

*Thou hast rightly judged.*—Although he answered with indifference, he answered correctly: "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." Jesus turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman?" He had been quite sure of himself; he had judged her to be a sinner. Is it possible that the Pharisee was beginning to realize that he could have been mistaken? Was there something about the presence of this Teacher that was causing him to reexamine both the question and his answer?

Jesus began to point out the discourtesy—if not the insult—with which Simon had treated Him. He contrasted it with the thing which the woman "who was a sinner" had done. Then he added, with words that must have stung this proud Pharisee, "Her sins, her many sins, have been and remain forgiven."

The tense of the verb "are forgiven" indicates that this had already occurred at some past time and that the fact remained true at the time Jesus spoke. The point of Jesus' parable shows the same thing: the debtors had been forgiven, even though one debt was so slight as to mean little or nothing.

*for she loved much.*—According to Jesus' story of the debtors, the love followed the forgiveness. Love led her to anoint the feet of her Lord.

*Who is this that even forgives sins?*—They reasoned correctly when they said, "Only God can forgive sins"; but they were wrong when they assumed that Jesus was just a man and not God.

*Thy faith hath saved thee.*—that is, her faith had saved her at some point in the past and the fact remained at the moment when He was speaking to her. Her faith, not her love, was the cause of her being forgiven. Love followed forgiveness, just as in the story of the debtors.

*go in peace.*—More than just a dismissal, this is instruction to continue in the way of peace.

### Summary

Four incidents of the ministry of Jesus are presented in this chapter. Two are of the healing ministry and two of the teaching ministry of the Lord. But the examples of healing were also used to teach; for teaching was primary in His ministry, miracles were worked to prove that He spoke from God.

Healing the centurion's servant gave Jesus the opportunity to point out the meaning of faith. The soldier knew how to give

orders, and he knew how to obey them. He believed that Jesus had the right to give the order and his servant would be healed. Jesus marvelled that a Gentile saw what Israel failed to see, the real meaning of faith.

The compassion of Jesus was shown in the miracle of raising the widow's son. People stood in awe when they saw it and glorified God saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us; God has visited His people."

The disciples of John asked Jesus, at John's suggestion, the burning question, "Are you the one that is to come, or are we to look for another?" Jesus answered by telling them to look at what He was doing. It was the fulfillment of the prophet's description of the work of the Messiah.

Jesus spoke of the greatness of John, but pointed out that the least in the kingdom of God is greater than the greatest born of woman. But there was wisdom in John's approach to the work he was to do, and there was also wisdom in what Jesus did, although many misunderstood both John and Jesus.

He taught the great lesson on love and forgiveness when He was a dinner guest in the house of Simon the Pharisee. The woman of the city, a sinner, had been forgiven at some time before this incident. Out of her great love for the Lord who had forgiven her sins, she entered the house of the Pharisee who didn't believe that He was the Prophet of God and before all the guests poured out the expression of her love on Him. Her sins were forgiven as shown by her love; but, as in Simon's case, little appreciation for forgiveness is accompanied by little love.

### *Questions*

1. What does the New Testament say about the various Gentiles who were attracted to Jesus?
2. What caused the centurion to appeal to Jesus?
3. What was his reputation among the Jews?
4. Why did he ask the elders of the Jews to speak for him?
5. When and why did he decide that Jesus should not enter his house?
6. How did he explain his reason for saying to Jesus, "Say the word and my servant shall live"?
7. Why did Jesus marvel at what he said?
8. What are the circumstances of the raising of the widow's son?

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9. What was Jesus' attitude toward the widowed mother?
10. What are some of the Scriptures that give hope to the Christian in the face of death?
11. What was the effect of the miracle on the people who witnessed it?
12. What did John do when he heard about all these things?
13. What question did John's disciples ask Jesus? Why?
14. How did Jesus answer?
15. Why did some find an occasion of stumbling in Jesus?
16. What questions did Jesus ask the people about John?
17. How explain what Jesus said about the greatness of John in contrast to the least in the kingdom of God?
18. What did Jesus mean by His reference to the games played by the children?
19. Why did they call Jesus a friend of publican and sinners?
20. How did He show the wisdom of His ministry and of John's.
21. Why did the Jewish leaders invite Jesus to their homes?
22. What does John say about the attitude of Nicodemus toward Jesus?
23. What was the name of the Pharisee in whose house the anointing took place?
24. What are the facts about the woman who anointed Him?
25. Why did she enter the Pharisee's house?
26. What was the Pharisee thinking while she was anointing the feet of Jesus?
27. What story did Jesus tell the Pharisee?
28. How did he treat it?
29. What lesson did Jesus teach from it?
30. What did He say about the woman's sins?
31. What had her dramatic demonstration of love proved?
32. Why do some have only little love for the Lord?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told more about the teaching ministry of Jesus (1-21).
  - 1. On one of the tours of Jesus (1-3).
    - a) He went through the cities and villages bringing the good tidings of the kingdom of God.
    - b) Those who accompanied Him:
      - (1) The twelve.
      - (2) Certain woman who had been healed of evil spirits and other infirmities.
        - (a) Mary Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out.
        - (b) Joanna, the wife of Chuzas who was Herod's steward.
        - (c) Susanna and many others.
      - (3) These women ministered to them out of their material possessions.
  - 2. The parable of the sower: How to understand the Word (4-15).
    - a) Jesus spoke the parable to a crowd that assembled from every city.
    - b) Results of sowing the seed:
      - (1) On the wayside, the birds got it.
      - (2) On the rocky soil, it withered for lack of moisture.
      - (3) On the thorny soil, the thorns choked it out.
      - (4) On the good soil, it produced a hundredfold.
    - c) Jesus warned: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."
    - d) Jesus explained the parable to the disciples.
      - (1) The disciples were to understand the secrets of the kingdom, although others did not.
      - (2) The seed is the Word that was heard by four classes.
        - (a) On the wayside, those who hear and do not understand. The devil takes away what was heard.
        - (b) On the rocky soil, those who hear but have no depth in themselves. They fall when temptation comes.

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- (c) On the thorny soil, those who hear but allow the cares of the world and pleasures to choke out the Word.
  - (d) On the good soil, those who heed the word and hold it fast and produce the harvest with patience.
- 3. The parable of the lamp: The Word is to be understood (16-18).
  - a) A lighted lamp isn't covered up, but placed where it enables people to see.
  - b) "Nothing is hid," that is, Jesus' teaching is to enable men to understand.
  - c) Jesus warned, "Take heed how you hear." Hearing can add to understanding or cause one to lose what he thinks he has.
- 4. Spiritual kinship: The result of hearing and understanding the Word (19-21).
  - a) Jesus' mother and brothers were trying to reach Him, but couldn't for the crowd.
  - b) When He was told that they were seeking Him, He said, "My mother and my brethren are those who hear the Word of God and do it."
- B. Luke told more about the healing ministry of the Master (22-56).
  - 1. Stilling the tempest (22-25).
    - a) The circumstances.
      - (1) It happened on "one of those days."
      - (2) Jesus and His disciples entered a boat and He said, "Let's go to the other side of the lake."
      - (3) They set out for the other side, and Jesus fell asleep.
      - (4) A wind storm came down upon them, filling the boat with water and putting their lives in jeopardy.
      - (5) The disciples awoke Jesus and said, "Master, Master, we are perishing."
    - b) The miracle.
      - (1) Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and the waves.
      - (2) The wind ceased blowing; the waves stopped tossing; a calm set in.
    - c) Then the Master taught the lesson on faith.
      - (1) He asked, "Where is your faith?"

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- (2) In reverence and wonder, they said to one another, "Who is this who gives orders to the winds and the waves and they obey Him?"
- 2. The Gerasene demoniac (26-39).
  - a) The circumstances.
    - (1) It was in the country of the Gerasenes on the opposite side of the lake from Galilee.
    - (2) A naked demon-possessed man who lived in the tombs met Jesus as He landed.
    - (3) He fell down before Jesus and in a loud voice said, "What have I to do with you Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"
  - b) Casting out the demons (29-33).
    - (1) The fact that Jesus was commanding them to come out had caused the man to cry out as he did.
    - (2) No one had been able to keep him under guard, for the demons drove him into the desert places.
    - (3) Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"
    - (4) He said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him.
    - (5) The demons begged not to be ordered to depart into the abyss.
    - (6) Jesus granted them permission to enter into the swine that were feeding nearby.
    - (7) When they did, the swine rushed down the steep bank and were drowned in the sea.
  - c) The effect of the miracle (24-39).
    - (1) The herdsmen fled and told the story in the city and country, for they were afraid.
    - (2) Those who came to investigate found Jesus and the man sitting at His feet, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.
    - (3) The Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave their country, for they were seized with a great fear.
    - (4) Jesus entered the boat and returned, for He was rejected by those who lost their possessions.
    - (5) The man wanted to go with Jesus, but He sent him to his own house and city to tell about the great things God had done for him.
- 3. Two more miracles of mercy (40-56).

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- a) A twelve year old girl was dying (40-42a).
  - (1) A crowd that had been waiting for Jesus welcomed Him when He returned.
  - (2) Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue and father of the dying girl, asked Jesus for help.
- b) A miracle that happened while He was on the way to Jairus house (42b-48).
  - (1) As the people crowded around Him, a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years touched Him and it stopped.
  - (2) Jesus, knowing that power to heal had gone forth from Him, said, "Who touched me?"
  - (3) The woman, in the presence of all the people, told why she had touched Him and how she had been healed.
  - (4) Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace."
- c) Raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (49-56).
  - (1) As He was speaking to the woman, there came one from Jairus' house to say, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher."
  - (2) Jesus said, "Believe and she shall be saved."
  - (3) He permitted only Peter, John and James, and the father and mother of the child to enter the house with Him.
  - (4) To the mourners within, He said, "Stop weeping. She is not dead, she is sleeping."
  - (5) They laughed Him to scorn for they knew that she was dead.
  - (6) Jesus took her by the hand and said, "Child, arise."
  - (7) Her spirit returned and she arose.
  - (8) Jesus had them give her some food, but told the parents to say nothing of what had happened.

### *Those Who Accompanied Jesus*

#### *Scripture*

8:1-3 And it came to pass soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good tidings

of the kingdom of God, and with him the twelve, 2 and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary that was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered unto them of their substance.

*Comments*

*And it came to pass soon afterwards.*—Luke indicates that this is a continuous story about the teaching ministry of Jesus and the miracles He performed to confirm His preaching. Our chapter divisions sometimes keep us from seeing the connection between the incidents he selected to make up his logically arranged story of the Life of Christ.

*that he went about through the cities and villages.*—Jesus went where the people were. He did not remain at the temple in Jerusalem, but visited even the little towns and villages that all might have an opportunity to hear Him.

