words, in the original form of the text, make no distinction between righteous and unrighteous anger: anyone who is angry with his brother exposes himself to judgment. There is no saying where unchecked anger may end. “Be angry but do not sin,” we are told in Ephesians 4:26 (RSV); that is, “If you are angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin; let sunset put an end to your anger, for otherwise it will provide the devil with an opportunity which he will not be slow to seize.”

 B.) Jesus points out that the murderous act springs from the angry thought. It is in the mind that the crime is first committed and judgment is incurred. The earthly court cannot take action against the angry thought, but the heavenly court can—and does. If you are angry in your heart you are already in danger. Do you see this? It does not say you shall be judged but you are in “**danger**”. The moment you or I get mad at someone we are in danger that is what Jesus is saying here. But you say who doesn’t get mad a people. The answer is no one, the point is to deal with the heart id your mad deal with it NOW, nip it in the bud, because if you don’t your in endangering yourself & the other person.

 Next Jesus gives two illustrations of letting your anger go to far & as you will see they are verbal not physical, & as you can see the deterrent is on an ascending scale as He shares, the first was harboring anger in your heart which placed you before the civil authorities.

 1.) *“..whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council*.” *Raca*  is a term that means “**worthless fellow**” or as we might put it today “nitwit, bonehead idiot..” It was to show contempt for their intelligence. Now the word “*council”*

speaks of the Sanhedrin it would be like our superior court or supreme court, a much more serious matter. Simply put, to verbally insult a persons intelligence is a more serious thing in our heart then just being angry. Why? Because when it’s got to that stage it is a lot harder to stop! If your angry to the point of insulting a person, if unchecked it can lead to violence. Today, this is not all that uncommon; one person becomes mad at another some statement is made about their intelligence than Wham! Again He did not say that you are already before the council but that you are in danger.

 2.) “*But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire*.” We are not sure what this word really means *'You fool”* We can clearly see that this was regarded as a far greater insult than calling someone a bonehead. It most likely meant something that attacked a persons character & many think it was like calling someone an apostate (against God). The word for “hell fire” is the word Gehenna & it is the valley on the south side of Jerusalem which, after the return from the Babylonian exile, served as the city’s rubbish dump and public incinerator. In earlier days it had been the site of the worship of Molech, and so it was thought fit that it should be degraded in this way. In due course it came to be used as a symbol of the destruction of the wicked after death. In fact this is where they cast the bodies of the people who had murdered someone. Thus the assignation of a persons character is far worse, the moment we begin to attack a persons character we are in much more sever danger, were close to murder.

 Folks anger in our heart creates a condition of a criminal & if not dealt with will cause death. If anger is not dealt with then we are on a very slippery slope it must be dealt with the moment we are made aware of our anger. God is interested in attitudes not just actions, it’s to late to stop after the action.

**III.) Vs. 23-26 The Gift of Reconciliation**

Again Jesus uses two illustrations on what how to handle our anger after the fact.

 1.) Vs.23-24 First Jesus puts far more importance upon relationships than He does religion. Be reconciled with a brother whom you have offended is better than performing some sacrifice or offering. **You can not atone for moral failure by religious action**. Who has ever said; “Love is never having to say your sorry”. There is no balancing out evil with good, you need to lay your gift down at the alter & make it right with the brother you have offended. Note that it is each of us who needs to examine our hearts to see whom we might have offended by our actions or attitudes. We don’t need to seek out the person who has offended us, no we need to seek out the person whom we have offended. Now let me give a word to the wise, if you have thought, “You know that Dale he is a boneheaded jerk, I’m going over their & tell him that’s what I’ve been thinking of him.” That is only going to make certain that I will behave in just the manor you have been thinking of me. No, that’s not what it is saying, it is saying that your brother already has some personal knowledge of what you have done, to that person go & make it right first than come & offer your gift.

 2.) Vs.25-26 Here Jesus uses the example of urgency because of our relationship with the Lord. Don’t delay, go at once our your debt may become so large as it can not be paid. In other words if you have hurt you enemy / brother go & tell him that you agree that you have treated him poorly before the hurt has become so large as to permanently effect that relationship. Notice to that the result will be if we don’t than we will be imprisoned. We won’t be released from this until we have paid the last penny, & how can you do that if you are in prison?

 What great teaching we have here upon our need to deal with our hearts early, coming to Jesus with our attitudes confessing our anger to Him before it comes out upon someone. Let me get a head start on you here, please forgive me in any action of anger or bitterness towards you.

**Matthew 5:27-32**

**“The Law of Love”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 27-28 The Law of Lust**

**III.) Vs. 29-30 The War Against Sin**

**IV.) Vs. 31-32 The Law of Marriage**

**I.) Intro.**

As we saw last week the Pharisees & scribes had reduced the commandment’s to outward & legal instead of the inward heart. We now move to that difficult passage of scripture dealing with lust. It was not that many years ago that we had a future president asked a very embarrassing & potentially damaging question. Jimmy Carter was asked if he had ever looked at a woman with lust in his heart to which he replied yes. We now have a president who claims that he has never done anything improper! Wow have we come full circle. The issue we are to look at this morning is not so much whether or not we have ever done this, but rather how we are to deal with it! To understand this we must understand three things:

 1.) What the original law taught & why.

 2.) How the Pharisees & scribes interpreted this & applied it.

 3.) What Jesus taught.

Now I’ve included the issue of divorce in this section dealing with lust for it no doubt is one of the greatest reasons for divorce today.

 Yet before we get started in this let me again say that the purpose of this teaching of our Lord was to show us the hopeless & helplessness of our fallen natures. It is my prayer that as we deal with all scripture we will come to our knees before Him & declare that we are spiritually bankrupt apart from His spirit in our lives. That we will grieve openly over our failure, that this will in turn create a humble broken heart in our lives which lead us to a greater desire then ever before to grow in His grace & knowledge. This leading us to reach out in Gods mercy because we have been recipients of that same mercy in our failures. Which will cause us to desire to be pure in our hearts, peace makers in our actions, & often persecuted by those that we are trying to reach with His love.

**II.) Vs. 27-28 The Law of Lust**

Vs. 27 Here again Jesus Quotes out of Ex. 20:14 & the 7th commandment. This commandment forbade a person to have sexual relations with another persons spouse. To break this was a capital offense by stoning. The second clause of this was found a short few verses away in verse 17 *“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's*.” Here is where we begin to get the middle eastern view of women in that time frame as well as today in some cultures. women were seen as part of a mans property thus she is linked with a servant, ox etc. Clearly the key to understanding how this law was taught originally is to be found in the word “***covet***”. That is what Jesus is going to point out in the next verse as He ties lust with coveting which are clearly inward activities, not just outward such as physically having sexual relations with another spouse, that is only the outward action of a heart that has coveted. The word covet, used here in Exodus is the word “**khaw-mad**”; & the root word means; to delight in:--beauty, greatly beloved, covet, desire, goodly, **lust**. Paul speaks that he too was at one time confused over the outward keeping of the law until he came to this verse in Exodus; Rom. 7:7 *“..I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet*.”

 So here we get the picture of how the Pharisees & scribes interpreted this & applied it in their lives. They just looked at this commandment outwardly & said that they were not having sexual relations with another spouse therefore what they thought inwardly was OK. Jesus said this of them in Luke 16:5 “*You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God*.” By their interpretation of this law on adultery they had nullified it’s intent, thus they never dealt with the issue of lust in their hearts at all. I believe a great many of us would rather not deal with our hearts in this area as well. We often think to ourselves that this is not hurting anyone else so why worry about it. Yet it does hurt someone it hurts you. So the time to deal with adultery is not after you have had sexual relations with someone’s spouse it is when you begin to treat any person as an object for your own personal pleasure. That is what is behind adultery, it is the sin of self pleasure.

Vs. 28 Here Jesus goes to the heart where the outward action begins. The moment we begin to look at another person not just another persons wife, but any woman even our own wife in away which is just as an object to fulfill our own urges then we have broken the spirit of the commandment. People, women have value apart from what pleasure they may bring us. There is a sacredness of life not just in not killing that person, but in their right to be loved & treated in away that does not see them as mere objects of pleasure but rather creations of His love!

 Let me say that we guys have no right to feel smug about ourselves in this area of adultery if we have been in our hearts seeing women as objects of our sexual fantasies. The only difference between us & a person who has committed the physical act of adultery is a lack of opportunity & or the fear of getting caught. Our hearts ought to be convicting us way before we get to that stage.

 Now that I’ve got all us guys slinking down in our chairs may I say a word to the gals here. Watch how you dress or shall I say undress around us! Watch how you behave around men! We don’t need any help in this area we struggle quite well with out the skimpy shorts. So what ought to be the conclusion having dealt with this scripture? I can not speak of how it effects you but I can tell you that I am convicted! I have told my wife before that I have committed adultery in my heart, that this is a struggle that I need her prayers in. That I hold myself accountable to several groups that ask me on a regular basis how am I doing in my thought life, am I watching any sexually explicit material etc. I’m serious about this area in my life how about you? That brings us to our next section!

 **III.) Vs. 29-30 The War Against Sin**

Vs. 29-3- You notice that Jesus goes right to how to deal with sin after dealing with this hidden sins of the heart? With that said we need to understand what Jesus is not saying before we can interpret what He is saying.

 A.) The trouble with a literal interpretation is that it does not stop the problem. If you gouge out your right eye what about the left? And if you cut off the right hand what about the left. So if you gouge out both eyes & cut off both hands what about the mind & the heart? Jesus said in Matt 12:35 “*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things*.”

Now that we have ruled out that what is He saying?

 A.) First that we must take a seriousness to sin in our lives. The right eye & hand were thought to be of greater value to a person then that of the left. Thus, Jesus is saying that if the most precious things in your life are causing you to sin you must get rid of them. The idea of sacrificing something that we have attached value & importance to shows that you are serious about sin & being holy. If that T.V. is so important to you yet it is causing you to trip up; “that is the meaning of the word offend”, then get rid of it.

 What is the most precious thing you have? It ought to be our relationship with the Lord anything that hinders that needs to removed! All to often we are struggling with some sin & we continue to struggle with it because we refuse to die to that area. May I speak plainly if all we do is stumble in sin in an area of our lives & are never willing to separate ourselves from that area by ding to what ever is causing us to stumble then we are fooling ourselves about being serious about sin in that area, all we really have is vague wishing!

 B.) Next we see that sin separates, Jesus tells us that sin will lead a person right to hell. We need to get to the place that we no longer worry about what pleasure our sin is giving us but rather what it is leading us into, death!

 C.) It is also clear that we must come to a great hatred of sin in our lives. Our ambition ought to be putting an end to every sin of our heart, all bitterness, envy jealousy, hate spite & lust. To do so we will need to regularly examine our own hearts!

 This all being said, our greatest goal is to become more like Him, this is seen not in words but in actions that will cause us to put away from us anything that will hinder our growth in the Lord!

**IV.) Vs. 31-32 The Law of Marriage**

Vs.31 Here again Jesus is linking what He just shared about adultery & seriousness about sin in our lives with that of divorce. Again it is helpful to understand what the law taught & why, how the Pharisees & scribes taught this, then how the Lord taught this.

 1.) “*Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce*.” This is a quote out of Deut 24:1-4. As I said before the punishment for adultery was death by stoning so there was no words spoken about divorce in the case of adultery that person was to be put to death. Women in that society had no rights there was no way they could divorce their husbands. And the husband could divorce his wife for any reason. There were two school of thought from two separate Rabbis & the debate was over the word “uncleanness” in Deut. 24:

 A.) Shammai, who said that divorce was only permissible if the wife was found not to be a virgin when they were married that was the only way in which she could be declared unclean. Only then could a written bill of divorce be given her.

 B. Hillel, who was a liberal who interpreted “uncleanness” as if another women was more righteous then the wife she was then declared unclean by way of comparison. Or if she burned your eggs in the morning she was unclean. All, they had to do is go to the public square, look at his wife & yell three times; “I divorce you!”

the Mosaic law was radical because of the concept of the written bill, in this bill the husband had to declare the specific reasons for the divorce which had to be established by two witnesses. The law went on to establish the fact that once he divorced her he could not change his mind & try to get her back, thus the seriousness of marriage was upheld. She could remarry but not to the same guy.

 Thus the Pharisees & scribes were only concerned with the document not the reason for the document. This is why the custom of a dowry became so popular it was alimony in advance in case the husband ever put away his wife she had money already. Jesus will have much more to say on divorce in the 19th chapter so we will wait until then to go over it.

Vs.32 The point of marriage & fidelity is her brought forth by Jesus. Marriage is not just a civil contract it is a covenant before the Lord. To becoming one flesh, & separating that will cause the other to break the bond of one to be untied to another. Jesus is not saying that it is a commandment that if a person has committed adultery you must divorce them He is saying that it is permitted but that is only because of the hardness of hearts.

 In conclusion, let me say that Jesus forgives adulterers murders, & even divorced people but these things are not what He has for you & I. We are all sinners in need to turn to our Savior daily. communion.

**Matthew 5:33-42**

**“The Laws Of Speech & Duty”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 33-37 Speaking of The Truth**

**III.) Vs. 38-42 Death to Self**

**I.) Intro.**

We have now come to the forth & fifth illustrations that Jesus used to show the principals of His kingdom. As I have said before these principals are in part used to drive us back to Him revealing our need of Him. The first section we are to be dealing with concerns our speech, the second our conduct.