Jesus and the apostles, of course, did not overlook the importance of preaching in the great centers of population. Jerusalem was one of those centers, and some of Jesus' greatest discourses were delivered there. Antioch of Syria and Ephesus became radiating centers from which the gospel was heard. While Paul was at Ephesus all Asia Minor heard about the gospel. It was his plan to preach where no one had ever told the story of Jesus. Finally, he realized his dream to preach the gospel in Rome also. Wherever he went, he preached the whole counsel of God, publically and from house to house. In doing so, he was following the pattern of Jesus's ministry of teaching and healing.

The methods that proved so effective in the ministries of Jesus and of the apostles are, where they are being tried, proving effective today. Church buildings for the assembly of the saints are necessary, but so many of those who are lost never set foot inside of them. Just as Paul did, the church must teach the Word in all the homes where permission can be had to do so. Many practical aids are available to assist those who want to share in this task. The assembly of the saints is designed, among other things, to give encouragement to the people of God, to instruct them in the Word, and to help them to know how to share the gospel with others. See Jesus' emphasis on this very thing in verses 38-39.

*preaching and bringing good tidings of the kingdom.*—Preaching on



current issues on which the people may be as well or even better informed than the preacher tends to make the whole experience useless. The authoritarian approach of the preacher—this is entirely different from preaching the authoritative Word of God—often points to the importance of the preacher, but fails to help the people in the task of sharing the good news with those who so desperately need it. When Jesus preached, He proclaimed the good news about God's rule in the hearts of men. He trained His apostles and sent them out to preach "repentance and remission of sins." Luke 24: 46-47. In this day when we demand—and rightly so—that there shall be relevance in preaching, is there anything more relevant to the sinner than the message of salvation? In this sinful age, can we do better than point to Jesus whose very name indicates that He came to save His people from their sins? There was need for social reform in Jesus day. His answer to the problem was to proclaim God's rule in the hearts of men that their lives might be transformed, for a transformed life is the only sure way of transforming the social structure of any day.

*certain women who had been healed.*—Jesus meant something to those who faithfully followed and ministered to His and the apostles' needs. The reason for their devotion is to be found in their appreciation for what Jesus had done for them. Church people may need to reexamine their own relation to the Lord. Has He done anything for them? Does salvation from sin mean much to many who make up the churches today? Or is the church composed of nice people whose company is enjoyed by those who join?

Every sinner—every one who has transgressed God's law—is in desperate need of the salvation and forgiveness that Christ alone can give (Acts 4:12). Devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ depends on the awareness of what it means to be saved from eternal death. Great as release from demon possession was, it does not compare with the importance of release from slavery to sin.

*Mary that was called Magdalene.*—She was called Magdalene because she was from Magdala, a town near Tiberias on the southwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew mentions a town by the name of Magadan (Matt. 15:39), and Mark speaks of Dalmanutha (Mark 8:10) in connection with the journeys of Jesus. There is not sufficient evidence to identify either with the home of Mary Magdalene, although some assume that Magadan may be a variant of Magdala.

Luke says that seven demons had gone out from Mary Magdalene.

Mark states that Jesus had cast them out (Mk. 6:9). Her demon possession is the basis of the totally unfounded tradition that Mary Magdalene is the "woman of the city" mentioned in Luke 7:37. There isn't the slightest evidence in the record that would indicate that she was responsible for the demon possession or that it in any way proves that she was a sinner. Mary's great loyalty to Jesus evidently grew out of her sincere appreciation for what He had done for her. Her loyalty did not lag, for she was among those who were at the cross when Jesus died for the sins of the world (Mk. 15:44-47). After His resurrection, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9; John 19:1-18). She was with the women who brought the news of the resurrection to the apostles (Lk. 24:10).

*the wife of Chuzas Herod's steward.*—The Herodian family arrayed itself against Christ and the church, but the wife of one of Herod's servants was among those who ministered to Jesus and His apostles. *who ministered unto them of their substance.*—This answers in part the question about Jesus' source of support. He and His disciples had not time to "make a living." These women contributed to the support of the Teacher and His disciples, for teachers were highly regarded by the people; and this was particularly true of Jesus and the people for whom He had done so much.

### *The Parable of the Sower*

#### *Scripture*

8:4-15 And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto him, he spake by a parable: 5 The sower went forth to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it. 6 And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it, and choked it. 8 And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. As he said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9 And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. 10 And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. 11 Now the parable

is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 And those by the way side are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And those on the rock *are* they who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 15 And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience.

### Comments

*he spake by a parable.*—Crowds gathered to hear Jesus wherever He went. This is not the first time He used parables in His teaching. But this is unusual because He used a series of parables to present the lessons about the kingdom.

A parable is a comparison or illustration. Usually it is something that happens in a natural way that permits the teacher to point to its counterpart in the spiritual realm. They were not used because they were so simple that everybody could easily understand them. In fact, the disciples of Jesus didn't understand the parable of the sower until He explained it to them. Many who heard didn't understand and didn't take the pains to ask the Teacher what He meant by the parables.

The emphasis in this series of parables is on the necessity of understanding the Word. Parables helped those who wanted to understand what Jesus was saying, but were of no value to those who were not concerned about His message.

*The sower went forth to sow.*—The four types of soil represent the reaction of four types of hearers. Some who heard allowed the devil to snatch away the implanted Word. James says, "Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). Others, like the seed that fell on the rocky soil, had no depth in themselves. They received the word with joy, but their convictions were not deep-rooted. Because they couldn't stand the trials of life, they fell away. Still others, like the ground that produced the thorns, allowed the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of

riches to choke out the Word. But those who heard and understood were like the good soil that produced a rich harvest.

*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*—There was more to be learned in the parables than appeared on the surface. This phrase is repeated in each of the seven letters to the churches of Asia (Rev. 2:7).

*And his disciples asked him what this parable might be.*—Of this group of parables, Jesus explained only two: The Sower and The Tares. On the basis of His explanation of these two, the disciples were able to understand the others (Matt. 13:51-53).

All figurative language of Scripture is to be explained in the light of the plain statements. This is true of the figurative language of *Revelation*. John explains many of the symbols used in the book, and on the basis of his explanations many other figures of speech that are not explained are made understandable.

Since we now have the complete and final and authoritative revelation of God in the Bible (Heb. 1:1-2), we should let the whole Bible interpret any particular passage that may not appear to be clear. The Lord intended His Word to be read and understood (Eph. 3:4).

*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.*—"Mysteries" refer to that which was not known until the secret was told. The secrets of the kingdom are told in the Bible, and they can be understood; but it takes effort to search the Scriptures (Acts 17:11), time to meditate on their meaning (Psa. 1:2), and a sincere desire to translate them into life to really know the sacred writings that can save those who believe in Jesus Christ (II Tim. 3:14-15).

*The seed is the word of God.*—Thus makes the parable meaningful to all who really want to know God's will for man. See also James 1:18; 22-25; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 119:9-16.

### *The Parable of the Lamp*

#### *Scripture*

8:16-18 And no man, when he hath lighted a lamp, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but putteth it on a stand, that they that enter in may see the light. 17 For nothing is hid, that shall not be made manifest; nor *anything* secret, that shall not

be known and come to light. 18. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he thinketh he hath.

### *Comments*

*that they that enter may see.*—The purpose of the lamp is to let the light shine so that people may see. The parables of Jesus were intended to give light to their pathway. They were not to obscure the truth for anyone who wanted to understand.

By placing the parable of the lamp after the parable of the sower, Luke suggests that the Word of God—the seed—was like a lamp to give understanding to all who are willing to accept it. See Psa. 119:105; II Pet. 1:12-21.

*For nothing is hid, that shall not be made known.*—What was hid from the disciples by the parable was made plain to them by the explanation which Jesus gave.

*Take heed therefore how ye hear.*—The disciples were to hear with the intention of understanding and being enlightened by the lesson Jesus taught. That person who hears only to criticize will not be helped.

*for whoever hath, to him shall be given.*—See Matt. 13:12-13 for a similar statement. To the one who has a desire to understand, more will be given, that is, the matter will be explained so that he may understand. But the one who did not have the desire to understand will soon forget that he had heard the parable, for it had no meaning to him.

In this connection, Matthew quotes from Isa. 6:9-10 which seems to suggest that some had deliberately closed their eyes and stopped their ears so that they wouldn't hear and understand.

### *Spiritual Kinship*

#### *Scripture*

8:19-21 And there came to him his mother and brethren, and they could not come at him for the crowd. 20 And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21. But he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these that hear the word of God, and do it.

*Comments*

*Thy mother and thy brethren.*—Mark reminds us that some of Jesus' friends thought that He was "beside himself" with the dream of messiahship. They tried to rescue Him from the crowds that followed Him (Mark 3:21). It is possible that His brothers felt the same way about Him, for John says that they did not believe on Him (John 7:5). But they were concerned about Him, for they had grown up with Him and must have had a very high regard for Him as their older brother. Of course, they did not know the facts about His birth that could not be shared with them by their mother until after His resurrection. It was the force of the resurrection that compelled them to believe that He was truly the Messiah. The Epistle of James begins with this statement: "James, servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." If we are correct in assuming that this is "James the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1:19), we have in this remarkable statement the genuine faith of Jesus' brothers after they had become convinced that He was the Son of God.

What a wonderful older brother He must have been to them; what a wonderful Lord He became to them!

*My mother and my brethren are these that hear the word of God.*—The parable of the sower shows us how to understand the Word of God. The parable of the lamp indicates that it can be understood. The lesson on spiritual kinship shows the results of hearing the Word of God and obeying it. Once, only the little family at Nazareth knew Jesus as their older Brother; now all who obey the word spoken by Him can enjoy this privilege. See Heb. 2:11-12.

*Stilling the Tempest**Scripture*

8:22-25 Now it came to pass on one of those days, that he entered into a boat, himself and his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake: and they launched forth. 23 But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filling *with water*, and were in jeopardy. 24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. And he awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And being afraid they

marvelled, saying one to another, Who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water, and they obey him.

### *Comments*

*on one of those days.*—Crowds gathered around the Master wherever He went. On one of those days He got into a boat with the disciples and said, "Let's go to the other side of the lake." And as they crossed the lake, "the Master of ocean and earth and skies" fell asleep, relaxing from the pressures of His busy ministry. On another occasion, He said to the disciples, "Come ye apart into a desert place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31).

His desire to go to the other side of the lake reveals a perfectly normal human desire, for He was the Son of Man; but His command to the winds and waves that obeyed His voice just as clearly reveals Him as the Son of God.

*and there came down a storm of wind on the lake.*—The Sea of Galilee is some 682 feet below sea level; sudden storms on the lake are not uncommon. The disciples knew what they were facing and cried out to Jesus, "Master, we are perishing." They were sure that they were about to lose their lives in the storm. At the command of Jesus, the winds ceased blowing; the waves stopped tossing; a calm set in.

*Where is your faith?*—They had willingly followed Him. They had carried out orders even when they were against their own better judgment (Lk. 5:5). But they had not yet learned what it meant to be in the presence of the Son of God who upholds all things through the word of His power (Heb. 1:3). But there came the time when they did trust Him even in the threat of death (Acts 5:40-42).