 Stop to imagine for a moment what impact we Christians could have upon the world if we honored Jesus with our speech & demonstrated His love by our actions? The story is told of a preacher named Peter Miller in the days of the American Revolutionary War who enjoyed the friendship of General Washington. There also dwelt in the same town one Michael Wittman, an evil-minded man who did all in his power to abuse and oppose this pastor. One day Michael Wittman was involved in treason and was arrested and sentenced to death. The old preacher started out on foot and walked the whole seventy miles to Philadelphia to plead for this man's life. He was admitted into Washington's presence and at once begged for the life of the traitor. Washington said, "No, Peter, I cannot grant you the life of your friend." The preacher exclaimed, "My friend, he is the bitterest enemy I have." Washington cried, "What? You've walked seventy miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I will grant the pardon." And he did. And Peter Miller took Michael Wittman from the very shadow of death back to his own home in Ephrata -- no longer as an enemy, but as a friend. Folks, this is how to win the world!

**II.) Vs. 33-37 Speaking of The Truth**

Vs.33 Again we will look at this section from the three views of what the original teaching was, how the Pharisees & scribes taught, & lastly what Jesus had to say on the subject.

 1.) These exact words are not to be found in the Old Testament, which is a clear signal that the Pharisees & scribes had already taught something different than what the scriptures had to say. What was taught on this subject of oaths can be found in:

 A.)Ex. 20: 7 the 3rd commandment; “*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain*.”

 B.) Deut 6:13 “*You shall fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name*.”

 C.) Lev. 19:12 “*And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD*.”

What was at issue was truth & the law was there to uphold the telling of truths. Life was chaotic because people could not be trusted at their word. So an oath was to be taken for telling the truth to which we say that a person who under an oath lies commits perjury. Gods name was upheld so highly that the Jews would not pronounce His name. Thus the swearing the truth in Gods name. The reason for this law was to show the seriousness that God places upon the truth!

 2.) The Pharisees & scribes had made this legalistic & thought that this should be applied in all of mans dealings. So they made distinctions between various oaths, some were binding others were not. If you took an oath by the temple it was not binding, yet if you made the oath by the gold in the temple it was. If you made an oath by the alter it was not binding yet if you made an oath by the gold on the alter it was. That is why Jesus rebukes them so severely in Matt. 23:16-22. Every thing centered around the exact wording in the oath. Sound familiar? Again it appears that our president has not been reading the words of Jesus instead he has been reading the words of the Pharisees & scribes. The very reason for the oaths was to uphold truth & their interpretation had made lying the norm.

 3.) Vs.34-36 There are some who have taken this statement of Jesus & have missed the point. They claim that Christians ought not to take an oath at all. To so interpret this that way is missing the context in which it was said. Jesus is not addressing the law as originally applied. Clearly the words “you have heard it said..” shows He was addressing how it was been interpreted by the Pharisees & scribes. He simply shows how inconsistent it is to make some oaths binding & others not. Why? Because in a part of every oath any way heaven, earth, Jerusalem for He is over everything & He created every thing, thus ultimately you are swearing by God anyway.

 A.) Vs. 37 Oaths are absolutely not needed in ordinary conversation. Why Because anyone saying to you that they are telling the truth has already by swearing such told you that they at times lie! The other day my son had a ball game in which they won the game, I had to miss the game due to a Bible study & they all got together to pull one over on me. When they came home they all looked bummed out & said that they had lost on a shot at the buzzer. I believed their little joke, them they told me the truth. I said I’d get even, so when our house flooded the kids didn’t know yet, so when I went to pick them up from school I told them that the house was flooded. They didn’t believe me, even after I swore I was telling the truth. Kind shows something about my relationship with my kids doesn’t it?

 Folks as believers we must be people of our word! We ought not need to ever swear we are telling the truth, because a lie or exaggeration would be out of character. This is another area I’m guilty of, I have a tendency to exaggerate. This is wrong, telling the truth makes oath taking obsolete. The bottom line is that charter & integrity ought to be hand in hand. Eccles. 5:4-5 says; “*When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed; Better not to vow than to vow and not pay*.”

**III.) Vs. 38-42 Death to Self**

Vs.38 Here is the fifth illustration in the way Jesus interprets the law. This principal is found in three places:

 A.) Ex. 21:23-25 “*But if any harm follows, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe*.”

 B.) Lev. 24:19-20 “*If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him; fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him*.”

 C.) Deut. 19:21 “*Your eye shall not pity: life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot*.”

The intent first & for most was to limit retribution for the civil government. It was to control excess punishment & to eliminate retribution & revenge. Simple put the most a person could exact from another person civily was an eye for an eye & a tooth for a tooth. The crime ought to fit the punishment is what the intent of the law is.

 2.) The Pharisees & scribes had made this an issue not for the civil authorities to limit retribution & revenge; they had made it an obligation for personal vindictiveness. This was never meant for personal application in the private sector, it was for the judges.

 3.) Vs. 39-41 First Jesus corrects this false interpretation concerning the personal use of this as an obligation, verse 39.

 A.) Vs. 39 “Don’t retaliate at all!” If someone does injury towards you don’t take matters into your own hand & harm them back. Again Jesus is addressing the miss application of this in the area of personal relationships not the proper application of this in restraining evil by the government. When a person was slapped in the cheek, (back handed) it was a personal insult, thus Jesus is saying when you are personally insulted or wronged don’t wrong the person back. This has nothing to say about war or Police etc. It is dealing with personal matters as they were being falsely taught. Simply put we are not to be personally vindictive.

 B.) Vs. 40 Here Jesus uses the illustration of being sued. The Jews wore two main garments the tunic; which was which was made of linen & covered the whole body too the knees & was worn next to your skin. Over this they wore a cloak it was nearly square & was wrapped around the body like a coat. The view is that of demands being placed upon a persons property through the legal system. If you owe something or you are being sued don’t fight that pay what you owe & beyond. People that don’t seek revenge against another physically often seek legally to the obsessive, clearly this is right where we live today.

 C.) Vs. 41 Here the illustration was not towards the individual but rather the oppressive government, or public authority. In those days of the Roman occupation of Israel if a Roman soldier saw you walking along the same road or near him he could ask you to carry his backpack for a mile (1000 paces) & you would obliged to do so. The Jews hated the Romans control of their land, so too suggest them not only doing this but going the extra mile was radical. What is being said is that we believers ought to be going beyond what the law requires us to do, give the extra mile out of love. You know that it is impossible to manipulate what you do for someone if what you do is out of love of Christ!

 D.) Vs. 41 Here then is the summation of all Jesus has to say on this matter of retaliation. Give, do not turn away! As we read this section it seems that what Jesus says here does not fit with the rest. What does giving & not turning away have to do with not seeking vengeance upon a person personally? It fits this way, to so live as to not personal seek revenge you must be dead to yourself & if your are dead to yourself you are not worried about getting even you are concerned for others. Resist evil but not the evil person, they are the ones we are to reach!

 As we conclude this section might I again say that all of this points us back to our failure & need of Him in out lives!

**Matthew 5:43-48**

**“Perfect Love”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 43-45 Love Your Enemy?**

**III.) Vs. 46-48 Love Like Our Father**

**I.) Intro.**

We now come to the sixth illustration which our Lord used to contrast the intent of the law with that of what the Pharisees & scribes had been teaching. Now I don’t know about you but this series has been highly convicting to me. It seems that I’ve been given a personal application to every section thus far, & so far as I look at it I have failed every time. Well this week I failed again. I don’t measure up to these ideals for believers in Christ’s kingdom, & all I can do is be honest about this go back to Jesus & confess my failure before Him for as 1 John 1: 9 says; “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.”

 This appeared some time ago in the Reader's Digest:

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centered. Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives. Do good anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs. Fight for the underdogs anyway.

What you spent years building may be destroyed overnight. Build anyway.

Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth. Give the world the best you've got anyway!

The simple truth is that those who deserve love the least need it the most. Is not that the story of you & I & Christ’s love for us?

**II.) Vs. 43-45 Love Your Enemy?**

Vs. 43 Here again we need to look at what was being taught by the Pharisees & scribes, what the old testament taught, & lastly how Jesus taught on the subject.

 1.) This is in part what Jesus in Matt. 5:43 calls the second of the two great commandments. If you were to look at the O.T. reference you would find the first part of it in Lev. 19:18 “*You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD*.” But the second part of this is not to be found. So where did they come up with this “and hate your enemy”?

 2.) If you read through the O.T. you will come across many passages of scripture that seem as if they encourage the Jews to hate & even destroy their enemies. If you go through Psalms you will find this theme often in fact the word enemies appears 79 times Lets take for example the words in Psalm 18:37-40 “*I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them; Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed. I have wounded them, So that they could not rise; They have fallen under my feet. For You have armed me with strength for the battle; You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. You have also given me the necks of my enemies, So that I destroyed those who hated me*.” Clearly the author is describing his victory over those who hated him. So is there a contradiction? No not at all; if you were to go through all, of those 79 references you will not find a single one of them that applies to the individual acting on his own behalf. So the difference in this passage as compared to that of what the Pharisees were teaching & practicing is that one is **judicial** as it is instructed by God the other is **personal**. God who alone knows the thoughts & intents of the heart was removing the evil influence of those enemies & was using human means for it. The Pharisees & scribes had taken this to the extreme & had made it an obligation for personal vengeance. You were obligated to hate your enemy, thus they thought that any person who was not Jewish was not their neighbor therefore they were an enemy.

 3.) Vs. 44 Now here Jesus tells us the intent & purpose of love.

 A.) The first thing of note here is **who Jesus sees as our neighbors**, simply put those that are our **enemies** who, demonstrate this by cursing us, hating us, spitefully using us, & persecuting us.

 B.) Not only is a definition of **who** is our neighbor it is also a road map of **how we are to show our love towards them**. We have already seen the negative aspect of what we are not to do last week in verse 38-42 here we are given four positive ways we are to love our enemies.

 1.) **Love**: That is the word “***agapao***” & of coarse it speaks of Gods love. Simply put we are to love them as He loves them. A point we will bring out more in a moment, as we look at the example Jesus puts forth in verse 45.

 2.) **Bless**: Here the word used is “***eulogeo”***, we get our word eulogy from & it means to speak well of, to thank or invoke a benediction upon. Do you say this when someone is cursing at just invoke a blessing upon them? The story is told of a wicked man who had passed away & the local pastor was asked to do the service, his brother knew that church needed a new roof so he said that if you say something good about him he would pay for the roof. The pastor agreed, & during the eulogy he spoke of how rotten the deceased man was, but at the end of his time he said these words; “Yet compared to his brother setting right here he was a good man!” I don’t think that is what the Lord had in mind here.

 3.) **Do good**: This is the word “***kalos***”, & it means to do well usually morally, to deal honestly, full well. In other words to the person who is hating you continue to do towards them morally & honestly with all you have.

 4.) **Pray**: This word means to pray to God, i.e. supplicate, worship; to earnestly make prayer for another. So for the person who continues to spitefully use us & persecute us we are to pray for their salvation.

 Now I of coarse always do this when someone is treating me as an enemy; **No way!** As I look at how I am to love those people who are hateful towards me & can honestly say I fail. If I had not failed going through the sermon on the mount yet I have now. Someone has well said that the best way to destroy a enemy is to turn him into a friend. But with that said I am not trying to make them my friends I am rather desiring to turn them over to Christ so that they might be His friend.

Vs. 45 So what does this verse have to do with loving our enemies? Well our heavenly father is our example & if we are His children then we ought to be act the way He does. so the first then we must ask ourselves is how does He love?

 1.) His love for us has never been dependent upon what we do for Him. His love is not reciprocal in nature He does not love us because of who we are or what we do. The fact is He loves us in spite of us! If He loved any other way then it would be wages not grace. Now that is not to say that He is not grieved over our behavior, but clearly Rom. 5: 8 says; that “*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*.”

 2.) “..for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.” So what does this mean? It shows that God loves not based upon His need but rather our need. This is common grace, God does not just bless the Christian ball team, or the Christian business. No! He bless all bringing sun & rain to both not based upon merit but rather need! Why? Because He sees their need & He loves them so He gives the sun & rain; the sustenance of life. Gods love is generated out of the nature of His character not the nature of ours. Do you get that? Do you love that way?

**III.) Vs. 46-48 Love Like Our Father**

Vs. 46 Here Jesus uses the tax collectors who were very self centered as an illustration of how they loved only those who loved them or greeted them. The idea here is this is what all sinners do; love based upon how others treat us.

 A.) The tax collector responds to this love, this self centered love is not evidence of Gods love. No our behavior must **not** be governed by what they do or don’t do with regards to their actions or attitudes towards us! As long as we are still self centered we will be sensitive, watchful, jealous, & envious towards others always reacting to what they do or don’t do. Now based upon this I have determined that I am the most self centerd person I’ve ever been around!

 B.) Next Jesus uses the analogy of greeting. Now the word greet means to enfold in the arms, to welcome by embrace. Think of this for a moment as you came in here this morning I saw you all hugging each other shaking each others hands. You were greeting each other. Well that is all fine & good but that is no different then what any other person does. You were greeting those who have loved you so you were loving them back. Now, what if your worse enemy came through the door, would you go over & give that person a great big hug? That is what we are called to do if our love is like the Lords.

 C.) Now don’t get mad at me but it does not say I have to like them or their behavior towards me. It does not say I am to like my enemies; it says I am to love them as God does. What God commands us to do is to love them as if we liked them. When we do I guarantee that at least one persons heart will change! Love is practical if it is Gods love then it springs not from the person but from what John says in 1 John 4:19-21 “*We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also*.”

Vs. 48 Now we come to this very difficult statement of Jesus, *“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect*.” Now the word “**perfect**” here is the word “***teleios***”, & it means complete in growth, mental and moral character, or of full age, mature. Notice carefully the context of this statement for it is not speaking that we can obtain some sort of “sinless perfection” as a part of being Jesus’ disciples. No it is speaking of the moral maturity & character. So you get the idea that as we love the way our Father does the way He has through His Son we shall be mature believers. Mature believers are not the ones that have memorized the whole Bible neither are they the ones that have all the gifts of the Spirit. They are the ones that love their enemies as Jesus does. I for one am not going to be calling myself a mature Christian, & again this section of scripture drives me back to Christ’s work on the cross. Clearly I can not stand on my own righteousness I will only stand on His!

**Matthew 6:1-8**

**“Why We Do What We Do”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Giving To God**

**III.) Vs. 5-8 Praying To God**

**I.) Intro.**

We now come to the sixth chapter which marks a change in Jesus’ message to His disciples. You will recall that Jesus started out with the characteristics of those that are His followers, He than shared what affects that would have upon the world. From there He showed the contrast of how the Pharisees & scribes practiced righteousness & how they were practice it. In all of the above what has been at issue is the heart dealing with how we handle the world & it’s temptation. If you will it is Christianity from the perspective of what we don’t do. We don’t murder for we are to stop our hearts at hate. We don’t commit adultery because we stop our hearts at lust & so on. Chapter Six deals with what we do. The first three things concern what we do as our act of worship & the rest deal with our handling of the world & those in the world. A careful reading of this passage will reveal that what our Lord is concerned most with is the motivation by which we do things, be that giving, prayer or fasting.

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Giving To God**

You will notice that Jesus first gives the warning verse 1, then He gives the example of what not to do, verse 2. Lastly He gives the benefit for the right motivation, verses 3-4.

Vs.1 First notice the way in which Jesus introduces this section, “Take heed” it is one of those words that arrest our attention & serves as a flashing warning sign. The word “charitable deeds” is rendered righteousness else where & it carries the idea of not just money but all outward displays of good works.

 Now before we look at the real issue here that being the motivation by which we do our righteous acts let me say the obvious. Jesus naturally assumes something here; **He naturally assumes that you will be giving of your time, talent & treasure. He does not say “*IF* you do a charitable deed...” but “*WHEN* you do a charitable deed..”** There are a great many believers who are storing up for themselves treasure here on earth where it won’t do them any good. You are not hurting Gods kingdom for He will just bless someone else, but you are robbing yourself of rewards in heaven!

 Now the heart of the matter, Jesus is telling them not to do their giving acts for the sake of display before people. This might seem to be a contradiction in light of His words to them in 5:13-16 about letting their light so shine before men, but it is clear from the rest of that verse that those that would see the good works would praise God not us.

 Next, Jesus says that if you do your good works to be seen by men that when they acknowledge you for it then you have your reward. In other words if what you were seeking was the praise of men then when you received it you have gotten what you wanted in the first place. The prophet Amos had this to say to the people of his day Amos 4:5 “*You* burn leavened bread as a thank offering and brag about your freewill offerings-- boast about them, you Israelites, for this is what you love to do,"

Vs. 2 Now comes the example of how not to give. The word “hypocrite” is a Greek word that described the actors in the Greek plays. The actors would ware these masks with huge smiles or frowns depending upon the character they were portraying. It was some portraying an emotion that was not true to where their heart was. What was taking place in those days was purely Jewish. The temple courtyard had an area set aside called the chamber of the secret & people would go there to drop off gifts for the poor in a chest called the trumpet. Later on the poor would come & receive the gifts from the chest; all done very discreetly. As the years went on it was decided that it was a hassle to have to go all the way to the temple to give alms to the poor so instead they tied a small brass trumpet to their belts & when they wanted to give to the poor they would blow their trumpets. Of coarse the needy would come out & surround the giver & all the on lookers would see what a generous person that was giving.

 Now Jesus says here again that they have their reward, that is a phrase that means “paid in full”. They sought the praise of men that better enjoy it for that is all they are going to get.

 Perhaps you feel pretty sure that this does not apply to you. I hope it does not, we at Calvary Chapel have tried to make sure that the way in which we do our offering does not draw attention to the person who gives. I’ve been told by other Pastors here that we could easily see our offering rise if we took a formal offering for it would lay constraint upon those who now don’t give. Our heart is that you will receive a reward from God for your gift that the motive in which a person gives here is for the glory of God not the praise of men. You will not see any services in which someone will stand up & declare that God has given them a vision that there are three people here this morning that are going to give $1000.00 would you please stand up. For the moment someone stood up they were rewarded. Do you want your rewards from God or from men in heaven or earth? So in the back there is the love box & if God has laid upon your heart to give then do so, but if you don’t want to give then don’t your just robbing yourself. Some churches if you look around the room you will see plaques reading; “this pew given by \*\*\*\*\*” or this brick donated by.” Well they better enjoy that brick for they got their reward. Now again the great majority of people that I know here never struggle with this. Yet as I was thinking of this verse I pushed it a little further to not even thinking about my given at all, not going to the Lord & saying “Now Lord we have been faithful givers here so why am I going through all this?” That shows perhaps a wrong motivation.

Vs. 3-4 So what is the Lord saying concerning not letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing? Don’t keep a record of it no spiritual ledgers of your good deeds. Paul gives us great counsel on giving in 2 Cor. 9:7 “*So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver*.” God loves the giver who gives “hilariously” If a person can’t give that way then keep it.

**III.) Vs. 5-8 Praying To God**

Vs. 5 Here again Jesus starts out with the wrong motivation in prayer. It helps to understand a bit of the Jewish culture here. There were three appointed times of public prayer at the synagogue 9 AM, Noon, & 3 PM. Twice a day they would repeat the Shema was made up of three sections of the O.T. once at 9 AM & again at 9 PM. The public prayer were 18 separate prayers which they memorized when they were young children. Like most traditions these prayers began to loose their meaning as they started saying them as fast as they could to get through them. The real religious Pharisees wanting to show themselves as great men of prayer would stop along the street corners & start praying showing how eager they were to pray.

 Now I bet not many of us would do this yet I wonder if we have been guilty of the same thing? I listen to the radio every now & again & there is this very good Bible teacher that when he prays always prays in the King James language. I am always wondering why he does that it just seems that he wants to be seen by men. Or perhaps you get up early to pray or you pray a long time, then announce it. “I’m a bit tired today you see, I got up at three this morning & prayed until sunrise as is my habit to do so!” You have your reward then enjoy it.

Vs. 6-8 **Three Keys to effective prayer** :

Jesus now goes on to give us three keys to effective prayer:

 1.) Vs. 6 **SECRET**: This verse carries two ideas in regards to secrecy.

 A.) First it should be **private**. That is not to say that a person ought not to offer any public prayers but that, most of our time of communion ought to be private. The word for “room” here is used for a store room where treasures were kept. It is in this private place where we are less distracted by the outside & less likely to pray in order to be seen by others.

 B.) Second it says “your Father”, thus they ought to be **personal**. Again the idea here is that we come to our Father personally. He is our Father. My son never comes to me & talks to me as if I was some foreign dignitary. Instead he says Dad could you take me over to the school so I can shoot some hoops. I can just imagine how this would sound if it were to try to impress me; “*Though oh great & benevolent glorious father. You who knows what I need before I ever ask who is always willing to give what ever I need. I know oh great one that you will even now take me to they school yard that I might exercise my body to better serve you & this house that I’m so thankful to be placed in*.” That is not how my son talks to me, he does not try to impress me because he knows me personally. He just speaks what’s on his heart always politely & humbly because he is the perfect child, your not buying this are you?

 2.) Vs. 7 Here we the principal of **simplicity**: The Rabbis had a saying that “Whoever is long in prayer is heard.” Instead they should of read what Solomon said in Ecc. 5:2 ***“...God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few***.” The Roman Catholic priests were very impressed with the Buddhist monks they encountered with their prayer wheels so in the middle ages they came up with beads on a string today know as a rosary. Say three Hail Mary’s & five Our Fathers, as if God is hard of hearing, or rewards based upon this kind of effort. Those of Islam do the same thing at certain hours of the day repeating the same prayers over & over. Folks we don’t need to convince God of what is best for us He knows, all we need to do is confess what He already knows to be true & thank Him already for His answer which is always going to be in our best interest which will be for His glory. Most prayer in the Bible are very short so a person does not need to spend hours on their knees every day repeating the same thing over & over. Just sit down before Him open your heart to Him & be concise. Prayer is not to be information time where you are telling God something that He already knows.

 3.) Vs. 8 Here we see that when we pray it ought to be in **sincerity**: What ever we say to the Lord we ought to be sincere for He knows what we need before we ask. Take some time as you inter into prayer & ask the Holy Spirit to show you your own heart then ask Him to show you what you already posses in Christ, most the time we ask God for things that we already posses in Christ.

\* communion\*

**Matthew 6:9-13**

**“In This Manner Pray”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 9 Petition**

**III.) Vs. 10-12 Intercession**

**IV.) Vs. 13 Worship**

**I.) Intro.**

*Little eight year old Danny Dutton of Chula Vista was asked in his 3rd grade homework assignment to explain God here is what he has to say about God & prayer; “God’s second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, as some people, like preachers, pray other times beside bedtime. God doesn’t have time to listen to the radio or TV on account of this. As He hears everything, not only our prayers, there must be a terrible lot of noise in His ears, unless He has a way to turn it off. God sees everything & hears everything & is everywhere. Which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn’t go around wasting His time by going over your parents head & asking for* *something they said you couldn’t have.”*

Last week we left off at prayer & specifically not praying with a wrong motivation. If you will recall I gave you three keys to prayer all starting with the letter “**S**”:

**Three Keys to effective prayer** :

 1.) Vs. 6 **SECRET**: This verse carries two ideas in regards to secrecy.

 A.) First it should be **private**. That is not to say that a person ought not to offer any public prayers but that, most of our time of communion ought to be private. The word for “room” here is used for a store room where treasures were kept. It is in this private place where we are less distracted by the outside & less likely to pray in order to be seen by others.

 B.) Second it says “your Father”, thus they ought to be **personal**. Again the idea here is that we come to our Father personally. He is our Father.

 2.) Vs. 7 Here we the principal of **SIMPLICITY**: Solomon said in Ecc. 5:2 ***“...God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few***.” We don’t need to convince God of what is best for us He knows, all we need to do is confess what He already knows to be true & thank Him already for His answer which is always going to be in our best interest which will be for His glory. Most prayer in the Bible are very short so a person does not need to spend hours on their knees every day repeating the same thing over & over. Just sit down before Him open your heart to Him & be concise. Prayer is not to be information time where you are telling God something that He already knows.

 3.) Vs. 8 Here we see that when we pray it ought to be in **SINCERITY**: What ever we say to the Lord we ought to be sincere for He knows what we need before we ask. Take some time as you inter into prayer & ask the Holy Spirit to show you your own heart then ask Him to show you what you already posses in Christ, most the time we ask God for things that we already posses in Christ.

 All prayer ought to be made up of three things **worship, intercession & petition**

& this model prayer is made of these three things as it begins & ends with worship, it intercedes for Gods kingdom, & petitions for our daily needs. More than this we shall find that this model prayer deals with our **past, present & future**, as well as dealing with our need for **provision, forgiveness & guidance**. When summing this all up this prayer contains anything & everything we will ever be concerned with all with in 65 words which take only 30 seconds to utter! It is amazing how complicated we make prayer. I have read the classics on prayer: The seven book series by E.M. bounds which consists of some 1,063 pages; as well as the classic Andrew Murry book entitled “Christ in the school of prayer” which consists of 252 pages. Yet here all that we need is contained in 65 words! Now before we begin our examination I would like to give you some observations of the whole of the prayer:

 1.) As you will read through this prayer you will notice the absence of all singular pronouns; no “I, me, or my’s”. It is all “us & our’s”! Prayer is by it’s very nature others centered, yet still concerned with our cares just not ours alone!

 2.) This is not the only time that this prayer is recorded in the Bible you will find it mentioned again in Luke 11:2-4. What is not clear because of cross referencing is that the prayer in Luke 11 did not happen at the same time as this one in Matt. 6: 9-13. In fact it happens some two years latter. Stop & think about this for a moment; Jesus at the beginning of His ministry takes these disciples up on a small mountain & teaches all about prayer, then two years latter after having observed Jesus in action, watching Him pray seeing that prayer was the source of all that He did here on earth they ask Him “Lord, teach us to pray,..” Now you would think that there would now be some advance coarse of prayer. Jesus did not say; “*Well, two years ago I taught you all the basics, now let me give you the real stuff that prayer is made of*!” Simply put this is all of the “stuff” on prayer.

 3.) Lastly this prayer ought to serve as a reminder to all the benefits that are now ours in Christ:

 A.) Vs.9 God’s person

 B.) Vs.10 God’s purpose

 C.) Vs.11 God’s provision

 D.) Vs.12 God’s pardon

 E.) Vs.13 God’s protection

 D.) Vs.13 God’s pre-eminence

Every thing we need is in Christ! It all starts with our **relationship** too Him through Jesus & then **recognizing** what is ours through that relationship.

**II.) Vs. 9 Petition**

Vs. 9 Here we start out with what many have called the invocation. The prayer starts out with the truth of relationship: More than that all else that will be said depends upon the significance of that relationship. If a person has no relationship with God than they have no right to call on Him.

 A.) The word “Father” here is very interesting word in light of the names for God.

 1.) Elohim = The strong One.