*Who then is this, that he commandeth even the winds and the water?*—Their question was not one of unbelief, but one of beginning faith that led them to acknowledge Him as the Son of God.

### *The Gerasene Demoniac*

#### *Scripture*

8:26-39 And they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee. 27 And when he was come forth upon the land, there met him a certain man out of the city, who had

demons; and for a long time he had worn no clothes, and abode not in any house, but in the tombs. 28 And when he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I beseech thee, torment me not. 29 For he was commanding the unclean spirit to come out from the man. For oftentimes it had seized him: and he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters; and breaking the bands asunder, he was driven of the demon into the deserts. 30 And Jesus asked him, What is thy name? And he said, Legion, for many demons were entered into him. 31 And they entreated him that he would not command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they entreated him that he would give them leave to enter into them. And he gave them leave. 33 And the demons came out from the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd rushed down the steep into the lake, and were drowned. 34 And when they that fed them saw what had come to pass, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. 35 And they went out to see what had come to pass; and they came to Jesus, and found the man, from whom the demons were gone out, sitting, clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus: and they were afraid. 36 And they that saw it told them how he that was possessed with demons was made whole. 37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes round about asked him to depart from them; for they were holden with great fear: and he entered into a boat, and returned. 38 But the man from whom the demons were gone out prayed him that he might be with him: but he sent him away, saying, 39 Return to thy house, and declare how great things God hath done for thee. And he went his way, publishing throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done for him.

### *Comments*

*the country of the Gerasenes.*—Both Mark and Luke say "Gerasenes," but Matthew says "the country of the Gadarenes." See Matt. 8:28 and Mark 5:1. It is possible that the country belonging to Gadara—the city itself was situated several miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee—reached to the shores of Galilee. Luke locates the incident on the banks of the Lake opposite the territory of Galilee.  
*a certain man out of the city, who had demons.*—Matthew says there



were two demoniacs (Matt. 8:28). Luke tells of only one of them.

That this is a genuine case of demon possession manifesting itself as extreme mental illness—note the psychotic symptoms—cannot be questioned. Luke, a trained physician, says the demon was an “unclean spirit.” Further proof that this was demon possession is indicated by the following: (1) Jesus conversed with the demons; He asked the man, “What is your name?” He said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. (2) Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (3) The demons begged Jesus not to send them into the abyss, but to allow them to enter the bodies of the swine. (4) When they entered the swine, the herd rushed headlong into the sea and were drowned.

*at the feet of Jesus.*—When the report of the miracle reached the people of the city and surrounding country, they came to Jesus and found the man whom they had often tried to subdue sitting at the feet of Jesus. The storm that once raged in his wretched life had ceased. He was as calm as the sea after Jesus had rebuked the winds. He was clothed and in his right mind, that is, the demons were gone, and he was in control of his mental powers.

*and they were afraid.*—The miracle of the Lord caused them to fear, for they were sinful people. Peter reacted the same way after he witnessed the miracle of catching fish (Lk. 5:8). Adam and Eve hid themselves from God, because they knew they had disobeyed Him.

*asked him to depart.*—They were seized with a great fear. Fear, not the loss of property, caused them to make the request. Sinners will always hide from God unless they can become convinced that He has commended His love toward them by the fact that Christ died for them while they were yet sinners. Rom. 5:8.

*prayed him that he might be with him.*—At the request of the people, Jesus was leaving their shores. But the man from whom the demons had gone out, wanted to be with Him. Jesus said, “Go back to your home and tell how great the things are that God has done for you,” for this is the secret of being with Him.

### *Jairus' Urgent Request*

#### *Scripture*

8:40-42a And as Jesus returned, the multitude welcomed him; for they were all waiting for him. 41 And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell

down at Jesus' feet, and besought him to come into his house; 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

### *Comments*

*Jairus' a ruler of the synagogue.*—Jesus had begun His ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth. He often found an audience in the synagogues, and sometimes He found those who need healing in these Jewish assemblies. But He did not always meet with a friendly reception there, especially from the leaders; but even the leaders had been known to ask His help in times of distress. We have no knowledge of Jairus after this incident, but Luke tells of another ruler of the synagogue whose name was Crispus who believed the gospel of Christ as Paul preached it in Corinth and was baptized. Acts 18:8.

*and he fell down at Jesus' feet.*—His respect for the Teacher, the urgency of the case, and his great distress caused him to fall at the feet of Jesus and ask Him to come and save his dying daughter.

### *A Woman in the Crowd Healed*

#### *Scripture*

8:42b-48 But as he went the multitudes thronged him.

43 And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, who had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed of any, 44 came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately the issue of her blood stanch'd. 45 And Jesus said, Who is it that touched me? And when all denied, Peter said, and they that were with him, Master, the multitudes press thee and crush thee. 46 But Jesus said, Some one did touch me; for I perceived that power had gone forth from me. 47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people for what cause she touched him, and how she was healed immediately. 48 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

### *Comments*

*the multitudes thronged him.*—The crowd was waiting for Him and

welcomed Him as He returned from the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They followed Him as He went with Jairus,

*And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years.*—Luke gives the medical history of this woman. She had spent everything, but no one could cure her. Mark says that after spending everything, she was no better, but rather grew worse (Mk 5:25-26).

*touched the border of his garment.*—The reports of the miracles that Jesus had worked must have led her to believe that even touching the hem of His garment would do what all others had failed to do. The flow of blood stopped immediately. What a contrast that was to the twelve years during which she had been treated without success by her physicians.

*Who touched me?*—Peter had a ready answer, but evidently failed to see why Jesus had asked the question. Jesus was aware of the multitudes who were pressing upon Him. He was aware that power had gone forth from Him. Why the question? Luke does not tell us, but it seems clear that He asked it to call attention to the miracle and to encourage the woman to let it be known.

*And when the woman saw that she was not hid.*—Her timidity caused her to try to hide the great favor, but at the word from the Master she came trembling, and falling down before Him she declared in the presence of all the people that she had touched Him and that she had been healed immediately.

*Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.*—She had a right to believe that He would heal her, for she knew that He had been healing all who came to Him. This is entirely different from the faith through which miracles were performed by those to whom such power had been given. See comment on Luke 9:37-45 for further explanation of faith in connection with performing miracles.

Her faith in Christ was rewarded, for she was made well. She no longer needed to fear. The gentle Healer said, "Go in peace."

### *Raising Jairus' Daughter From the Dead*

#### *Scripture*

8:49-56 While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Teacher. 50 But Jesus hearing it, answered him, Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made whole. 51 And when he came to the house, he suffered not any man to enter in with him, save Peter,

and John, and James, and the father of the maiden and her mother. 52 And all were weeping, and bewailing her: but he said, Weep not; for she is not dead, but sleepeth. 53 And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. 54 But he, taking her by the hand, called, saying, Maiden, arise. 55 And her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately: and he commanded that something be given her to eat. 56 And her parents were amazed: but he charged them to tell no man what had been done.

### Comments

*While he yet spake.*—Jesus was still speaking to the woman who had just been miraculously healed when one came from Jairus' home to give him the tragic news, "Thy daughter is dead." Perhaps we now see why Jesus had not let that miracle go unnoticed. The messengers said hopelessly, "Do not trouble the Teacher."

*But Jesus hearing it, answered him.*—He had already given them a reason to hope. Now He said, "Fear not; only believe, and she shall be made well." He wanted them to believe what they had seen and to have hope that He would perform this miracle also.

*And when he came to the house.*—He allowed only Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the child to enter the house with Him. The crowd had already seen the wonder of healing the woman in their midst. Jesus did not work miracles merely to be spectacular. His miracles were done primarily to prove that the message He taught came from God. See Heb. 2:3-4.

*All were weeping.*—Inside the house, He met the usual mourning that accompanied death. He said to the mourners, "Stop crying. She did not die, she is sleeping." That turned their mourning to scornful laughing, for they knew she was dead.

*But he, taking her by the hand.*—Without further rebuke, Jesus gently took the hand of the dead child and said, "Child, arise." Luke simply adds, "Her spirit returned, and she rose up immediately, and He directed them to give her food."

*And her parents were amazed.*—Nothing is said about those who had laughed at Him in the presence of death. Did anyone of them have the grace to apologize to the Lord? Were they ashamed of what they had done? Did they acknowledge the miracle as the woman in the crowd had done? "The parents were amazed." Thus in simple words, Luke tells about the effect of this wonderful miracle.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Their gratitude must have been unlimited, but Jesus told them to say nothing of what had happened.

### *Summary*

Jesus and His disciples were on one of the many tours that took them through the villages and towns of Galilee. Certain women whom He had healed accompanied them and ministered to the group.

On one occasion a crowd gathered and He taught them in parables. The parable of the sower showed them that the Word of God is the seed. Four classes of hearer were described by Jesus, but the ones who heard and understood produced the harvest.

The parable of the lamp explained that Jesus intended them to understand His words, for a lamp lets people see. He warned them to be careful how they heard.

On another occasion when He was teaching, His mother and brothers asked for Him; but He said that those who hear the word of God and do it are the members of His family.

The pressures of His busy ministry made it necessary for Him to get away for some rest from time to time. Jesus and the disciples got into a boat, and Jesus said, "Let's go to the other side." As they set out, He fell asleep. A sudden storm was about to sink their boat. The fearful disciples awoke Him. He rebuked the winds and waves and a calm set in. In reverent wonder they said, "Who is this who speaks to the winds and waves and they obey Him?"

They were met by a demon-possessed man as they landed on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus cast out the legion of demons and allowed them to enter a herd of swine that was feeding nearby. The swine rushed over the cliff and drowned in the sea. People came to see what had happened and were amazed to find this one whom they had never been able to control sitting calmly at Jesus' feet. Fear seized them and they asked Jesus to leave. As He was getting into the boat, Jesus said to the man, "Go to the people of your house and city and tell them about the great things God has done for you."

The daughter of a ruler of the synagogue was dying. Jairus, the father, asked Jesus to come to his home and help him.

On the way, a woman from the crowd that was following touched Him and was immediately healed.

On arriving at the home of Jairus, they were told that the child

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was dead. Jesus took Peter, James and John and the parents and entered the house. Taking the girl by the hand, He said, "Child, arise." Her spirit returned and she arose. He said, "Give her something to eat, but say nothing to anyone about what has happened."

### *Questions*

1. Where did Jesus conduct His teaching ministry?
2. What do the Scriptures indicate about preaching in the great centers of population?
3. What did Jesus and the disciples preach?
4. How were they supported?
5. What are the known facts about Mary Magdalene?
6. How explain her loyalty to Christ?
7. What is a parable?
8. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
9. What do the four types of soil represent?
10. What is represented by the seed?
11. How did the disciples learn the meaning of the parable of the sower?
12. What bearing does this have on understanding figurative language of the Bible?
13. What is meant by "mysteries of the kingdom"?
14. What lesson is taught by the parable of the sower?
15. How does the parable of the Lamp continue the lesson of the parable of the Sower?
16. What lesson is taught by the parable of the Lamp?
17. What was the attitude of Jesus' brothers toward Him during His ministry?
19. Why did Jesus and the disciples start across the sea?
18. What changed their view?
20. What lesson did Jesus teach about spiritual kinship?
21. What is known about storms on the Sea of Galilee?
22. What effect did the miracle of stilling the storm have on the disciples?
23. Why did Jesus ask, "Where is your faith?"
24. Where is the country of the Gerasenes?
25. What proof that the man was demon-possessed?
26. Why did the people ask Jesus to leave?
27. What did Jesus say to the man who wanted to go with Him? Why?

## CHAPTER EIGHT

28. Who was Jairus?
29. What did he ask Jesus to do?
30. What happened on the way to his house?
31. Why did the woman in the crowd have faith that Jesus could heal her?
32. How does this differ from the lack of faith that kept the disciples from casting out the demon from the epileptic boy?
33. Why did Jesus ask, "Who touched me?"
34. When did they learn that the daughter of Jairus was dead?
35. Why did He say, "Fear not; only believe, and she shall be made well"?
36. Why did He limit those permitted to enter the home?
37. What did He do in raising the child from the dead?
38. What was the effect of the miracle on the parents?
39. What restriction did Jesus place on them? Why?
40. What about those who had laughed at Him in the presence of death?

## CHAPTER NINE

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told about the extension of Jesus ministry (1-17).
  - 1. The first mission of the twelve (1-6).
    - a) He called them together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.
    - b) He sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.
    - c) He gave them instructions for the journey: Take no staff, wallet, bread, money or extra clothes; go to someone's house and stay there until time to depart; if any reject your message, shake the dust off your feet to show your disapproval and their responsibility.
    - d) They went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.
  - 2. The reaction of Herod to His ministry (7-9).
    - a) He was perplexed by the rumors that John the Baptist had been raised from the dead, or that Elijah had appeared, or that one of the old prophets had risen.
    - b) He had beheaded John, but who was Jesus? He wanted to see Him.
  - 3. Feeding the five thousand (10-17).
    - a) The circumstances.
      - (1) It was after the apostles had returned and told Him what they had done that He took them and went to a city called Bethsaida.
      - (2) The multitudes were aware of it and followed.
      - (3) He welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those in need of healing.
    - b) The problem the twelve faced and what Jesus did about it.
      - (1) As the day began to wear away, they came to Him and urged that the crowds be sent to the villages to find food and lodging.
      - (2) He said, "You give them something to eat," but they had only five loaves and two fish. Should they



## CHAPTER NINE

go and buy food for all these people, about five thousand men?

- (3) Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down in groups of fifty. Then He took the loaves and the fish and blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitudes.
- c) The result of the miracle.
  - (1) They ate and were filled.
  - (2) There was taken up of what remained of the broken pieces, twelve baskets.

B. Luke told how Jesus prepared His disciples for their ministry (18-62).

1. The necessity of the cross (18-27).

- a) The cross in the mission of the Messiah (18-22).
  - (1) Jesus was praying; the disciples were with Him.
  - (2) He asked, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?"
  - (3) They answered, "John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets risen again."
  - (4) He asked, "But who do you say that I am?"
  - (5) Peter answered, "The Christ of God."
  - (6) Jesus made His point after charging them to tell this to no man by saying, "The Son of Man must be rejected by the leaders and be killed, and on the third day be raised up."

b) The cross in the life of His followers (23-27).

- (1) He said, "If any man would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."
- (2) He explained, "For whosoever would save his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, this one shall save it."
- (3) He asked, "What, indeed, is a man profited by gaining the whole world and losing himself?"
- (4) He explained this loss: "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man shall be ashamed of him when He comes in glory that is His and the Father's and of the holy angels."
- (5) In contrast to that coming, He said that some of those present would not taste death till they should see the kingdom of God.

## 2. Complete dependence on Christ (28-45).

## a) Revealed in the Transfiguration (28-36).

- (1) It occurred about eight days after the lesson about the cross when Jesus took Peter, John and James and went into the mountain to pray.
- (2) As He was praying, a change came over His face and His garments became white, flashing like lightning.
- (3) Then Moses and Elijah appeared to Him, speaking about His departure to be accomplished at Jerusalem.
- (4) Peter and the others had been asleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two who stood with Him.
- (5) Peter proposed that they put up three tents, one for each of them, not realizing that they were not needed.
- (6) A cloud overshadowed them; they were afraid as they entered the cloud; a Voice said, "This is my my Son, my chosen; Hear ye Him!"
- (7) After the Voice spoke, Jesus was alone. The disciples told no one what they had seen.

## b) Demonstrated in the cure of the epileptic boy (37-45).

- (1) On the next day when they had come down from the mountain, a man from the crowd asked Jesus to help his demon-possessed son.
- (2) The disciples hadn't been able to cast it out.
- (3) Jesus said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you?" Then He said, "Bring your son here."
- (4) The demon convulsed the boy, but Jesus rebuked it and healed the boy and gave him back to his father.
- (5) All were astonished at the majesty of God.
- (6) While they were marvelling, Jesus said to the disciples, "Listen carefully, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men."
- (7) They didn't understand, but were afraid to ask Him what He meant.

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3. Necessary principles to direct them (46-62).
  - a) True greatness explained (46-50).
    - (1) The little child in their midst (46-48).
      - (a) The disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest.
      - (b) Jesus, pointing to the child, said, "The least among you is the one who is great."
    - (2) The unknown miracle worker (49-50).
      - (a) He was casting out a demon in Jesus name.
      - (b) John said, "We forbade him because he didn't follow with us."
      - (c) Jesus said, "Don't forbid him; he that is not against you is for you."
  - b) Rashness forbidden (51-55).
    - (1) Jesus, approaching the time of the ascension, set out to go to Jerusalem.
    - (2) He sent messengers into the Samaritan village to prepare for Him.
    - (3) They didn't receive Him because He was going to Jerusalem.
    - (4) James and John asked, "Lord, shall we call fire from heaven and consume them?"
    - (5) Jesus rebuked their rashness, and they went to another village.
  - c) Complete dedication demanded (57-62).
    - (1) A volunteer who failed to realize the necessity of following Him unselfishly.
    - (2) One who was invited to follow who failed to realize the need to follow unconditionally.
    - (3) Another volunteer who failed to realize the need to follow Him unintermittently.

### *The Mission of the Twelve*

#### *Scripture*

9:1-6 And he called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 And he sent them forth to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. 3 And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor wallet, nor bread, nor money; either have two coats. 4 And

into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart. 5 And as many as receive you not, when ye depart from that city, shake off the dust from your feet for a testimony against them. 6 And they departed, and went throughout the villages, preaching the gospel, and healing everywhere.

### Comments

*And he called the twelve together.*—The account of choosing the twelve is given in 6:12-16. They are now being sent out on their first mission. The Master not only chose them, but He also instructed them and sent them out to share in the work that not even He could do alone. This became a training experience for the greater task of carrying the gospel into all the world (Mk. 16:15-16).

*power and authority over all demons.*—The message they would speak would be given them by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 10:20). The miracles were their credentials, proving the God spoke through them.

Jesus gave them power and authority to exercise it in casting out demons and curing diseases. Some, such as Jewish exorcists and some "faith healers" today, to whom no such power has been given have tried to exercise authority in these areas. Luke gives at least two examples of the utter failure of all such unauthorized efforts. See Acts 19:13-16 and Jesus reference to Jewish exorcists in Lk. 11:19.

*to preach the kingdom of God.*—They were to proclaim God's rule in the hearts of men. People needed to let God direct their lives. This is the same message John had preached. It must be proclaimed to every generation.

*Take nothing for your journey.*—On this first mission, they were to go among Jewish brethren who understood the meaning of hospitality and respect for teachers. But rejecting their message meant rejecting Christ; rejecting Him meant rejecting God's rule in their hearts.

The wallet or traveling bag was used for various purposes, sometimes to carry extra clothing or food. Since they were to have no extras, not even two coats, they didn't need the bag. Deissmann, in *Light From the Ancient East* (page 109), mentions a bag that was carried by pagan priests as they went about begging. But this could not apply to Christ's disciples since they were to go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and be taken care of by them. They did face some dangers, however, for some would not believe their message.

Jesus pointed this out so that they might be prepared for it (Matt. 10:16-23).

*And as many as receive you not.*—The unwelcomed guests were to leave not only because of the lack of hospitality but also because the message of the kingdom of God was being rejected. They were to shake the dust from their feet and in this dramatic way indicate the unworthiness of those who did not accept their message. The responsibility for rejecting God's rule was left with those who refused to be taught by Christ's messengers.

*preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.*—The good news of the kingdom was accompanied by the miracles of healing which served to prove that they spoke from God. Mark says that "they preached that men should repent" (Mark 6:13). Matthew adds that Jesus said, "Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (Mt. 10:23). They were on an urgent mission. Jesus would meet them before they had time to finish this task. This, of course, is not a reference to His second coming.

### *The Reaction of Herod the Tetrarch*

#### *Scripture*

9:7-9 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done: and he was much perplexed, because that it was said by some, that John was risen from the dead; 8 and by some, that Elijah had appeared; and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. 9 And Herod said, John I beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him.

#### *Comments*

*he was perplexed.*—Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist was disturbed by the reports he was hearing about the miracles of Jesus. Some tried to explain them by assuming that He was Elijah or one of the old prophets who had been raised from the dead (Mal 4:5; Deut. 18:15). Some were saying that He was John who had risen. Herod seems to have accepted this view for a time, for his disturbed conscience was searching for an answer to its guilt. He decided to kill Jesus too, assuming that that would ease his conscience (Lk. 13:31). The only thing, however, that cleanses an evil conscience is the blood of Christ that was shed on Calvary (Heb. 9:14; 10:22; I Pet. 3:21).

But Herod's conscience didn't bother him very long, for when Pilate sent Jesus to him during the trial "he was exceedingly glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see him, because he had heard concerning him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by him" (Lk. 23:8).

### *Feeding the Five Thousand*

#### *Scripture*

9:10-17 And the apostles, when they were returned, declared unto him what things they had done. And he took them, and withdrew apart to a city called Bethsaida. 11 But the multitudes perceiving it followed him: and he welcomed them, and spake to them of the kingdom of God, and them that had need of healing he cured. 12 And the day began to wear away; and the twelve came, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge, and get provisions: for we are here in a desert place. 13 But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more than five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy food for all this people. 14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said unto his disciples, Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each. 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down. 16 And he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake; and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17 And they ate, and were all filled: and there was taken up that which remained over to them of broken pieces, twelve baskets.

#### *Comments*

*a city called Bethsaida.*—It is generally agreed that this is Bethsaida Julias, a city located on the east side of the Jordan near the point where it empties into the Sea of Galilee.