 2.) El Shaddai = The Mighty One.

 3.) Yahweh = The covenant name which means “I Am that I Am”.

Yet none of these names does Jesus use here instead He uses the word “Abba” it is a very deep spiritual name so profound theologically that only those who have studied for years can comprehend it. No! It is the word best translated “Daddy or Papa”. Is He no longer the powerful, mighty, God spoken by the words above? Has He now some how changed? No! He has not changed that is still His character His nature. What has changed , is our heart.

 Now there are a great many people today who they say they know God, but is He their Daddy? Now my son can walk right up to me & say; “Dad I’m hungry “, & get something to eat. But a stranger can’t just do that. Why? Because I don’t know him, he is not my child. All to many people say since God created them then they are His children & I suppose that in some ways that is true, but that is not the same as having a relationship with the Lord. Again He is not “my Father” He is “our Dad” that is He is the Dad of all who know Him personally. Not just the Dad of Calvary Chapelities.

 B.) Next note His location, “in heaven”. Actually the word heaven here is in the plural form & should read in the “heavens” He is far beyond all of what we are conscience of. He is far above yet every where at once. He is reigning in glory. I relate to Him because He is my Dad, yet I reference Him because of Who He is. There is that great line in C.S. Lewis’ book the Lion the Witch & the Wardrobe where the children are asking about Aslaim the Lion. They ask if He is safe & the answer comes back, “No, but He is good” That is what is pictured by these words “in heaven”.

 C.) Now that we have established that every thing hinges upon this relationship notice the next thing about “our Dad”. “Hallowed be Your name”. This is not a word that we use today in our language but it means to “make holy” or “let Your name be made Holy”. Names use to always stand for the character of the person, in other words people were named for their character or attributes. We need to remember that or Dad’s essential character is Holy. I think too that when we say these words “hallowed be your name” it reminds us before we start asking God for things that ultimately we represent Him!

**III.) Vs. 10-12 Intercession**

Vs. 10 Here we move from the person & character of God to His purpose: “Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.” This is the second of six petitions in this prayer. The first three affirm Gods glory :

 1.) Vs.9 His holiness

 2.) Vs.10 The coming of His kingdom

 3.) Vs.10 The obedience to His will

The right kind of prayer ought to always have the greatest amount of passion for Gods glory & agenda. His Name, His kingdom, His will always be our greatest desire.

G. Campbell Morgan says this; “*Prayer is not first of all a means by which we get something for ourselves; it is rather a method of helping God to get something for Himself*.” Pastor Chuck says; “True prayer begins with us seeking to line up with Gods purposes; never trying to change what He wants to do.”

Vs.11 Now we move to our personal needs, where we again see three petitions for our good. Again notice that there are no personal pronouns, it is not “Give me my bread” it is “Give US OUR bread”.

 1.) Vs.11 Bread for our bodies

 2.) Vs.12 Forgiveness for our souls

 3.) Vs.13a Protection for our hearts & minds

There is nothing wrong with prayer that lifts up our need to God. Notice though Jesus does not say give us our monthly or yearly bread. Now that is how a great many of us pray always fretting about something that has not happened yet. Bread here no doubt refers to our daily provisions. Yet with that said Jesus is the bread of life, (John 4:32-34). He alone meets my deepest hunger. It is great that God would have us be dependent upon Him daily for our provisions!

Vs.12 Here we come to another great need we all have “Forgiveness for our souls.” It would appear by this passage that we only are forgiven based upon our forgiving of others. But the order of this clearly shows that forgiveness of others can only occur as we have been forgiven. Eph. 4:32 tells us “be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.” That is the picture of forgiveness, we forgive because of what Christ has forgiven in us not the other way.

 If you want to know what the difference between Christianity & all other religions is it is found on the basis of how we are forgiven. Only in Christianity is a person forgiven on the works of another. All other religions it is based upon our own works!

Vs.13a Protection for our hearts & minds. Here is the last of our petitions for our personal needs. Temptation here does not mean to be drawn into sin but rather testing. Also of note is the word lead it can be rendered “leave”. So to put this another way it could read “leave us not into testing.” Simply put bring us there but don’t keep us there! Folks we are week creatures full of failure, there is a lot of wisdom in praying Lord don’t leave me in testing! Notice as well that we have an enemy we need to be delivered from, satan.

**IV.) Vs. 13 Worship**

Vs.13b Notice in this ending a threefold ascription of praise:

 1.) Kingdom

 2.) Power

 3.) Glory

“Heavenly Holy Dad, You are holy, & You always do right in all Your works. Holy Dad, I only want to be in Your presence, & for Your presence to be felt here in the world. Conform my life to Your plan, I yield to You. Give me only those things this day which cause growth in my life with You; both spiritual & physical. Holy Dad, I give You all those things that would hinder me from growing closer to You, & I let go of anything others owe me, as this would hinder Your love from operating through me. Holy Dad, keep me from the things that would stumble me, & render me in bondage to the devil. For all I desire is for You to be glorified in my life, & for Your power to work through me for Your glory forever. So be it!

**Matthew 6:14-24**

**“Where Our Heart Is”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 14-15 Forgiving Men**

**III.) Vs. 16-18 Fasting For The Father**

**IV.) Vs. 19-24 Treasure Seekers**

**I.) Intro.**

Now we move on in this sermon on the mount, again dealing with the hearts response to life. It is the motivation that will determine where our heart truly is. I heard told a story of a Christian lady who lived next door to an atheist. Everyday, when the lady prayed, the atheist could hear her. He thought to himself, "She sure is crazy, praying all the time like that. Doesn't she know there isn't a God?" Many times while she was praying, he would go to her house and harass her, saying, "Lady, why do you pray all the time" Don't you know there is no God?" But she kept on praying. One day, she ran out of groceries. As usual, she was praying to the Lord explaining her situation and thanking Him for what he was gonna do. AS USUAL, the atheist heard her praying and thought to himself, "I'll fix her." He went to the grocery store, bought a whole bunch of groceries, took them to her house, dropped them off on the front porch, rang the doorbell and then hid in the bushes to see what she would do. When she opened the door and saw the groceries, she began to praise the Lord with all her heart! The atheist then jumped out of the bushes and told her, "You ol' crazy lady, God didn't buy you those groceries, I BOUGHT THOSE GROCERIES!" Well, she broke out and started running down the street, shouting and praising the Lord. When he finally caught her, he asked what her problem was. She said, "I KNEW THE LORD WOULD PROVIDE ME WITH SOME GROCERIES, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS GONNA MAKE THE DEVIL PAY FOR THEM!" This story makes you wonder about her prayer life!

**II.) Vs. 14-15 Forgiving Men**

Vs. 14 -15 Jesus will have much more to say on this in chapter 9:2-6, 18:21-35, but here the emphasis is upon the fact that for Gods children forgiveness is not an option. We do not have the luxury of holding on to bitterness towards other people. Now in 5:23-24 the emphasis was upon what we did that someone held against us, here the shoe is on the other foot. The gospel is the message of forgiveness, God is the One who pardons our sins we ought to be like Him. It ought to be impossible for us to go to God to ask for forgiveness if we are unwilling to forgive others. As stated last week Eph. 4:32 puts it right as far as grace is concerned; “*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you*.” It is difficult to see how a person who remains in bitterness towards another could enjoy the assurance of Gods pardon if they were not to pardon so small of a debt owed to them! The more we have been forgiven ourselves the more we ought to be able to forgive.

**III.) Vs. 16-18 Fasting For The Father**

Vs.16 Again note the words; “When you fast” not “If you fast”. Fasting today in the western church is almost unheard of. And if it is done it is not done for the right reasons. Let us first then give two reasons why people fasted, then what the Pharisees & scribes were doing & lastly the right way.

 Fasting, was done for two reasons:

 1.) **For direction**: Both in the O.T. & the N.T. you can see examples of this, when people wanted to know Gods will, or direction they would fast. Doctors tell us that there is something that is biological about this. When there is no food in the stomach there is actually more blood flow going to the brain. You can actually think better, more clearly on a empty stomach then you can on a full stomach. I’m sure we have all found it difficult to listen or watch something on a full stomach, we tend to want to dose off.

 2.) **For liberation**: When someone feels oppressed, bound by the flesh they would set aside the flesh & resubmit their heart to God. Now fasting, is seen primarily dealing with food however their is a scripture dealing with husbands & wives 1 Cor. 7:5

“*Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control*.”

 So how were the Pharisees practicing this? Primarily they were seeing this of just the body not the heart. When you fast you are giving up the lessor (the physical” to gain the greater (the spiritual). They fasted twice a week every Monday & Thursday. You could always tell that they were fasting because of their appearance described by Jesus in verse 16 as they would walk around with sad countenance, drawn in cheeks, uncombed hair. They looked like they were about to die.

 Again their motivation was to be seen as spiritual by men & they got their reward.

Vs.17-18 Jesus tells us the right way to fast, it is the opposite of what these folks were doing, no one ought to be able to see that you are fasting. Our motivation is not to appear that we are given up so much physically to get so little from God. It is the other way, we are giving up so light to draw near & gain so much more of Him. The problem with all of this is **self interest**, the reason so many want to be seen is that they may have some sort of special recognition for being something that they are not!

**IV.) Vs. 19-24 Treasure Seekers**

Now we move on to how we are to handle material things. We know that we are to dwell in the spiritual realm but how are we to handle the temporal things of this life? In this section we shall see what our attitude ought to be towards wealth.

Vs.19-20 First I want you to notice that “**laying up**” is a for gone conclusion. Jesus does not forbid “laying up” neither does He say that it is wrong to lay up “**treasures**” that is not the issue. The issue is “**where**” you are doing so! “Laying up” is put both negatively, that is where you should not be putting your treasure & positively where you should be putting your treasure. If you will what Jesus does hear is give a comparison of values the reason is to reveal our true attitude.

 Literally, this reads “*Treasure not treasures upon the earth*,... *but treasure for yourselves treasure in heaven*. The word “**treasure**” means to place something horizontally, to store it for none activity, to hoard it, collect it. The idea is to lay things aside, piece upon piece so that you can possess them. *The story is told of the words of an old miser to a young boy telling the boy that coins were made flat so that they may rest where they are, to which the boy replied yes they were made round as well that they may roll away*. What again is interesting is that Jesus does not say that it is wrong to have a passion for possessions, it is the abuse of it that is wrong. Treasures on earth, treasures in heaven, which are you laying up? Either way you will be trying to amass your fortune.

Vs. 19 Look at the practical reasons Jesus uses to tell us why it is not good to lay aside here on earth. Poor person who is trying to make their fortune here on earth where there is such a problem with storage.

 A.) Moth: Wealth in those days consisted of expensive cloth & fabric. Think of this for a moment you have saved & treasured fine fabric & moths come in & eat it. Now some of us have houses & we have a great deal of money tied up in our homes, temporal things made of wood & concrete. Now if your great treasure is your home & say for instance it floods or you have termites & that is your treasure. Well it is not very secure is it! If your treasure is in things that will just make bugs wealthy then you clearly have a problem.

 B.) Rust: This is that which attacks metal slowly eating away at that treasure. Tell all you have left is a pile of dust. Today a great many people have their treasure in their cars, oh foolish people. This is the weekend of the hot rod show at the fairgrounds & you can go see these folks & their treasures here on earth. Something so easily destroyed by the elements.

 C.) Thieves: Here again if your treasure is in something of the earth than it can be taken from you.

Vs. 20 The common problem here is in the storage container earth, it is not a safe place to guard your treasure. Contrast that with heaven no problem. Notice that Jesus does not say anything about the good that you will have in so placing your treasure in heaven, all He does is say that the storage container is contaminant free. That is to say that if you place your treasure in heaven it is secure you don’t need to worry about it’s security.

Vs. 21 It is interesting to me that Jesus does not say *“Where your heart is their your treasure will be also*.” How can you be more heavenly harted? By placing your treasure there. The point is that you can only have your treasure & your heart in one place they can not be in two different places they will be in either this world or in heaven. If your treasure is here on this earth than so is your heart! And the opposite is also true!

 No matter who you are we all will have a passion for possessing, Jesus says so right here; you are going to be laying up treasures that is the way we are made. Here we see that there is a direct correlation between what we treasure & our heart condition. What we treasure will have it’s effect upon our hearts. So everything depends upon where our treasure is because that is where our heart is going to be & everything depends upon where our heart is for as a person thinks in their heart so they are.

Vs. 22-23 The eye is the channel by which we receive illumination. Your eye gaze will be either for the things of the Lord or for self interest. Heavenly things will fill it with light, worldly things will fill it with darkness. What Jesus is saying is that we ought to have a right view of the things that we treasure. The self centered eye that is dark is only consumed with gathering things for here & now. There are many to day suffering from astigmatism & they need to have their lenses changed so that they can have the right conception of the things of this world.

 So are earthly riches wrong? No they are not wrong of themselves, but if you live for things they you a astigmatism your world view is all blurry. Prov. 28: 22 says; “*A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, And does not consider that poverty will come upon him*.”

Vs.24 Lastly after telling us that our treasure will effect our heart & cause us not to be able to see, here He tells us it will enslave us as well. We have a choice of two masters.

You can only serve one of them. The question is relay a matter of worship, who are you worshipping God or mammon. I heard recently that only 10% of the U.S. economy is on actual dollars. 90% of all transactions are backed by nothing. Economics is a risky religion. Are your possessing possession or are they possessing you? Again their is no piety in poverty neither is their any righteousness in riches. it’s a matter of the heart. It is far better to use the money God has blessed you with to be a blessing & lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven!

**Matthew 6:25-34**

**“Take Thought Not To Worry”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 25-30 Worry Won’t Work**

**III.) Vs. 31-33 Worry & Worldliness**

**IV.) Vs. 34 Worry Is Not Worthwhile**

**I.) Intro.**

Jesus has just finished speaking to us about where our treasure is, He has told us that by the way He has made us we will be gathering things the question is where we will be gathering them too. The problem with gathering them here on earth is the container in which they are kept is corruptible. Now we move on to see how we handle things here on earth will effect us.

 In light of this & the fact that it is mothers day I heard a story about a Mom & her little daughter as they went to the grocery store. A man was observing them as they shopped. As they went down the aisle where the cookies are kept the little girl began to whine & fuss wanting the mother to purchase the cookies. The mother just very commonly said, “*Now Monica, we just have half of the aisles to go; don’t be upset. It won’t be long*!” Soon they came to the aisle where the candy was kept, & the little girl began to shout for candy. And again the mother said she could not have any, to which the little girl began to cry. The mother said, “*There, there, Monica, don’t cry we only have two more aisles to go, & then we will be at the check out*.” When they got to the check out there was all the gum & the little girl began to ask for the gum throwing a terrible tantrum upon the fact that her mother was not going to purchase any gum. Again the mother patiently said, “*Monica, we’ll be through this check out stand in a few minutes & then you can go home & have a nice nap*.” The man observing all this was so impressed at the mothers ability to Handel the little girl that he followed her out to the parking lot & stopped her to compliment her. “*I couldn’t help noticing how patient you were with little Monica*”, He said. To which the mother replied, “***I’m Monica ..... my little girl’s name is Tammy***.” Jesus says, “Therefore I say to you do not worry about your life.”

**II.) Vs. 25-30 Worry Won’t Work**

You will notice that this section deals with “WORRY”. In fact the word worry or worrying appears 6 times in 4 verses. This section of the chapter divides nicely upon the words “do not worry” as Jesus gives us three specific reasons not to be anxious, verses 25, 31, 34.

 What is “worry”? Literally the root of the word means to **strangle**. I think this is very true as all of know when we are worried about some thing we can not eat or drink & often feel as if we are all tied up in knots. It is amazing of minor a thing can be that will cause us to be all uptight. Jesus here has great hope for us worry warts. He proclaims for us freedom from worry & it is based upon our ability to realize that He loves us & is involved in every aspect of our lives. Now this section of scripture ought to really minister to some of you who worry. I of coarse don’t struggle with this problem, Yeh, right! I have worried more in the last six weeks then I did over the last six months, so if I apply this section I could be set free from anxiety.

 There are things that are necessary in this life food, drink, clothing, which we will have a part in taking care of yet God is here saying that He does not want us to be anxious over these things. It gives us arguments why not to be worrying about such things.

Vs.25 First notice the word “Therefore” everything He is now going to say comes from what He has just stated prior. He just declared to us that our hearts & treasure ought to be in heaven not upon the earth based upon this worry about such things even essential things ought not to happen in our hearts. In other words if we are anxious over things then it is an indication that our treasure & our heart is here on the earth.

 Jesus lists three essentials in our earthly life:

 1.) Eating: With out food you will die, it may take some time but you will die.

 2.) Drinking: With our drinking something you will die it will take a lesser amount of time, then food.

 3.) Clothing: With out clothing you will die as well.

Thus all of these things are necessities of life; they were also measure in that culture as well as our own of wealth. The more money a person had the more they could go out & but the best food & more of it. The more money a person had the better drink they could buy. The more money the better the clothing & so on. So it appears the anxiety over these things is not in having them as it is in having enough to satisfy your desire for them. Follow me so far?

 Thus Jesus’ statement about the purpose of life; “*Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing*?” What’s the purpose of life? Why we were created that we would have fellowship with God. In as much that these things enable us to fellowship with Him then great. But when they begin to consume our thoughts then we are not able to enjoy our fellowship with Him.

Vs.26 This is the first of two examples dealing with the fact that worrying over these things is unnecessary because of our relationship with our Loving Father. Simply put worry does not need to happen based upon two reasons:

 1.) Our Father loves us, He values us. We are His children. That is from His perspective that is looking at the problem of worry from heavenward. Reminding ourselves of this fact.

 2.) Worry does not work. It does not change anything, we can fuss all we want worry ourselves to death & it produces nothing.

Vs. 26 Here we see the illustration of the birds of the air. They do not sow that is they are not out there planting seeds in the ground. Neither do they afterwards go out & harvest the crop & store it. We do all of what the birds can not do yet, they are still taken care of by the Father.

 Now some look at this verse & say well then we all ought to just sit around doing nothing because that is what birds do. That is silly I have not seen one bird in all my life just sit in a tree & wait for a worm or bug to climb up the tree & into their mouths. No! Birds work they just don’t worry about the outcome. Even if we work, notice who it is that feeds us, Our Father! If God takes care of the needs of those who can not care for themselves who are of less value than us His children how much more will He not care for His children who can care for themselves?

Vs. 27 Based upon that what profit does worrying about this add? Some think that this may refer to adding years to ones life. Worrying does not work weather it is dealing with years to a persons life or 18 inches to their height.

 Now when your a kid everything hinges if your a boy upon how tall you are, but there is nothing you can do about that. I personally love to see the little guys out there play ball against all those big guys. I remember watching my son play ball a few years ago. He was a bit intimidated to go into the paint & shoot the ball over the big guys. I would not say he was worried about it but he did feel as though they were going to swat him if he shoot the ball. Well he has matured he does not worry about his height he just goes right on in there & shoots the ball.

Vs. 28-30 Now Jesus tackles another area here that of what a person wares. All clothing in those days were made, not just sowed together but even the thread was spun. These flower are beautiful yet they do nothing on their own. They simply grow on what God provides. Yet, looking at their color & texture next to that of even King Solomon who even in all of his wealth was not as beautiful as the flowers of the field. If God takes care of flowers which he has not blessed with reason to work & toil for their preservation how much more will he clothe those who he gives Himself contumely for?

 Now notice the last part of this. “*will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith*?” The reason people worry is here said to be a lack of trust. Worry & faith are mutually exclusive.

**III.) Vs. 31-33 Worry & Worldliness**

Vs. 31-33 Here we see that worry is associated with those who don’t know the Lord. The none believer worries about the things of life but our Father knows what we need before we ask. We are not to have a passion for the things of the world, we are to have a passion for the things of God, verse 32. There is a thing that ought to concern all believers that is the things of God. we Ought to have a passion for that which He has a passion for. To stay up all night worrying about what to ware tomorrow is foolish, but to stay up all night burdened for the sole of a friend is a good thing. No life is right if it has no passion, but that it’s passion is the kingdom of God.

 The word seek in verse 32 means to “crave” the Father knows what we need we don’t need to crave the things of the world. Now the word in verse 33 rendered “seek” means to “worship”. The test we need to ask ourselves is; “What am I seeking?” If your life is devoted to your own well being then you will be anxious for your god is mammon & your worry will haunt you. However if you are seeking the Lord & His kingdom then you will be enjoy heavenly treasure & earthly rest. This is a decision we made when we first became Christians but it is one that we reinforce daily by the actions of our daily life. There is a saying that goes like this, “Do your best & commit the rest”.

 The story is told of a girl who saw some cheap fake pearls at the store, (read story)

**IV.) Vs. 34 Worry Is Not Worthwhile**

Vs. 34 The word “trouble” is also rendered “adversity”. It is amazing that most of what I worry about is very much in the future. Anxiety is always caring about the future. To worry about events that we do not even know what will happen is foolish. It is foolish to worry in light of what we have already seen. Someone has well said; “Today is the tomorrow that we worried about yesterday.” Jesus is saying that tomorrow will take care of it’s self. Worry takes life out of us it produces nothing & shows a lack of trust in our heavenly father.

**Matthew 7:1-12**

**“Grace & The Golden Rule”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-5 How To Judge**

**III.) Vs. 6 How To Discern**

**IV.) Vs. 7-12 When In Doubt, Pray**

**I.) Intro.**

As we read through this section of scripture we need to remind ourselves that as Jesus spoke these words there was no chapter divisions. He did not come to chapter seven & say, “Now, chapter seven!” Thus, this was a continual teaching all of which links up with what was already said. So this chapter which starts out saying, “*Judge not, that you be not judged*”, ties in with what He had just said previously, “*Sufficient for the day is its own trouble*.”

 One of the things that happens to me when I start to get anxious over the things of this is world is that I become critical of those who are handling my things in this world. One of my Bible teachers the first day of his class told us that he wanted to share the most profound thing he ever learned from anyone else. He told us that this was the key to maintain a consistent joyful walk with the Lord. Here they are:

 1.) Life is not fair.

 2.) People are weird.

 3.) Love covers a multitude of sins.

Twelve years has passed since he firs told me those words, & they are still profound! Much of our life is not what we go through rather it is in what manor we respond. We must learn how to make right decisions. How to discern between people yet not be critical of them. We need, as Gods children, to treat people in the manner in which we wish to be treated. The key to this is to be found in our constant prayer, asking, seeking & knocking for the wisdom & power to so love as He loves.

**II.) Vs. 1-5 How To Judge**

Notice how Jesus teaches here:

 A.) First, (Vs. 1) He declares the principal: “*Judge not, that you be not judged”*

 B.) Second, (Vs. 2) He amplifies the principal: “*For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you*.”

 C.) Lastly, (Vs. 3-5) He illustrates it.

I just love to read Jesus’ teaching because of this, no matter what Jesus taught He always put wheels on it. To not, as a Christian, live what He taught made no since. I’ve learned over the years to always take the truths of God & put them in the world in which we live.

 For instance people who say they Know God because they have heard about Him thinking that is enough to go to heaven. I say that is like a person who is dying of an infection who knows about penicillin & it’s ability to help the healing processes thinking that just the knowledge the drug will heal them!

Vs. 1 It is important to understand just what this word “judge” means. Does it mean that we are never to use our intellect to discern anything about another person. So often today you will hear a person say to you or another Christian when confronted about some visible sin in their live, “Judge not, that you not be judged!” The actual word has a wide variety of meanings everything from distinguish & discern, to condemn, & damn. So now we must look at the context in the use of this word to determine it’s meaning. Clearly verse 6 helps us here because Jesus is clearly not condemning the proper use of our intellect to discern who is a dog or a pig. Therefor in the first five verse Jesus forbids the kind of judgment that condemns or finds faults with another person. Perhaps this would better be put if it said; “Condemn not that you not be condemned.” In other words come to no final verdict upon another persons life. Don’t go around looking for another persons faults or condemn a person based upon our perception of the motives in which they do something. Weighing the heart or motives of man belongs to God; Prov. 21:*2 “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts*.”

Vs.2 Here Jesus amplifies this point on not condemning another person not having a critical spirit towards another person. It is a simple truth a person who is a fault finder in others will have it done to them. When we come to wrong conclusions about someone else then they will in turn come to wrong conclusions about us.

 It always amazes how my faults always look a lot worse on you then they do on me. It great to have kids because every now & then you will hear them say something just as critical as you do with the same expressions that you use, then you go “Man that’s ugly” & the Holy Spirit says “Yeh, I know!” Now that I’m a little more full figured it would be pretty silly for me to say man do you see that guy over their look at how fat they are. If I do sooner or latter someone is going to look at me & say “Have you seen that fat guy over there?”

 Remember that story of David in 2 Sam. 12: where the prophet Nathan came to David after he had taken Uriah the Hittites wife Bathsheba & then when he got her pregnant he had him put on the front lines & killed. Nathan came to him & told him about a wealthy man who had all the servants & flocks he could ever want & yet he saw this very poor man who had only one little lamb that he loved. Well, said Nathan the wealthy man took the poor mans pet lamb & barbecued it for his dinner guests. With this David became enraged & said, “This man shall surely die!” To which Nathan replied, “You are the man!

 Oh how many times have we sinned this way towards others? What a great sin this is. I have been noticing that you all do this a lot, “Dale, you are the man!”

Vs.3-5 Here we are given a clear illustration of the principal about having a critical spirit. Jesus uses real figures in a funny way! The word speck is like it sounds a small piece of saw-dust. The beam is a massive piece of timber. The beam in which the Lord uses here is a critical spirit against other people. The person who has a critical spirit towards another has a far greater problem then does the one he is criticizing, a lack of love. Our search for faults in others is evidence of the beam of a critical spirit.

 I got to tell you this one of those areas that God is always dealing with me in. Sometimes as I look over this area in my life it seems as though I have a ministry of rebuke! The truth is I will never be able to see the small little speck in other until I have a spirit of love towards them! Self-righteousness clouds my vision & renders ministry impossible. Picture this if you will would you allow a blind doctor to operate upon your eyes? G. Cambel Morgan said this; “***The power to remove the speck to which you object lies not in our acute vision but in the passion & tenderness of your love to remove it***!”

Paul said this to the Galations in Gal. 6:1 “*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted*.” We need to maintain the balance as one person said, “I’m no judge, but I am a fruit inspector!” We need to love those, but hate the sin.