According to Mark 6:45 and 53, Jesus sent the disciples back across the lake after feeding the five thousand, and they landed at Genessaret, the west side of the lake. John says that it occurred on the other, that is, east side of the sea of Galilee and that after the miracle the disciples went down to the sea and got into the boat to go over the sea to Capernaum (John 6:1, 17). It was at Capernaum on the next day that the multitudes came to Jesus and asked, "Rabbi, when comest thou here?" (John 6:24-25). These Scrip-

tures seem to indicate that the miracle took place on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee and that after the miracle the disciples returned to Capernaum which was located on the northwest side of the sea.

*But the multitudes perceiving it followed him.*—By this time the popularity of Jesus was reaching its climax; people were following Him everywhere He went. Even when He tried to get away for a little rest, they followed Him; and He "welcomed them and spake to them of the kingdom of God and them that had need of healing he cured."

*Send the multitude away.*—As evening drew on, these practical men realized that something had to be done for the welfare of the people. "Send them away" to the stores and places of lodging was all they could think to do. They knew that the "two hundred shillings"—all that they had—wouldn't buy enough to begin to feed them even if there had been a place where they could buy food.

But Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." At His suggestion, they took stock and found that they had only five loaves and two fish—just a lunch that belonged to a boy in the crowd (Mk. 6:38; John 6:9). What was that for so many? Were they to go and buy food for them? Apparently it didn't occur to them that Jesus could solve the problem, even though they had seen Him perform many wonders by this time.

*Make them sit down in companies, about fifty each.*—Jesus knew what He would do. In that desert place where there was virtually no food, He was the only one who could supply the need. The crowd was to sit down in groups of about fifty so that no one would be overlooked. He would provide the food; but the apostles were to do the rest, for that was within their ability. Organization was necessary to the success of the task.

Jesus took the loaves and the fish and looking up to the heavenly Father He blessed them and broke them and gave them to the disciples to give to the people. Was anyone in the crowd aware that a miracle was taking place? They were slow to grasp the lesson about the Bread of Life which He taught them when they came to Him after the miracle that had fed them physically.

*remained over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets.*—The miracle had demonstrated that He was the Creator, for "all things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made" (John 1:3). Gathering the broken pieces conserved

the food, but more than that it demonstrated that a genuine miracle had taken place. The people said, "This is of a truth the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6:15). But they didn't see that He was the Bread of Life (John 6:41). Their real selfishness is revealed in their reference to the manna which their fathers had eaten for the forty years in the wilderness; Jesus had fed them just once. And it was not Moses, but the Father who had sent the manna; Christ was the true bread that the Father had sent to those who believe on Him.

### *The Necessity of the Cross*

#### *Scripture*

9:18-27 And it came to pass, as he was praying apart, the disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Who do the multitudes say that I am? 19 And they answering said, John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the old prophets is risen again. 20 And he said unto them, But who say ye that I am? And Peter answering said, The Christ of God. 21 But he charged them, and commanded them to tell this to no man; 22 saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up. 23 And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self? 26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you of a truth, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

#### *Comments*

*And it came to pass.*—Luke was aware of many things that he did not include in his narrative. See Mark 6:45-9:1. His purpose was to present Jesus as the Son of God and the Son of Man, and it did not take all that He did to establish the claim. But all that he did write concerned Jesus' work and teaching (Acts 1:1-2). John suggests



that "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" if the complete record were made (John 21:25).

*as he was praying.*—Jesus constantly communicated with the Father about all that He did. Just before Peter expressed the conviction of the apostles that He was the Christ, Jesus was praying. Matthew reminds us that this incident occurred in the region of Caesarea Philippi.

*Who do men say that I am?*—This question was designed to lead the disciples to think clearly about Jesus and to prepare them to see that He must go to the cross. The cross was not only necessary for Him, it was also necessary in the life of each of His followers.

*And they answered, John the Baptist.*—Herod and others were saying this (Matt. 14:1-2). Others were saying that he was Elijah, basing their claim on the prophecy of Malachi 4:5 which said, "Behold, I will send you Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes." Others were explaining Jesus' powers by saying that He was one of the old prophets who had risen. After the feeding of the five thousand, the people came to take Him by force and make Him king, for they said, "This is of a truth, the prophet that cometh into the world" (John 6:14-15). Later, Peter positively identified Him as the prophet about whom Moses had written (Acts 3:20-24).

*But who say ye that I am?*—Peter said, "The Christ of God." Christ means anointed and refers to His office of prophet, priest and king. According to Peter's confession as given in Matthew 16:16, he added the words, "the Son of the living God." This explains His person, for He is Son of God as well as Son of Man. He was often called "Son of David" referring to Him as Messiah, that is, Christ.

According to Matthew, Jesus said to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The rock upon which the church was to be built is the truth expressed in Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Perhaps the best proof of this is Peter's own statement in which he quotes Isaiah's prophecy and shows that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the spiritual temple, the church. See I Pet. 2:3-8. See also Paul's statement in I Cor. 3:11.

The gates of Hades refer to the power of death. In this context, Jesus was speaking about His own death which was to take place in Jerusalem (Matt. 16:21; Lk. 9:21-22). Peter explained this when he quoted the sixteenth Psalm, on the Day of Pentecost (Acts

2:24-31). The antecedent of "it" (Matt. 16:18) is not "church" but "rock." The truth that He is the Christ, the Son of the Living God is the rock that could not be destroyed by the powers of Hades. He was to be put to death, but He was to be raised from the dead to prove that He was Prophet, Priest, and King. If He had not been raised, He could not have been any one of these. The victory of the church over death depends on Christ (I Cor. 15:22-26), but this is not in the context of Matthew sixteen.

*tell this to no man.*—A similar order is given after the transfiguration with the added word, "until the Son of man be risen from the dead" (Matt. 17:9). The apostles were to wait until they had positive evidence that could be shared with others before telling of their conviction that Jesus is the Christ. The resurrection established it beyond doubt. See Acts 4:2, 10-11, 19-20; Rom. 10:9-10. *take up his cross daily.*—The cross was necessary for Jesus in His office of Prophet, Priest, and King. The cross was necessary in the daily life of His followers as they went out to preach the Word of the Cross.

The meaning of the cross for the follower of Christ depends on the meaning of the cross to Him. His cross is a symbol of death to sin. Then the cross to His disciples must be more than some burden to be patiently borne. Paul says, "our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away" (Rom. 6:6). Those who belong to Jesus Christ "have crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof" (Gal. 5:24). See also Col. 2:20-3:17; Gal. 2:20; 6:14.

The cross, death to sin, must be taken up daily by those who follow Him. Peter said that "Christ left us an example that we should follow in his steps who did no sin" (I Pet. 2:21-22). Should we stumble, as Peter did, there is the gracious provision of the loving Father for the cleansing of the erring Christian (I John 2:1-2). But habitual sinning cannot be practiced by the Christian (Rom 6:1-4). The standard of Christ is high, but not impossible. His commandments are not grievous (I John 5:3).

Self-denial is not merely denying oneself of some material thing. It means to disown self, to act in a completely selfless manner. Paul is a good example: All that he had once counted dear, he set aside for the privilege of gaining Christ (Phil. 3:7-11). Jesus illustrated this in the parable of the Pearl of Great Price. The man who sought goodly pearls had to sell all in order to gain the one pearl

of great price. Nothing short of complete dedication to Christ will satisfy the demand of self-denial.

*save his life shall lose it.*—This is Jesus' own explanation of what He had just said about self-denial. Lose it for Christ, if you would save your life! There is no diluting this to mean partly save, or partly lose; it means complete dedication.

*For what is a man profited?*—Jesus explained what He meant by losing or saving life. What profit is it if you gain the whole world but lose your life? Reason tells us He is right! The Bible gives us true perspective so that our sense of values may not be limited by what we see at the moment. See Psa. 37:1-40; 73:16-17.

*ashamed of me and of my words.*—The one who is ashamed of the Christ of the cross or of the Word of the cross will not be recognized by Christ when He comes to judge the world. See also Matt. 7:22-23. Mere profession of obedience is not enough; Jesus demands sincerity in relation to Him. James warns, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves (James 1:22).

*when he cometh in his own glory.*—that is, at the last judgment. See Matt. 25:31-46; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:11-15.

*till they see the kingdom of God.*—This is in contrast to what He had just said about the final judgment. All will be present on that day. But some of those who heard Him speak were to be present on another occasion, that is, when they would see the kingdom of God. The kingdom, the earthly phase of it, came on the Day of Pentecost when Jesus was proclaimed both Lord and Christ, reigning at the right hand of the throne of God (Acts 2:33-36).

Some have assumed that Jesus and the apostles expected His second coming within the lifetime of some of those who heard Him speak. But the language of this context shows the contrast He made between His coming at the Judgment and His coming in the kingdom on the Day of Pentecost. Paul wrote II Thessalonians to correct the mistaken view that the coming of Christ was to be expected in his day (II Thes. 2:1-3). His kingdom did come on Pentecost; He will come at the end of the age. "Amen: come, Lord Jesus."

### *The Transfiguration*

#### *Scripture*

9:28-36 And it came to pass about eight days after these sayings, that he took with him Peter and John and James, and went up into

the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *became* white *and* dazzling. 30 And behold, there talked with him two men, who were Moses and Elijah; 31 who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. 33 And it came to pass, as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said. 34 And while he said these things, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him. 36 And when the voice came, Jesus was found alone. And they held their peace, and told no man in those days any of the things which they had seen.

### *Comments*

*about eight days after.*—Matthew and Mark say, "And after six days' (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2). Luke says *about* eight days. If we count the day on which Jesus had been speaking plus an interval of six days and add the day on which the Transfiguration took place, it would make the eight days, that is, about a week as they counted time.

*he took with him Peter and John and James.*—Peter gives his own version of the transfiguration in II Peter 2:16-18. This was not a cleverly fabricated tale, but the testimony of an eyewitness of the majesty of Jesus Christ. He heard the Voice that brought honor and glory to Jesus when the Father said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; Hear ye Him." This is more reliable than the "cunningly devised fables" of the men who sought to deny the Master who bought them (II Pet. 2:1).

*and went into the mountain to pray.*—Since Matthew says that they were in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, it is reasonable to assume that the mountain, although not named by any of the writers, was Mount Hermon which has an elevation of some 9100 feet. Luke alone says that He went into the mountain to pray and that He was praying when the transfiguration took place. This was an important example for the apostles, for they would need to keep in constant

contact with the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ in their mission of spreading the gospel in all the world.

*the fashion of his countenance was altered.*—The change of His face and the gleaming white garments are a fitting symbol of the honor and approval which He received from the Father (II Pet. 1:17).

*there talked with him two men.*—How the disciples were able to recognize Moses and Elijah is not stated. They were in glory but had not lost their identity. They were talking about Jesus' "decease" which He was to accomplish at Jerusalem. He was soon to leave this earthly experience and return to "the glory which He had with the Father before the world was" (John 17:5). It is fitting that these two representatives of the Old Testament should be speaking to Christ about His death and the glories that were to follow since that is the message of the Law of Moses and the Prophets (I Pet. 1:10-12; Lk. 24:44-47).

*Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.*—On another occasion these same men were found sleeping while the Master was undergoing the agony of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-44; Lk. 22:45-46). Before condemning them too harshly, we might do well to examine our own lack of alertness at prayer meeting. But because they were asleep, they were not prepared for what they saw when they were fully awake. As Moses and Elijah were departing, Peter proposed that they make three booths or tents, one each for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah. Apparently he didn't realize that Moses and Elijah were not remaining with them permanently or that Jesus was soon to be taken from them, although He had told them several times that He would be. The suggestion that Peter was placing Jesus on the level with Moses and Elijah in importance and honor does not seem to agree with the context. He really didn't know what he was proposing, but out of fear felt that he had to say something (Mark 9:6).

*And a voice came out of the cloud.*—This was the voice from the Majestic Glory, the voice of God who said, "This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him." God's approval of His Son and the assurance to the apostles who heard Him speak form the two-fold purpose of the Transfiguration. When the Voice came, Jesus was found alone. In this dramatic way, God showed the men that they were to hear His Son.

*and told no man.*—They obeyed the instruction Jesus gave them, but they did discuss the coming of Elijah (Matt. 17:9-13). This led

Jesus to tell them how John fulfilled the prophecy about the coming of Elijah (Mal. 4:5).

*The Epileptic Boy*

*Scripture*

9:37-45 And it came to pass, on the next day, when they were come down from the mountain, a great multitude met him. 38 And behold, a man from the multitude cried, saying, Teacher, I beseech thee to look upon my son; for he is mine only child: 39 and behold, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth, and it hardly departeth from him, bruising him sorely. 40 And I besought thy disciples to cast it out; and they could not. 41 And Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and bear with you? bring hither thy son. 42 And as he was yet a coming, the demon dashed him down, and tare *him* grievously. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And they were all astonished at the majesty of God.

But while all were marvelling at all the things which he did, he said unto his disciples, 44 Let these words sink into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered up into the hands of men. 45 But they understood not this saying, and it was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask him about this saying.

*Comments*

*a great multitude met him.*—Jesus and the three disciples had been in the mountain; the crowds were waiting for Him to return. Their anticipation was evidently heightened by the failure of the disciples to meet the request of the distressed father.

*Teacher, I beseech thee.*—The father turned to Jesus for help, for his only son was demon-possessed and in desperate need of help. Luke calls the demon an unclean spirit. The symptoms were those of epilepsy, but Luke says it was demon-possession. The technique which Jesus used in dealing with the case shows that it was not the ordinary disease, but real demon-possession. He, of course, had power to cast out demons as well as heal diseases.

*I besought thy disciples.*—Why couldn't they cast out the demon? Jesus, according to Mark, said that this kind came out only by prayer and fasting (Mark 9:29). He also said that it was because of their

little faith (Matt. 17:20). If their faith had been as much as a grain of mustard seed, they could have removed mountains. This case clearly called for a miracle, and the least amount of faith that had to do with the power to perform miracles could have accomplished it. To assume that this refers to mountains of difficulty that can be removed by trust in Jesus is to overlook the meaning of Jesus' explanation. He had given them power over demons, but they lacked the faith—not faith like that of the woman in the crowd—by which that power was made operative. Had they, in the absence of Jesus, attempted to cast out the demon without relying on Him? Without the faith that kept them in contact with the power they were utterly unable to perform the miracle. See *Studies in First Corinthians*, pages 224-25 and 238, for additional comment of faith to remove mountains.

*O faithless and perverse generation, how long.*—Jesus had already given ample evidence of His deity, but many were looking at the cure—understandably so—and not at the evidential value of the miracle (John 20:30-31). Jesus was nearing the climax of His earthly ministry and knew that He would not be with them much longer. His complaint seems to be that they had not yet, even at this late date, grasped the truth about Him.

*astonished at the majesty of God.*—Jesus cast the demon out and gave the boy back to the father. As usual, the crowds were astonished; but this time, at the majesty of God.

*But while they were marvelling.*—They marvelled at the miracle, but Jesus reminded the disciples that He was soon to be delivered up into the hands of men to be crucified. That's why He had asked, "How long shall I be with you?" It was important that they realize that His mission called for the cross by which He was to destroy the power of the devil (Heb. 2:14). He said, "Let these words sink into your ears." Don't let them go in one ear and out the other.

*But they understood not this saying.*—There seemed to be no place in their thinking for the cross. They had their minds centered on the kind of kingdom that they wanted Him to establish—an earthly kingdom. They were afraid to ask what He meant, lest it be the end of their dream. See Luke 24:21.

### *True Greatness*

#### *Scripture*

9:46-48 And there arose a reasoning among them, which of them

was the greatest. 47 But when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, he took a little child, and set him by his side, 48 and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same is great.

### *Comments*

*which of them was the greatest.*—Peter's prominence and avowed loyalty to Jesus may have given him some notion that he was of special importance. James and John who may have been relatives of Jesus were evidently hoping to be elevated to positions of importance in the kingdom when Jesus established it (Matt. 20:20-21).

*he took a little child.*—Jesus took this an occasion to teach His disciples a much needed lesson on true greatness. He said, "Whosoever shall receive this little child in my name receiveth me." Then He made the point, "He that is least among you all is the one who is great." See also Mark 10:43-45 for Jesus' own example of true greatness.

### *The Unknown Miracle Worker*

#### *Scripture*

9:49-50 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. 50 But Jesus said unto him, Forbid *him* not: for he that is not against you is for you.

### *Comments*

*one casting out demons in thy name.*—They had just gone through the experience that taught them that no man could cast out demons except in relation to Jesus. This one whom they had forbidden was casting out a demon in His name. It, therefore, was not pretense as in the case of certain Jewish exorcists (Acts 19:13).

*we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.*—Their pride was offended. It was not a question of relieving the demon-possessed person; it was simply that he did not follow with these disciples.

*Jesus said unto him, forbid him not.*—Since he was doing the work in the name of Christ, he was not to be forbidden. This is the real



basis for unity of action, each one acting in the name of Christ. And to act in the name of Christ is to act by His authority. "He that is not against you is for you." Even the one who does such a lowly task as giving a cup of cold water because he belongs to Christ shall not lose his reward (Mark 9:41).

*The Inhospitable Samaritans*

*Scripture*

9:51-55 And it came to pass, when the days were well-nigh come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before his face; and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, because his face was *as though he were* going to Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? 55 But he turned, and rebuked them.

*Comments*

*that he should be received up.*—That is, the closing days of His ministry that led to the ascension (Acts 1:9). But the incident of sending the seventy shows that the ascension, while approaching, was still several months away. According to John's record, Jesus went first to the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1-2) and later to the Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). Why did Luke include this section which is not given by Matthew and Mark? It was to give Theophilus information which Luke considered important as he reassured him of the things in which he had been instructed.

*entered into a village of the Samaritans.*—This was not the first time that Jesus had been in Samaria. See John 4:1-4. See II Kings 17:24-28 for the origin of the Samaritans. The old controversy over the correct place to worship continued from the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity until the days of Jesus (John 4:20-24). The Samaritans held to the Pentateuch as their sacred scriptures, disregarding the other portions of the Old Testament which mention Jerusalem and the place of worship.

*And they did not receive him.*—The fact that He was going to Jerusalem—probably to the feast of Tabernacles—stirred the old

prejudice and led them to refuse lodging to Jesus and His disciples. But see John 4:39-42 for their reaction to the invitation of the woman at the well, and Acts 8:5-40 for the account of Philip's ministry in Samaria.

*bid fire come down from heaven.*—James and John were not nicknamed "sons of thunder" without cause (Mark 3:17). Their rash proposal was met with prompt rebuke by Jesus. There were other villages in which to spend the night. Violence seldom serves to abolish prejudice. By contrast, Luke shows the power of preaching Christ to bring joy to the lives of the people in the city of Samaria (Acts 8:4-8).

### *Dedication Demanded*

#### *Scripture*

9:57-62. And as they went on the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God. 61 And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. 62 But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

#### *Comments*

*I will follow thee.*—Jesus had already said that whoever would come after Him would have to deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Him. Later, He challenged them with the necessity of counting the cost of discipleship, for anything short of complete dedication would not do (Luke 14:25-35). This volunteer failed to realize the necessity of following Him unselfishly.

*And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes.*—Foxes have dens, birds have roosts, but the Son of Man did not have a place to lay His head. The Samaritans had just refused Him lodging; His own home town, much earlier, had rejected Him; before Him loomed the cross.

*And he said to another, Follow me.*—The first man had volunteered,

but Jesus challenged this one to follow Him. He wanted first to go bury his father. If the father was actually dead, why wasn't he attending to the arrangements for the funeral? He said "Let me go bury my father." In all probability the father was old and the dutiful son wanted to be present when death came so that he might properly care for his burial. He put this first, but the followers of Christ must do so unconditionally.

*Leave the dead to bury the dead.*—Those who were spiritually dead could take care of the physically dead. The greater task was to publish abroad the kingdom of God. This will raise the dead in trespasses and sin to a new life in Christ. See Eph. 2:5-6; Rom. 6:4-5.

*I will follow thee, but.*—Another volunteer; he wanted time to say goodbye to those at his house. But those who follow Christ must do so unintermittently.

*No man, having put his hand to the plow.*—The plow in that day was a forked stick and difficult to handle at best. Undivided attention was necessary to do a good job. The one with the hand to the plow who looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

The three cases—two volunteers and one who was invited—may be summarized as follows: To the first one, Jesus is saying, "Think it through first;" to the second, "Let nothing interfere with your following Me;" and to the third, "Stay with it to the end."

### *Summary*

The incidents recorded in this chapter may be gathered up under two general headings: (1) Those things which Jesus did to extend the influence of His ministry, and (2) what He did to prepare His disciples for their work after His ascension. The importance of this preparation is seen in the fact that He was depending on them to take His gospel into all the world.

The mission of the Twelve to the lost sheep of the house of Israel was a training experience to prepare them for their worldwide mission.

Rumors of Jesus' miracles reached the ears of Herod the tetrarch. An aroused conscience asked, "Who is this?" Herod answered, "John the Baptist whom I beheaded." His only thought was, "Kill him too." A little later, the Pharisees warned Jesus to leave the district, for, they said, "Herod wants to kill you."

People by the thousands were following Jesus wherever He went.

In a lonely place where no food was to be found except a boy's lunch, He fed the five thousand on the loaves and fish. Even though He had worked such a miracle, He reminded the disciples that there was a cross to be borne, a cross for Him and a cross that meant self-denial for all who would follow Him.