**III.) Vs. 6 How To Discern**

Vs. 6 Here we see the need to balance this love with discernment. If we were to turn over to 2 Peter 2:22 we will get the right interpretation of what Jesus meant about Dogs & swine. “But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit," and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” Peter had been talking about false teachers & prophets when he said this. We are not to condemn a person by way of a critical spirit but neither are we to take the things of God before someone who clearly wants only to mock them. Clearly this is a call for discernment, you will need to look at the fruit of a persons life, not condemning them but seeing if they are open for spiritual truths or just want an argument. My wife had a co-worker a while back who kept on asking questions at first it seemed as if the person was truly interested in truth & the Bible. As time went on all they really wanted was reasons to not believe. Finally she told him “Are you really wanting out of the life you are now living or are you just looking for excuses to stay the way you are?” With that she said she went on to say, “If you really want the truth come on over for dinner & my husband & I would love to talk with you further.” That was the last time he asked her any more questions. Oh how awful for this man all he wanted was to find excuses & reasons not to believe, he was not interested in reasons to believe! These are the people that you must continue to live it but not talk it. Jesus **does not ever say** that we should **not** let our light so shine before men that they may see your good works & glorify your Father in heaven. Clearly then this is a reference to what we say & share with others! But how will we be able to know weather we are critical in spirit or discerning? Verses 7-11.

**IV.) Vs. 7-12 When In Doubt, Pray**

Vs. 7 First you will notice here that Jesus uses words that are progressively more intense. He starts with “Ask” then moves to “Seeks” & lastly to “knocks”. All of this ought to have the word “Keep” in front of them for that is what it is in the Greek. So the first then we need to be doing is “CONTINUAL PRAYER”. If your not sure how to respond to someone be in continual prayer, when in doubt pray!

 Now thought this truth can be apply to other situations it’s clear context is on the right way to treat others & making sure you are not behaving with a critical spirit. So lets look at this three keys:

 A.) Ask: The word means to beg in the since of complete dependence. The is the first then we must realize is that as far as we are concerned we are beggars completely dependent upon the Lord who weighs the hearts on man to rightly know how to treat another person. And if we come to Him in our humility what will happen? We shall find! Is that not great when we come to Him in our ignorance we find Him who is all truth!

 B.) Seek: Means to desire or to worship God. It implies care, if you have ever lost something that you love then you are seeking it with a desire much more intense then just asking if someone has seen it. And what will happen as you keep on seeking the Lord? Why, you will find!

 C.) Knock: This word means to rap & I don’t mean the so called music. This shows a persistence that leaves no door left closed. And what is promised here? Why the door will be opened!

Vs. 8 Notice what it says here; “Everyone” who asks ... seeks ... knocks ... receives ... finds ... opened.” Every now & again I will talk to some dear believer who is struggling & I will tell them they need to give this or that over to the Lord in prayer & they will say; “I’ve given it to God but It’s still hear prayer has not worked!” It is not prayer that has not worked but us! We give ourselves to God & then we take that area back! We have got free wills we need to lay down what ever is stumbling us at His feet & not pick it up again!

 All of this shows passion, would it be that we would go before the Lord seeking Him with our whole heart this way. So many people have a warped view of God. “Hey, if I really give myself to God then he is going to send me to some awful place or cause my to marry some ugly dude!”

Vs. 9-11 Here again Jesus uses this illustration to emphasize the truth He just taught. I love my kids & if they came to me & said; “Dad I’m hungry” I know I would not say sure thing help yourself to that rock out side. If I who am fleshly know how to love my children how much more does our heavenly Father?

 Now personally I’m glad God has not always given me the things that I wanted, because He knows that they would only harm me. Is it not great to just think on how great Gods love is towards us, what grace He exhibits towards me every day. That is what hit me at the pastors conference this past week. Here I am fussing & acting up all the time & He just is so patient towards me. **My worry ought not to be what God will do to me if I open my heart all the way towards Him but what I will miss if I don’t**!

**Matthew 7:12-29**

**“The Way Of Life”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 12 The Golden Rule**

**III.) Vs. 13-23 Gates, Trees, & Life**

**IV.) Vs. 24-29 A Sure Foundation**

**I.) Intro.**

We have now come to the end of this 30 minute massage that Jesus taught, called the “Sermon On The Mount”. You will remember that this passage started with the words of 5:1-2 “*And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them*,..” Thus all of what Jesus has been saying refers directly to you & I. This manifesto of the King is to those of us who are His subjects. It is here how we are told the way in which we shall reach those who are not yet His subjects. This section serves as a summation of all that He has taught us thus far. The sermon will conclude with the response of those who are out side of His Kingdom, & this ought to be of great encouragement to us of the validity of the Word of God. I must confess that I get a bit upset at all the Church adds in the paper that say, “relevant Bible teaching”. All Bible teaching is relevant! It makes you wonder what these churches are communicating?

 In the L.A. Times recently there was the story of a man who had been picked up as a robbery suspect. The person who had been robbed was asked to pick him out of a line up. The six men that were behind the one way glass were asked to repeat the phrase, “***Give me all your money or I’ll shoot.***” When they got to the real robber instead of shouting the phrase he yelled at the glass, “**That’s not what I said**!” All to often to be relevant we are not teaching the word, we are just repeating phrases of the world & this has no effect, not so with Jesus He taught as one who had authority! I think today in many churches if Jesus were in the service He would stand up & shout, “**That’s not what I said**!”

**II.) Vs. 12 The Golden Rule**

Vs. 12 Now there are a great many who think that Jesus stole this from other men before Him. It is a fact that others before Him have said words similar to this, for instance:

 A.) Hillel had said, “*Do not do to thy neighbor what is hateful to yourself or he will do it to you*.”

 B.) Socrates said*, “What stirs your anger when done to you by others, do not do that to others*.”

 C.) Aristotle said, “*We should bear ourselves towards others as we should desire them to bear towards us*.”

 D.) Confucius said, “*What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others*.”

Yet there is a radical difference between what they all said & what Jesus said here. Theirs are all negative & passive. **It is all about not doing**. Refrain from harming them & they will not harm you! Don’t rob that person & they won’t rob you. If you don’t say something mean about that person they won’t say any thing mean about you. This is not what Jesus is saying here. **His is positive & active**. Go & treat people the way in which you would want to be treated. Wow! What a concept. You mean if you are being a jerk how would you want some one to treat you. Why, I would want them to come right over to me & call me a jerk, spit in my face & kick my right in the leg. OK lets see if that is true! No, you would want someone to love you & spend time with you trying to comfort you & see what is going on in your life. The difference is as great as not breaking the speed limit; which I’m sure all of us obey, & stopping to help stranded motorists. The first is about not doing, the second is about doing.

 This golden rule is only golden if it is attached to this prayer above, that is why the word “***therefore***” is here; it is only as we “ask, seek & knock”, that we are able to so treat others. You see, you can’t do this apart from total dependence upon Him. Just treat your spouse the way you want to be treated, but you say I don’t want to then you need a change of heart!

**III.) Vs. 13-23 Gates, Trees, & Life**

As we come upon this section Jesus is going to use a three-fold illustration to illustrate our responsibility in our following Him. Yes, He is full of grace & truth, but we have a responsibility to follow. It is interesting to line up these illustrations to Jesus words in John 14:6 *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me*.” The first being “The Way” which links with verses 13-14. Next “The Truth”, which lines up with verses 15-20. Then lastly “The Life”, which fits verses 21-23.

Vs.13-14 As we look at this the imagery is not that difficult. Jesus says that there are two ways, a narrow gate & a wide gate. They in turn lead to a difficult way & a broad way.

 What’s interesting about this analogy is what we often forget, namely the end result of the journey. The right way leads to Life, the wrong to destruction. The person who is looking at just the benefits of where they are now instead of where they want to go will be easily fooled. What is your goal? Is it to find the most easiest path in this life, money popularity, power? Then the gate is easy to find, you will hear about that gate every day it’s roads are paved with big flashing signs.

 Now what’s interesting is the word picture you get as you look at Jesus’ analogy of this path of life. Destruction is very narrow wouldn’t you say? The word can refer to either spiritual, such as damnable or practical, like waste. I get this picture of one of those machines at a junk yard that smashes cars, they confine them in a box & press in until all you have is a block of steel. So in other words this picture is like a funnel, the broad entrance that leads a narrow confinement. Many find this way to ruin. You can bet that the broad way does not have a sign over it saying; “This way to hell”. No! it is the popular way. A great many people are turned off by Christianity because they say it is to restrictive. To which I always say that is not so! You see, we are set free from sin into the glorious liberty of grace. 1 Cor. 6:12 says; “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any*.” And again in chapter 10 verse 23 we read, “*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify*.” So our liberty extends to the point where we need to ask ourselves what we are into is it enslaving us is it building us more into the image of Jesus?

 Now, again the way of Christ to some may appear to be restrictive, but the end is life. Wow! Talk about freedom. Again the picture is a funnel only from the other end, you start out at the narrow end & end up at eternal life.

 How sad it is that a lot of people are only looking at the gate & the ease of this life. It is like the story I’ve heard of a wealthy man who asked a lot of people which they would rather have; $10,000 right now or a penny a day doubling the amount each day for a month. Most people said that they would prefer to have the $10,000 up front not realizing the amount they would of had in a month. At the end of the first week you would have only $1.27. By the end of the second week you would have $81.91. Then, by the end of the third week you would have $10,321.91; or $321.91 more then the $10,000. Finally at the end of four weeks you would have 1 million, 342 thousand, 13 dollars & 10 cents.

Hey, give me the narrow way that leads to life!

Vs. 15-20 Now we move on to “The Truth” we have seen the danger of going down the wrong path, now we see the danger of following the wrong person.

 1.) First I want you to know that, these false teachers or prophets come disguised. I’ve been watching a series of videos on the Mormon Church. They don’t come out & tell everybody that they believe you can be come a god. Neither do they say to everyone that Jesus is the spirit brother of Satan, or that Jesus was the child born from the sexual relationship between God the Father & Mary. Or that Jesus had many wives. No they say that they are just a more full evangelical denomination. That’s sheep’s clothing!

 2.) We are told how we can distinguish them: “By their fruits.” One old puritan pastor was found of saying; “**It is possible to put grapes on thrones & figs on thistles, but they can’t grow there**.” In the O.T. Prophets represented God & declared His truths. Thus they were exhorted in Deut. 13:1-5 to put then to the test by both words & works. Might I suggest a few simple tests:

 A.) First test of a teacher or a prophet is in their life. How do they live? Are they living in humility, righteousness, & faithfulness? Do they look like Jesus? Does their life style point you too Jesus or the world?

 B.) Secondly what do they teach? Is what they teach consistent with the whole counsel of the word of God? So Many of these guys are more interested in fleecing the sheep then they are caring for the sheep. Gods not broke! If all they do is hit you up for money then they are at the very least miss representing God. God is perfectly able to provide for His plan; He will never use guilt or pressure to get you to give. I was reading the other day of one of these guys who has the largest T.V. audience in the world for any religious broadcast. He endorses yoga, TM, Zen Buddhism as valid methods of harnessing Gods divine laws. He went on to say that if he came back in 100 years & found some of his descendants were Muslims that it would not bother him. Folks I would say that this is a false teacher.

 C.) Lastly test their fruit, or if you will the effect in those that they teach. Are the people growing in the grace & knowledge of Christ? Or are they just being entertained? The Fruit of Christ of Gal 5:22-23 which is*; “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*” comes from the result of “WHO” we are in Christ. If these things are not evident then the teaching is most likely man-centered. Do not be mistaken you can not gather good fruit from a corrupt tree. Much of what false teachers say is truth, it is what they add that you have to watch out for! Aesop told a story of a wolf who wanted to steel sheep so he took a sheep skin & put it over himself & went in among the flock. It just so happened that the shepherd got hungry the same night & went to find the biggest sheep in the fold & plunged a knife into it’s side. It turned out to be the wolf!

Vs.21-23 Now we come to the last of these three illustrations which deals with life. Again let us examine this carefully. The key to understanding this passage is in the words “DOES the will of My Father”, “Many will SAY to Me etc.” “I never KNEW you”. Clearly what Jesus is speaking of is the difference between those who **profess** & those who **practice**. It is important to recognize that we are not talking about a person who at one time had a relationship with the Lord & turned a way, clearly Jesus is speaking of a person whom He “NEVER KNEW”. It is important as Paul writes to Romans 10:9 “*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*.” But it is not just an outward profession it is an inward relationship signified by the words “believe in your heart”.

 Notice that these people have impressive spiritual accomplishments, “prophesied, cast out demons, done many wonders” all in His name; but this alone is not the sign of true fellowship. **The bottom line is that salvation is not on the basis of verbal confession, or upon spiritual works it is based upon knowing Jesus & being known by Him**. These are like people who call a doctor but don’t go to the office. Jesus says that only those that “DO THE WILL OF HIS FATHER” will enter the kingdom of heaven. So what is the ”Will of the Father”? 1 John 3:23 tells us that *“..His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ*” Such that never do this no matter what are who practice lawlessness. It is by our obedience that we prove that we have a relationship with Him. A lot of people are out doing things for God but it is to be noticed for their action!

**IV.) Vs. 24-29 A Sure Foundation**

Vs. 24-27 We now come to the last section as Jesus again tells us that it is not just outward conformity, not just mere intellectual consent but applying truth. Again let us examine this section:

 1.) Both of these men build. All people are building houses in their lives, there is not a person today who is not building their houses of life. They are building the shelters of life those thing that they retreat into to find shelter & comfort in. It is a fact that all people are doing this.

 2.) Both use the same material. The material of construction is the same. The fabric of construction material is the same. The materials of comfort are the same, a job, a family, a community. These are not evil they are simply the places where we live certain substances that enable us to live.

 3.) Both built in the same area. Jesus is speaking here to them in the area of Israel. In fact the of this area in the summer was hard & dry very solid to build upon. Thus, each house looked the same from the outside, built in the same area with the same materials.

Yet with this said one mans house stood the other collapsed. Notice that the true test of their construction came when trials hit. Folks trials will come, it is only then that you will truly know whether or not you built upon the sure foundation of Christ.

 A.) The one who builds his house upon the rock is the one who hears the words of the Lord & does them.

 B.) The one who builds his house upon the sand is a (blockhead) who heard the word of the Lord & did not do it.

A lot of people go to church or listen to Greg Lourie at Harvest & say right on, & yet don’t take action.

 The Only difference in these two men is in the foundation. 1 Cor. 3:11 says; ***“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ***.” We can not just be hears of the word we must be doers of the word, (James 1:22).

Vs. 28-29 The effect of this 30 minute sermon was that people were amazed. These were not just opinions they were truth with authority. Folks we have come full circle, the word of God, sitting His disciples their upon a hill teaching them. The Word of God is life change it ought to excite us as we open the Bible & read the words of Jesus, but may it do more then just excite us may by His Spirit change us.

**Matthew 8:1-4**

**“The Touch of Truth” A**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Touching The Untouchable**

**I.) Intro.**

We have just concluded one of the greatest messages ever uttered, “The sermon on the Mount.” Now if I had been there with Jesus I would have been like the rest of them, amazed for He taught as One who had authority. You will remember that before this 30 minute message Jesus according to Matthew was going *“..about all Galilee,* ***teaching*** *in their synagogues,* ***preaching*** *the gospel of the kingdom, and* ***healing*** *all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people*.” He specifically took up those of His kingdom to instruct them on how to reach the multitudes. The question that would of come to mind is; “**Lord, this is great stuff, but does it work**?” There is unfortunately a great gap in most of our lives between what we say & what we do. Mere intellectual awareness of truth is not enough. Belief in truth must take action & bear fruit!

 I’m the kind of guy that has a lot of good ideas. I come up with all sorts of things that I think will work. I decided that it would be a good idea to put all new lights in our house, so we went up to Modesto & bought some. Now, most of them were no problem for a do-it yourselfer like me, but there was this one evil light that did not want to go together, it had a twin brother that went together just fine. I had Mike cut it twice to help it fit & still to this day if you come to my house you will see this evil light with all of my good ideas does not fully work as I intended it too. The sermon on the mount is beautiful, but does it work? Here we shall see the “**principal in power**” in the lives of ordinary people. In this section we shall see three specific miracles & one general account of Jesus’s at work with what He had just taught. I want you to know that these are not in chronological order that is not what Matthew is doing here he is painting a picture that ought to bring hope to every human being who is not now whole.

 Before we get into each section may I make a brief observation? Jesus treated every person with such love as if they were the only person He dealt with each day. Some times the calling is so great, the needs so overwhelming that we don’t no where to begin.

 The story is told of an elderly man. He walked with a cane, carefully surveying the beach that the receding tide had left exposed. Every now and then he bent to pick something up and toss it into the ocean. A curious bystander watched with fascination as he carefully scanned the beach before him. As he watched he realized that the old man was looking for starfish. Every time he saw one lying helpless in the sand, unable to get back to the ocean on his own, he would lovingly pick it up and toss it gently back into the sea. Curious as to why he was doing this, the observer approached him. His reply was, "The starfish are left behind after the tide goes out. If they don't get back into the ocean they will dry up and die beneath the hot summer sun." The curious observer replied back;

 "But there are endless miles of beach and there must be millions of starfish.” "Surely you don't think you can save them all. What difference can your efforts possibly make?" Slowly the old man bent over and picked up another starfish. As he tossed it into ocean he looked at me and said, "**It makes a difference to that one**." How easy it is to become so discouraged by the sheer magnitude of the task that Christ has set before us that we fail to focus on the value to Him of each one, Jesus never did that for He saw the value of each one!

**II.) Vs. 1-4 Touching The Untouchable**

Vs. 1 It is interesting that though He had been speaking to the disciples as he came down the mountain “great multitudes” followed Him. I believe that Jesus is still the most captivating person that has ever been. I saw last night that they were doing some sort of T.V. show about the most entertaining folks in the last 100 years. How sad, that we would even have such a thing. Yet, we would choose folks who never really did all that much in the scope of life accept try to make us forget the mess we are all in. Today a great many churches are out there trying to make Christianity more entertaining. I’m not interested in that, I just want to do what Jesus did in*“.. all Galilee,* ***teaching*** *in their synagogues,* ***preaching*** *the gospel of the kingdom, and* ***healing*** *all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”* The way to do that is not to try to be entertaining, but rather to do what George Sweeting said; “Keep the main thing the main thing.”

Vs. 2-4 Now as Jesus comes down the mountain He is met by a leper. Now it is important that we get some view of what leprosy is & what it meant to the person who had it.

 1.) The word means to be “smitten”. It included any & all infectious skin disease. Today the actual disease is called Hansen’s disease named for the man who first isolated the vaccine for it.

 2.) It was & is incurable though today the vaccine can keep it controlled. It begins with specks on the eyelids and on the palms, gradually spreading over the body, bleaching the hair white wherever they appear, crusting the affected parts with white scales, and causing terrible sores and swellings, actually causing numbness of the nerve endings. From the skin the disease eats inward to the bones, rotting the whole body piecemeal, starting with the loss of digits on the fingers and toes. The smell was so bad from the rotting flesh that it is said that you could smell a leper 100 feet away.

 3.) “In Christ’s day no leper could live in a walled town, though he might in an open village. But wherever he was he was required to have his outer garment rent as a sign of deep grief, to go bareheaded, and to cover his beard with his mantle, as if in lamentation at his own virtual death. He had further to warn passers-by to keep away from him, by calling out, ‘Unclean! unclean!’ nor could he speak to any one, or receive or return a salutation, since in the East this involves an embrace.”

 4.) For the Hebrews it was a dreaded malady which rendered its victims ceremonially unclean—that is, unfit to worship God (Lev. 13:3). Anyone who came in contact with a leper was also considered unclean. Therefore, lepers were isolated from the rest of the community so that the members of the community could maintain their status as worshipers.

Thus putting this all together you get the picture of the complete shame & isolation of this poor man. Perhaps he had a family & one day he goes off to work & while at work he notices a little white spot. On the way home he stops by the priest who puts him apart for a week to see if he has leprosy. A week later it is discovered that he does. Then he would never be allowed to see his family up close again. Never again would he be able to hug his wife & children. Can you imagine? Never allowed to worship in the temple? The Talmud taught that leprosy was second only to death. In fact you were as good as dead. Now back to how Jesus dealt with this person. Leprosy, is a typology of sin, for like sin it is:

 a.) Lies deeper than the what you can see on the service

 b.) Corrupts man, & spreads all over every aspect of a persons life

 c.) Makes him dead while he is still alive, for it separates a person from both God & man.

 1.) First, notice that this leper came to where Jesus was at. this tells us something’s:

 A.) He was desperate, for he was violating the law.

 B.) He was not the only leper in the area, for they lived in colonies.

 C.) He had heard of Jesus & was convinced that Jesus could heal him.

Vs. 2 Look now at what this leper says to Jesus; “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”

 1.) The word “Lord” here is quite important as it is the first time it is used for Jesus. It is the translation in Greek of the Hebrew word “yahweh or Jehovah”. In fact last week we saw Jesus use the word in 7:21-23. Simply put this leper comes to Jesus as God or supreme master.

 2.) Second notice the leper does not doubt Jesus ability to cleanse him. He does not ask if Jesus is able to do it but rather is He “willing” to do so. It is; “I know You can make me whole, but will You?”

 I think that there are a great many people are stuck in their rotting sinful lives that know Jesus is able to take away their sinful habits but aren’t sure He is willing. Perhaps your struggling in your marriage right now & you know Jesus can change it & make it the way He has designed it to be, but your not sure He is willing. Might I suggest to you that you need to come forward to Jesus right now & allow Him to cleanse you! There are several things that this leper did that we too must do.

 1.) He hated his condition. He was past the stage of self pity & embarrassment, he just wanted to be cleansed. No more excuses. He came out in the open, remember there were most likely other lepers around, but they did not come forward, he did.

 2.) He asked, the right person for the right thing. He knew Jesus was the only one able to cleanse him, yet he also knew that his condition was what separated him from healing.

A lot of people say; “Well I will come to the Lord with this area after I get it cleaned up.” “When, I deal with this area or that area I will let Jesus touch me.” Don’t make this same mistake as the other lepers who stay away from the touch of the Lord, because they are unclean. You will never be able to make yourself clean apart from His touch!

Vs. 3 Do not miss the beauty of this, “Jesus put out His hand & touched him..” To the outcast the unlovable, He puts out His hand & touches. Are you in need of His loving touch today? This was against ceremonial law to touch a leper, but as soon as He touched him he was no longer a leper. Can you imagine what it must of felt like for this man who was untouchable to be touched? Do you want to be changed? If so His touch is available for you! I do not know a person who does not want a loving touch.

 Note: Jesus did not give this man the third degree, “Now, what is it that you did that got you in such a mess?” No! He just took hold of that sinful decaying life & said; “I am willing”. Yes! The mans question was on Christ’s willingness, to which He answers, but more than that He affirms this by saying; “be cleansed.”

Vs. 4 In light of the above what He tells him to do in this verse is a bit puzzling.

 1.) He tells him not to tell everybody, something that we are told in Marks gospel that he did not do. Instead he went out & proclaimed it freely. Now I’m amazed today if you watch some of the T.V. evangelist today as they do exactly the opposite of what Jesus did in light of healing. They go out & tell everybody what they are doing. Jesus would teach openly, preach before thousands, but when it came to miracles He told people to keep it quiet. He wanted to draw people to Himself by the truths He proclaimed & the miracles just testified to the truths. They were not for the crowds they were the individuals He touched

 2.) He tells the cleansed leper to go & offer the gift that Moses commanded as a testimony to the Priests. Lev. 14 was that portion of the Law yet for 1500 years not one leper was ever healed until this man came forward. What you will read their is that he was to bring two doves to the priest one dove was killed & it’s blood was spilled into a basin. The other dove was then dipped into the blood & then turned lose to fly away to freedom. Is that not what Christ has done for us, we have been dipped into His blood & set free to fly!

 Look again at what Jesus did for this man:

 A.) Here was a man outcast from all social & religious privileges.

 B.) He requests the Lord to cleanse by faith.

 C.) He is touched by one who was forbidden touch.

**Matthew 8:5-17**

**“The Touch of Truth” B**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 5-13 Serving The Servant**

**III.) Vs. 14-17 Freeing The Afflicted**

**I.) Intro.**

I came across a 1991 quote of Florida Gator’s famed football coach Steve Spurrier as he addressed fans at a press conference concerning a fire in the football dorm of their rival Auburn tiger’s. He stated that the dorm was a total loss & had taken some 20 of the football teams class books in the blaze. He went on to say that the real tragedy was that 15 of the books hadn’t been colored yet! This goes a long way in giving you an idea of how the Jews saw certain groups. There were three such groups that most Jews has nothing good to say about. **The first**, as we saw last week, was the Lepers. They believed that they were “smitten by God” & they were banished from society. They were as good as dead because of their disease. **The second** group that they totally despised were gentiles it was thought that they were created by God to fuel the fires of hell. Of coarse they would hate those leaders & soldiers of the occupying country even more. **Lastly**, they did not have a high regard for women. They were necessary to further the race but beyond that they were of little value. In fact when ever it came time for a baby to be born all the family & friends would gather bringing gifts waiting to celebrate if it was a boy, but if it was a girl then they would pick up & leave gifts & all. So who does Jesus touch? The lives of those who were outcasts in society!

**II.) Vs. 5-13 Serving The Servant**

Vs. 5-6 **Capernaum** is mentioned 16 times only in the gospels. In Mark 2:1 it is called Jesus home & in chapter 9:1 it is called His own city. It stood on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee & was one of the most prosperous and crowded districts of Palestine. The importance of the city is further demonstrated by the location of a military installation there under the command of a centurion. This city lay on the great highway from Damascus to Tyre. It has been identified with Tell Hum, about two miles south-west of where the Jordan flows into the lake. They have dug up extensive ruins of walls and foundations, and also the remains of what must have been a beautiful synagogue, which it is conjectured may have been the one built by the centurion the same one that Jesus frequently taught at.

 We are given three main people in this story, “**a certain centurion”, “a paralyzed servant” & “Jesus**”.

 A.) **A certain centurion**: To obtain the position of centurion one would have to prove themselves in battle. This man was placed in charge of 100 men because he was a valiant warrior. Luke tells us that he was wealthy & that he loved the nation of the Jews, for he had built them a synagogue. We are further told that he himself did not come to Jesus but rather that he first sent elders of the Jews to Jesus & when Jesus got close to the house he sent out some friends with the message. Thus he was a man not only aquatinted with Jewish customs but a humble man as well.

So we have:

 a.) A wealthy Roman seeking a poor Jew

 b.) A powerful centurion reaching out to a meek carpenter

 c.) A mighty man of war looking for the Prince of Peace

He did not do this for himself, nor was this some casual request but “pleading for his servant”. This word means to “call alongside to help” & is also used for the word pray. This centurion sent some of the leaders to pray that Jesus would come & help.

 B.) Vs. 6 **A paralyzed servant**: The word for servant here tells us that he was a young servant & that his paralysis was of sickness that left him in great pain.

 So this centurion, sends leaders to plead on his behalf not for himself, but for some young servant who is tormented with being unable to move. Why would he bother? God had touched this centurion heart & this gentile who was a warrior & hater of people had now come to the place where he cared for a lowly servant boy. It is this man that God uses to touch this tormented boy. What if this man would not of bothered?