The Twelve were completely dependent on Him. In the Transfiguration they were taught the necessity of obeying Him. In the cure of the epileptic boy they learned the meaning of faith in Him who had given them power to perform miracles. He taught them the meaning of true greatness, and stopped their wrangling over which one was to have first place among them. He rebuked their rashness that would have destroyed the Samaritan village and left the door open for the preaching of the gospel by Philip the evangelist.

Jesus dramatically demonstrated what His demand for complete dedication meant. He rejected the volunteer who offered to follow Him but who had not counted the cost. He rejected another whom He had invited to follow Him when he said, "Yes, but first let me bury my father." A third one volunteered, but Jesus demanded full-time service, for, He said, "the one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God."

### *Questions*

1. How did Jesus extend the effectiveness of His ministry?
2. How did He train His disciples for the task of carrying the gospel into all the world?
3. What made the difference between the power of the disciples to cast out demons and the attempts of the Jewish exorcists to do so?
4. What were the disciples to preach on their first mission?
5. Why take nothing for the journey?
6. What did they mean by shaking the dust off their feet?
7. What did Jesus say He would do before they finished the task he gave them on this first mission?
8. Why did Herod think that Jesus was John the Baptist?
9. What can cleanse an evil conscience?
10. How does the feeding of the five thousand show the influence of Jesus' ministry?
11. Where did it take place?
12. What lesson did Jesus teach the people after it was over?
13. Why did Jesus tell the apostles to give the crowd something to eat?

## CHAPTER NINE

14. How did Jesus demonstrate the necessity of organization in carrying out His work?
15. Why gather up the broken pieces?
16. What was Jesus doing just before Peter made the good confession?
17. Why did He ask, "Who do men say that I am?"
18. Why would some say "John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets"?
19. What does "Thou art the Christ" mean?
20. What does "Son of God" mean?
21. On what was the church built?
22. Why did Jesus mention the gates of Hades? What is Hades?
23. Why did Jesus restrain them from telling others that He is the Christ?
24. Why was the cross necessary for Jesus?
25. What does the cross mean in the life of His followers?
26. How did He explain self-denial?
27. What of the one who is ashamed of Jesus and His words?
28. How was it possible for some to see the kingdom of God before they died?
29. Whom did Jesus take with Him into the mountain where He was transfigured?
30. What is the name of the mountain?
31. What did Peter write about his experience in that mountain?
32. Why had Jesus gone into the mountain?
33. What was the meaning of the Transfiguration to Christ? to the apostles?
34. Why were Moses and Elijah permitted to appear with Jesus?
35. What did they talk about?
36. Why did Peter want to build the three tabernacles?
37. What is the significance of the message of the Voice that came out of the cloud?
38. What explanation did Jesus make about the disciples' question concerning the coming of Elijah?
39. What had the disciples tried to do while Jesus was in the mountain?
40. Why did they fail?
41. What is the difference between the faith of the woman in the crowd and the faith which the apostles lacked?

## STUDIES IN LUKE

42. Why did Jesus refer to "the faithless generation"?
43. Why didn't the disciples understand Jesus' prediction of His crucifixion?
44. Why did the disciples discuss the issue of greatness?
45. How did Jesus answer their problem?
46. Why did Jesus tell them not to forbid the unknown miracle worker?
47. Why did the Samaritans refuse lodging for Jesus and the disciples?
48. What did James and John propose that justifies their nickname, "Sons of thunder"?
49. How did Jesus' attitude affect the Samaritan situation later?
50. Why did Jesus reject the man who volunteered to follow Him?
51. What does this mean: "Let the dead bury the dead"?
52. Why did putting the hand to the plow and looking back make one unfit for the kingdom of God?

## CHAPTER TEN

### *Outline*

#### A. Luke told about the mission of the Seventy (1-24).

##### 1. Their appointment and work (1-16).

###### a) The circumstances (1-2).

- (1) Jesus appointed seventy others (in addition to the twelve).
- (2) He sent them out two by two.
- (3) He sent them to the cities where He was soon to come.
- (4) He reminded them of two things:
  - (a) The harvest was great, the laborers few.
  - (b) They were going forth as lambs in the midst of wolves.

###### b) The instruction for their journey (4-11).

- (1) Take no purse, traveling bag, or shoes.
- (2) Don't stop to greet people along the way.
- (3) Greet those into whose house you enter; if you are not welcomed, your greeting will return to you.
- (4) Accept such hospitality as may be offered, for the laborer is worthy of his hire; but do not go from house to house.
- (5) Heal the sick and say, "The kingdom of God has come near you."
- (6) Where you may be rejected say, "The dust from our feet, we wipe off against you, but know that the kingdom of God has come near."

###### c) The judgment on those cities that reject them (12-16).

- (1) It will be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment for Sodom.
- (2) Woe to Chorazen and Bethsaida; if the mighty works done in these cities had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented.
- (3) It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the Judgment.
- (4) "Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades."
- (5) Why? "He who hears you hears me; he who rejects you rejects me and him who sent me."

## STUDIES IN LUKE

2. Their return and report to Jesus (17-20).
  - a) The demons were subject to them in His name.
  - b) He said, "I was observing Satan as he fell like lightning from heaven."
  - c) They were not to rejoice over their power which He had given, but over the fact that their names were written in heaven.
3. The prayer of Jesus at that time (21-24).
  - a) He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit over the things the Father had revealed.
  - b) The Father is known by the Son and him to whom the Son reveals Him.
  - c) His disciples are to be congratulated on seeing what many prophets and kings desired to see.
- B. Luke reported the incident that led to Jesus' telling the story of the Good Samaritan (25-37).
  1. A lawyer asked Jesus a question to embarrass Him (25-29).
    - a) The question: "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"
    - b) Jesus answered by asking, "What is written in the law? How does it read to you?"
    - c) The lawyer answered, quoting from the Law of Moses, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself."
    - d) Jesus said, "You have answered correctly; do this and you shall live."
    - e) But the embarrassed lawyer said, "And who is my neighbor?"
  2. Jesus answered his question by telling the story of the Good Samaritan (30-37).
    - a) A man going from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers who beat him and left him half dead.
    - b) A priest and a Levite happened along but ignored it.
    - c) A Samaritan came by and gave him aid, and took to the inn where he cared for him.
    - d) He arranged for further care for which he promised to pay when he came again.
    - e) Jesus' question requiring the lawyer to answer his own



## CHAPTER TEN

own question, "Which of the three, do you think, proved neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?"

f) He answered, "He who showed mercy on him."

g) Jesus said, "You go and do likewise."

C. Luke told of Jesus' visit to the home of Martha and Mary (38-42).

1. Martha welcomed Him into her home; Mary, her sister, sat at His feet listening to Him.
2. Martha complained, "Lord, doesn't it concern you that my sister has been leaving me to serve alone? Tell her to help me."
3. The Lord said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted about many things."
4. Then He added, "One thing is needed; Mary has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her."

### *The Mission of the Seventy*

#### *Scripture*

10:1-24 Now after these things the Lord appointed seventy others, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself was about to come. 2 And he said unto them, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest. 3 Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs in the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no wallet, no shoes; and salute no man on the way. 5 And into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house. 6 And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again. 7 And in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. 8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: 9 and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. 10 But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, 11 Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we wipe off against you: nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh. 12 I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. 13 Woe unto thee,

Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you. 15 And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt be brought down unto Hades. 16 He that heareth you heareth me; and he that rejecteth you rejecteth me; and he that rejecteth me rejecteth him that sent me.

17 And the seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name. 18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in any wise hurt you. 20 Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

21 In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father; for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight. 22 All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father; and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*. 23 And turning to the disciples, he said privately, Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things that ye see: 24 for I say unto you, that many prophets and kings desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.

### *Comments*

*the Lord appointed seventy others.*—It was impossible for Jesus to accomplish everything alone. He was able to reach more people, however, by effective organization and distribution of responsibility first to the twelve and then to the seventy (or seventy-two according to some texts). The seventy were selected, equipped for their mission, carefully instructed, and sent out two by two to do the work for which Christ commissioned them.

The value of organization had been demonstrated in Moses' day. At one time he attempted to care for all the problems of the nation of Israel, but Jethro wisely pointed out that it was too much for him. He advised Moses to appoint rulers over the people who were

to be divided into groups of thousands, hundreds, and tens (Ex. 18:13-27).

When the twelve apostles attempted to carry the total burden of the church in Jerusalem, they soon found out that some of the people were being neglected. So they had the congregation select seven men whom they appointed to care for the distribution of food to the widows who were dependent on the church for support (Acts 6:1-6). The apostles gave themselves to the task of preaching the Word. Later, they appointed elders in all the churches (Acts 14:23). And for a list of other workers see I Cor 12:28; Eph. 4:11-13.

Jesus maintained control over both the twelve and the seventy, for they were under the immediate direction of the Holy Spirit. He maintains His authority over His church today through the direction given to it in the New Testament (Matt. 28:18-20).

*The harvest is plenteous.*—Then as now, the harvest was great, but the laborers few. Crowds were following Jesus; why didn't He send all of them? The story of the rejected volunteers suggests that all did not have the required dedication for the task (Luke 9:57-61).

Workers should be carefully selected for the specialized tasks in the kingdom today. A call for volunteers is often answered by unqualified people. Often those who could be trained to do the work do not feel worthy to volunteer. The responsible leaders of the church—ministers, evangelists, elders, deacons and others—should constantly watch for those who are capable of being trained for the tasks necessary for the progress of the gospel. It should be the goal to have every member engaged in the work of the Lord. Some may not be qualified to teach, but the importance of their serving in other ways should not be overlooked.

*pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest.*—The task was to be done under the direction of the Lord of the harvest. He sent them forth.

*Go your ways.*—Too often people are told to go, but given no instruction as to ways to proceed or message to proclaim. Such generalized efforts accomplish little for the work of Christ. Many, no doubt, would go if they were told how and where and what to do.

*lambs in the midst of wolves.*—They were to go to their Jewish brethren, the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They could expect the hospitality normally accorded teachers in that day. But some would not accept them; they were to be on guard against such. See Luke 22:35-38 for Jesus instruction to the twelve when He sent them into all the world to preach the gospel.

*Salute no man on the way.*—Instructions for the Seventy were about the same as for the Twelve when they were sent out on their first mission. They were on urgent business for the King. They were not to lose time by visiting along the way. They would find it difficult to get their task done before Jesus came to them, for He was moving toward the climax of His ministry which was the cross and the ascension.

When they did enter some home, they were to say, "Peace be to this house." If a son of peace was there, a peace loving person, their blessing was to remain with him. But if he was not one characterized by peace, the blessing would return to the one who tried and failed to share the message of peace with him.

*such things as they give.*—The Seventy were not to move from house to house, for it would be time consuming and it would accomplish little. They were to become one of the family that gave them a place to stay and eat what was set before them. Just what was involved in the reference to diet may not be clear. Was it a matter of "clean and unclean" foods? Jews made much of this issue. Paul gave similar instruction to the Christians at Corinth about eating what was set before them (I Cor. 10:23-30). Jesus told the Seventy to eat what the family did, for it was one of the best ways of becoming identified with people whom they were to help with the gospel of the kingdom of God.