 C.) Vs. 7 **Jesus**: Before He is ever asked to come Jesus says, “He will come & heal him.” He does not say; “I will see what I can do.” There is that perfect confidence in the Lord.

 Folks the Lord is willing to take a hold of any area of your life that is causing you to be paralyzed unable to serve the master. He will come & heal you!

Vs. 8 Notice the centurions heart “I am not worthy that you should come under my roof.” Jews could not come under the roof of any gentile nor were they allowed to even talk to a gentile. Yet with that said, there was still the need of this servant.

 Next we see two things about this centurion verses 8-9:

1.) He was a man who understood that those who exercise authority must themselves be under authority. No one can rule others well if they themselves are not ruled!

2.) He was a man of great faith for he understood who he was trusting in. Notice his words here in verse 8 & the illustration of this in his own life. “Only speak a word, & my servant will be healed.” Lets be careful here with this, there are some who put all the emphasis on what is said rather on who said it. There is no formula here it is simply that the centurion understood who it was that promised that the servant would be healed. The word is not an activity, nor some formula, the Word is a person & His name is Jesus! There is no need for the Lord to be in the exact presence of this servant for He is the Word & He won’t go back on His Word!

Vs. 10 There are only two times that Jesus marveled at any person & both times it involved faith. In this case He admired the faith of this gentile & in Mark 6:6 he was taken back by the unbelief of the Jews. I find this interesting for this is the way we often treat the Lord with our unbelief, not trusting in His word. So here is this gentile totally outside the covenant of Israel demonstrating such profound trust not for himself, but for another.

Vs.11-12 Jesus now goes on to say that God would like this centurion bring forth many from the East & the West into faith like that of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob.

 Hey, we are not Christians because of our heritage, we are believers because we have trusted in Christ just like this gentile we have been transformed. Oh how sad it is to see many professing believers not trusting in the Word of life. Whole Churches turning to all sorts of things instead of trusting in the Word of life.

This centurion was a man who’s faith & trust was based upon his philosophy of life. It was truth that he ordered his life around, it was not mere talk it was his walk!

 As we have been all praying this week, this is what keeps coming back, “Lord make us at Calvary Chapel people who have surrendered our lives to your Lordship. We don’t just want to be about playing churchianity.

Vs.13 Is this not great! There is no great big deal out of this, as this man believed it was done. The servant was not in the presence of the Lord, in fact the centurion was not in the presence of the Lord, yet he trusted Jesus at His word. Folks, do you trust Jesus at His word?

**III.) Vs. 14-17 Freeing The Afflicted**

Vs.14-15 Now we come to the last group of outcasts, women.

 Note: Some content that Peter was the first pope & that he was celibate. Clearly Peter was married for it is his mother in-law who was sick.

 Just a side note here we are told in John’s gospel that Peter was from Bethsaida (house of fishing) yet here we see that he now made his home in Capernaum. What this shows us is that after Peter started following the Lord he picked up & moved everything to do so. He left his livelihood to be closer to Jesus. There are a great many today that do this the other way around. People move to prosper their business yet never seek the Lord as to whether or not if this is going to cause them to be closer to the Lord. May I ask you do you want to be nearer to the Lord, do you want to be at a place where it is most conducive for your spiritual growth?

 Now in this story no one asks the Lord to heal this lady. It just says that “He saw”. Don’t you love it. A great many people get all mad at the church for not reaching out or not touching them the way they wanted. I will agree that there is a mandate upon the church to do so, but that is not what we want to bring people to a dependence upon, we need to keep people focused upon the fact that it is Jesus who meets their needs not Calvary Chapel. He sees where you are at, are you looking to Him or someone else?

 Next, we se Him again touching her, a lowly woman. Now look at what happens next; yes the fever left, but what else does it say? “She arose & served them.” In the revised version it says that she served Him, now I think both are true for when you serve “them” then you are serving “Him”.

 Folks, I think that you ought to always be able to tell who Jesus has touched for if He has touched them you will always find them serving. Have you been touched by Jesus? How would we know, are you serving Him? Are you signed up to help in Sunday school?

 I don’t know about you but this hits me right between the eyes! If I’ve been touched with His soothing loving hand then the natural thing is that you will find me serving. I see this attitude in our retired guys in this fellowship, you will always find them serving in some way or another, man I love these guys. I came across this the other day as in a few months I’ll be 40. The benefits of old age:

 Although pounds are harder to lose as we get older, our teeth begin to fall out so you can’t eat as much. And when people say that you look terrible because your teeth are falling out you tell them that’s OK because your eye sight is going so you can’t see your teeth fall out. But when others start to tell you how bad you look you tell them it’s OK because you are losing your hearing as well so you don’t have to listen to them & even if you could hear them your memory is getting so bad you can’t remember.

Vs. 16-17 As evening came thousands came around this house & Jesus healed ALL. I love this Jesus touches all who come to Him. All who come to Jesus will be healed! Now wait a minute you say, are you telling me that all who come to Jesus who are afflicted will be healed? Yes, that’s what I’m saying & that is what verse 17 says. But let me clarify this. All will be healed one day for there will be no more sickness or death, but it may not be in this body. I believe that this prophecy of Isaiah 53 refers to both spiritual healing as well as physical healing. Yet He does not always heal us of our infirmities because when we are week then we are strong for in for His strength is made perfect in our weakness. Ultimately though we will be healed for we are told in Rev. 21: 4 that “**God will wipe away every tear from *our* eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away**."

 As we close won’t you who are outcasts come to the Lord who longs to make you whole?

**Matthew 8:18-22**

**“What It Costs To Follow Christ”**

**I.) Intro.**

**II.) Vs. 18-20 No Where To Lay Your Head**

**III.) Vs. 21-22 Let The Dead Bury Their Own**

**I.) Intro.**

In light of Fathers day I came across this little story. A man just came home from work. His son was waiting for him at the door. As he came in his son asked "How much do you make an hour, daddy?" Being tired from work the man was very angry that his son had asked him this. He said "Your mother doesn't even know that!" "But please daddy, how much do you make an hour?" The man said "Fine, I make $20 an hour." The boy then asked "Then can I borrow $10 daddy?" The man yelled no and left the room. That night he felt bad for the way he treated his little boy. So he got out of bed and went to his son's room. The boy was still awake. He went over to him and gave him the $10 he had asked for. The boy took another $10 out from under his pillow. He said "Now I have enough, can I buy an hour of your time daddy?"

 We come now to a brief interlude in this story as Jesus was demonstrating the principals He taught His disciple’s on the mount. Matthew tells us two events that took place where Jesus shared upon the cost of following Him. I find it interesting in light of the fact that these are the same two things that hinder me from following Christ closer; **comfort & obligations**. Next week we will look at two other road blocks in following Jesus closer in the story of Jesus asleep in the boat, that of not trusting Him in the midst of out trials. And Jesus casting out the demon’s into the swine.

**II.) Vs. 18-20 No Where To Lay Your Head**

Vs. 18 What a curious verses this is to us. There was **great success** in His early ministry, “***great multitudes***” were about Him. What Jesus was saying; & more to the point, that which the multitudes saw Him do was very attractive. The persecution in His later ministry had not yet survived so there was this swell of popularity. It was cool to follow Jesus, it was the thing to do in Israel. That is the back ground of His comments to this two followers.

 With that said look at what Jesus does with this new found popularity; *“He gave command to depart to the other side*.”

 It is very interesting to watch the trends in modern Christianity today. A lot of what goes into making the local church, it’s mission statement, it’s programs & so on are centered around numeric success. The bottom line for some is found in “**HOW MANY ATTEND**”. Here Jesus is having that great numeric success that so many today crave, “**great multitudes**” followed Him. I contend that in light of what Jesus did here that what we ought to be concerned with is not making **followers** but rather **disciple’s**! So much of the trends today ask the question: “How can we make Christianity & church fun & entertaining so that people will want to come?” **I object to the question**! Jesus never said to make **followers** of all people & He never said that all the world should **come to the church**. Rather He said that we are to **go out** into the world & **make disciple’s** “learners” of all nations!

Vs. 19 There is no doubt in my mind that following Jesus was quite glamorous at this time. All the working of miracles, the great popularity that followed made ministry seem greater then it was.

 Now with this we have a “certain scribe” which is swept up in this moment of time, who as they are readying to leave comes to Jesus with that great statement, “*Teacher, I will follow You where ever You go*.”

 **First,** I’m inclined to believe that this scribe was sincere in this statement. Further more I think that even after Jesus statement to him he got in that boat, for in verse 21 Matthew refers to him as one “***His disciple’s***”. The word “follow” here means “to be in the same way with” & it is the word that described the act of being a disciple. “***Jesus***”; he said, “***I want to go where ever You Go.”***

 With that said I think a lot of people are miss informed about being a Christian or being involved in ministry they see all the glamour all the attention & respect that some people pay those who have up front ministry. The other day I got a glimpse of what true ministry was in the eyes of Paul. Paul considered himself an under-rower in Christ. That is to say He thought himself on the bottom deck of a slave ship. I went in to use the men’s room & some clown thought it was a good idea to put in the toilet bowl a bunch of paper towels & then they proceeded to go # 2 on them so you could not flush the toilet. I thought, “I’m not going to clean this mess up.” Then I thought of Paul a servant putting up with the messes of others, that’s what I’m called too. So I breathed through my mouth & cleaned the mess up.

 Let me say this with all the joy I can; “It is great being a Christian!” I mean I can’t imagine where my life would be now if I had not met the Lord 17 years ago. He has changed my first 21 years of death into the greatest years of life I could ever of dreamed of.

Vs. 20 Now notice how Jesus answers him. First from the perspective of how effective Jesus’ ministry was & second from the perspective of comfort in this world was He says:

 “*Fox’s have holes & birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay His head*.”

 1.) In other words you see success in numbers, but the truth is success is in poverty of spirit! Jesus said in Mark 10:45 "*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many*." The key to being used of God is not in some program it is in the heart of the servant that God uses. Oh that we would measure success on the yielding of our heart towards the Father, that is success!

 2.) Second, there is a price to pay it is called comfort or riches. Following Christ simply means that you are going to have to let go of any thing that is now on the throne of your heart besides Him! To be sold out for God means you must be empty of the world! A great many people would have no problem saying; “Lord, I will follow You wherever You Go.” But if the Lord, said “Well, I’m going to the Sunday school class.” They would not follow. Or if it meant that they were to be inconvenienced in some way they would not go. How about you? Have you counted the cost?

 Jesus calls Himself the “***Son of Man***” He loved to call Himself by this phrase. The very words of it speak of His humanity & sacrifice. Jesus looked at this scribe who had been *captivated by His words & impressed by His works*, and asked; “***Why are you coming after me?” “For as you see me so must you be***!” The “Son of Man” The master of the spiritual & physical realm the One who spoke & the universe leaped into existence. The great & glorious One whom “great multitudes” followed was **HOMELESS**. To those of us who wish to follow Christ not the effects of His words & works, but Him, He shows the cross. Wow! What a challenge! My way must hit the hi-way if I am to follow Jesus. Anything that would hinder me must be left behind.

 Now again we are not told what this scribes decision was & I think that God does not want us to know what he did for the greater question is; “What are you going to do?”

 One of the greatest hindrances to our greater growth in His grace is our refusal to be uncomfortable. We don’t follow Him closer because it would mean less of us!

**III.) Vs. 21-22 Let The Dead Bury Their Own**

Vs.21 Here again we have another “disciple” attracted to what’s going on around Jesus & he to wants to follow the Lord, but makes a small concession which seems to us quite a reasonable request. Luke’s telling of this event says that Jesus was the one who initiated this response when He said; “***Follow me***”; then came the disciples request.

 In light of this the words of Jesus in verse 22 seems very harsh. It is here where a bit of Hebrew culture helps us in our understanding. In Jesus’ time people were buried the same day that they died. Thus if the father had already died then the disciple would not of been here with Jesus at all he would of been preparing the body. Normally the responsibility to care for the body fell upon the eldest son. Burial was considered to be a holy act to Jews so Jesus would not of forbid such a thing but instead would of joined the mourners.

 What this disciple is saying is that he is obligated to care for his aging father & after his father has passed away then he would follow Jesus. So here we see yet another hindrance to following the Lord relationship obligations. “Yeh, Lord I’ll follow you but can I still date so & so who does not know the Lord?” A great many folks won’t grow in His grace because they refuse to give up a relationship with some non-believer that causes them to compromise their walk before the Lord. This disciple’s father was not near death, he was fine yet his families responsibility was over that of following Jesus. There was no time set upon when he would follow Jesus just some time after his father died.

Vs. 22 The fact that Matthew calls this man a disciple tells us that this was a call to service! Let those spiritually dead bury those who are physically dead. Jesus is not saying to be disrespectful but rather to keep the right priorities in life. It is far better to preach the gospel & give life to those who are not yet dead then to wait until they die then bury them.

 In Mark 10: 28-31 Jesus responded after the rich young ruler refused to set aside his wealth to follow Him. Peter spoke up & said, “*See, we have left all and followed You." So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, "who shall not receive a hundredfold 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*.” We must be willing to put Jesus first before any other relationship. Practice follows principal & principal must not be compromised if it is to be practiced.

 Folks, are we willing to count the cost & follow Jesus? What in your life needs to be taken off the throne? Hey, you will never regret it. The slain missionary Jim Eliot said; “He is no fool who gives up what he can not keep to gain what he can never lose!” May those words burn into our hearts this morning!