*the laborer is worthy of his hire.*—See also Matt. 10:10; I Tim. 5:18; and I Cor. 9:14. See *Studies In First Corinthians*, pages 159-163 on Paul's argument for the support of the ministry.

*and they receive you not.*—The Seventy were forewarned that not all would accept their message. The Lord Himself was rejected by many and crucified by the very people He tried to help. His workers can expect to be rejected by some, but there are those who will gladly accept the message of salvation. Timothy was to face hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, but there would be victories for his encouragement in the service of the Lord also.

If the Seventy met with rejection, they were to shake the dust from their feet and move to others who might respond to God's message.

*It shall be more tolerable in that day.*—Sodom fell under the terrible judgment of God because of its wickedness, but the city that rejected the messengers of Jesus was to fare worse in the Day of Judgment than Sodom. Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum were

warned about the fate that was awaiting them. If the mighty works of Jesus had been done in those other cities which had long since perished, they would have repented. But Capernaum which was the center of Jesus' whole Galilean ministry, would it be exalted to heaven? Jesus addressed the city and said, "You shall be brought down unto Hades." The ruins that mark the places where those proud but sinful cities once stood give silent testimony to the truth of Jesus' prophecy concerning them.

*The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.*—This message was to be given both to those who received Jesus' messengers and to those who rejected them. To those who received the message of Christ, the kingdom came with blessing; to those who rejected, it came in judgment.

Jesus identified Himself with His messengers. To reject them was to reject Him; to reject Him was to reject the Father who sent Him. The kingdom of God came near with blessings for those who were willing to receive them, but judgments for those who refused God's rule in their lives.

*I saw Satan fallen as lightening from heaven.*—The Seventy reported to Jesus that the demons were subject to them in His name. The response of Jesus is rendered differently in the various versions. The King James reads, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." This suggests that Jesus saw Satan fall from heaven. The American Standard puts it this way, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." This suggests that Jesus said that He saw Satan after he had fallen. R. S. V. reads, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Jesus was observing when Satan fell, and his fall was like lightning from heaven. It was sudden, swift, and positive.

To what does this fall refer? Some, basing their views on Isa. 14:12 and Rev. 12:7-12, suggest that it was when Satan literally fell from his original state. But the Isaiah passage, according to Isa. 14:4, refers to the king of Babylon. The passage in Revelation shows that Satan was defeated before he began his attack on God's people on earth. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony and by the fact that they loved not their lives even unto death. Others suggest that it was the defeat of Satan in the wilderness temptation of Our Lord. That was a signal victory for the Son of Man who was tempted in all points as we are but without sin (Heb. 4:15). But Jesus related this fall of Satan to the victory of the Seventy. They had just told Him that the demons

were subject to them in His name; but He was aware of it before they told Him, for He was observing the battle as Satan fell before the power of the Lord's army.

*he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.*—that is, He spoke these words of rejoicing and thanksgiving by the Holy Spirit. Luke also says that the words of the comand given by Jesus to His apostles were spoken through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2; Matt. 28:18-20).

The Seventy had cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit. They were not to rejoice that demons were subject to them, but that their names were written in heaven. All this was the occasion for Jesus' rejoicing.

*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.*—Jesus usually addressed God as "Father" in His prayers. This is the longest recorded statement of address used by Him.

The Seventy were ordinary people, yet it pleased the Father to reveal the things of the Kingdom to them. They in turn told others about the kingdom of God. But those who were satisfied in their own wisdom did not welcome this revelation from God.

*no one knoweth who the Son is.*—At the baptism of Jesus, the Father had said, "This is my Son." The way to know the Father is to know His Son. When the disciples asked Jesus to show them the Father, He replied, "If you had recognized me, you would have known the Father" (John 14:7-11). This explains the statement of John 1:18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him"—that is, He has unfolded the story of the Father. That story is given in the Gospel of John. John 20:30-31 is the conclusion of the story, but John 1:18 is the statement of its purpose.

*Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see.*—Just before Jesus explained the Parable of the Sower, He said to the disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. 13:16). Many prophets and righteous men had desired to see and hear these things about Jesus. Those who had the privilege of hearing Him were to be congratulated. Peter wrote that the prophets and even the angels had desired to look into these things (I Pet. 1:10-12). The Old Testament message pointed to the coming of the Messiah. The disciples of Jesus were in the presence of the One about whom the prophets had spoken. The hope of Christians, based on the testimony about His life, death and resurrection, is in His coming again (Phil. 3:20-21; Heb. 9:27; I Thes. 4:13-18).

*The Story of the Good Samaritan**Scripture*

10:25-37 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and made trial of him, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? 26 And he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? 27 And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. 28 And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. 29 But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? 30 Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance a certain priest was going down that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And in like manner a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he was moved with compassion, 34 and came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on them oil and wine; and he set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 And on the morrow he took out two shillings, and gave them to the host, and said, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, I, when I come back again, will repay thee. 36 Which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers? 37 And he said, He that showed mercy on him. And Jesus said unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

*Comments*

*a certain lawyer.*—This incident is similar to the story of the Rich Young Ruler (Lk. 18:18-29), but there are striking differences. The ruler was evidently sincere in his desire to know what he had to do to have eternal life. The lawyer was deliberately trying to trap Jesus. Perhaps he was trying to get Jesus to set aside the Law of Moses or at least say something that could be used to condemn Him.

*What shall I do to have eternal life?*—Under the Law of Moses the answer was simple and should have been understood by the lawyer,

as his response shows. Paul says, "Moses writeth that the man that doeth righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby" (Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12). The law, of course, could not forgive the sinner who broke the law (Gal. 3:21). Only the blood of Christ could provide forgiveness which is made available under the New Covenant to the obedient believer in Christ through the grace of God (Rom. 3: 21-26). This explains the difference between the answer of the lawyer which Jesus approved and the answer given on the Day of Pentecost to those who asked what to do for remission of their sins (Acts 2:36-38).

*What is written in the law?*—Jesus was born under the law, and His ministry was carried out during the period in which the Law of Moses still held jurisdiction over God's people. The Old Covenant did not give place to the New until the Day of Pentecost. Naturally, when He was asked about eternal life, He pointed to the Law of God for the age in which He lived.

Jesus answered the lawyers question by asking another, for He wanted him to think about it. He was aware of the purpose the lawyer had in asking it. So Jesus said, "What is written in the law? How does it read to you?"

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.*—The lawyer's statement first summarized the Law of Moses with reference to duties to God. The manner in which they were to be carried out is stressed in these details: (1) with all your heart; (2) with all your soul; (3) with all your strength; and (4) with all your mind. Then he added the statement that summarizes the duties toward man: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

*desiring to justify himself.*—The embarrassed lawyer who had deliberately tried to embarrass Jesus asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answered his question by telling the story of the Good Samaritan. A man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, but he was ignored by a priest and a Levite. Of all people, these should have gone to his rescue. But a Samaritan—they were despised by the Jews—came along and gave him aid. Then he took him to the inn where he could be cared for until he got well. As he was leaving, he said to the inn keeper, "Whatever else you spend, I'll repay when I return."

*Which of these three?*—Jesus' question made the lawyer answer his own. There could be no doubt about it. The one who had shown mercy to the distressed and beaten man was the neighbor. Was



the proud lawyer ready to be taught? The Master said, "Go and do likewise."

*Jesus at the Home of Mary and Martha*

*Scripture*

10:38-42 Now as they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. 40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving; and she came up to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. 41 But the Lord answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: 42 but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

*Comments*

*he entered a certain village.*—Luke did not name the village, but John says that Lazarus, with his sisters Mary and Martha, lived in Bethany (John 11:1). Luke does not give all the geographical details necessary to enable us to reconstruct all the journeys of Jesus in the closing months of His ministry. There can be little doubt, however, that He was in Bethany of Judea. Afterwards, He went again into Perea, "beyond the Jordan" (Jo. 10:40).

*Martha received him into her house.*—No mention is made of Lazarus. It is idle to speculate about this omission. The important fact is that Mary, Martha's sister, was sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning the lessons the Master taught.

*But Martha was cumbered.*—The contrast does not encourage the neglect of household duties and hospitality to guests. It does stress the importance of giving first place to what the Teacher has to say. Martha, in her distress, said to Jesus, "You tell her to help me." *anxious and troubled about many things.*—John tells something about her faith in Christ and hope of the resurrection (John 11:18-27). Jesus' gentle rebuke seems to say that it was not necessary to do so much to entertain Him.

*one thing is needful.*—Did this refer to food? Hardly. The one thing needful—food could be forgotten for a time (John 4:32-34)—

was the lesson Jesus was teaching. That was spiritual food, and it could not be neglected. Mary had chosen the good part, and it would not be denied her.

### *Summary*

In addition to selecting, instructing and sending out the twelve apostles, Jesus appointed seventy others to go with the message of the kingdom of God into all the villages where He was about to come. The harvest was great, the laborers were few.

Their task was urgent; they would be working among their own people; they, therefore, were to make no elaborate preparations for this journey. There was but little time to get the work done.

On their return they reported to Jesus that the demons had been subject to them in His name. But He said, "I was observing as Satan fell like lightning from heaven." Instead of rejoicing over their power to cast out demons, they were to rejoice that their names were written in heaven. Jesus Himself rejoiced in the Holy Spirit that the Father had revealed these things to men who trusted Him.

The victories of Jesus were of various kinds. A lawyer challenged Him with the question, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Because they were living under the Law of Moses, Jesus said, "How does the Law of Moses read to you?" But the lawyer persisted, "Who is my neighbor?" Then Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan. The meaning of "neighbor" was made plain. Jesus said, "You go and do likewise."

Jesus' journeys took Him to many places. The details of these trips are not always given. The visit to the home of Martha and Mary gives a fleeting glimpse of an important teaching situation. Mary had chosen to sit at His feet and learn from Him; this privilege was not to be taken from her.

### *Questions*

1. Why did Jesus appoint the Seventy?
2. What did He do for them before sending them out?
3. What does the Bible teach about the value of organization?
4. What can be done to enlist a larger number of church members in the Lord's work?
5. Should we pray for workers today?
6. In what ways does the sending of the Seventy help us to prepare for the work of evangelism today?

## CHAPTER TEN

7. What dangers were they to face?
8. Why were they not to salute men on their way?
9. What greeting were they to give those who invited them into their homes?
10. What were they to do if they were rejected?
11. How were they to conduct themselves in the homes where they were to stay?
12. What does the New Testament teach about support for those who work in the gospel?
13. Why would it be more tolerable in the judgment for Sodom than for the cities of Jesus' time?
14. What is meant by the expression, "The kingdom of God is come near you"?
15. What are the various ways in which Jesus' remarks about Satan are stated?
16. What did His remark mean?
17. Why say that Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit?
18. For what did Jesus thank the Father?
19. What did Jesus mean by the statement that no one knows who the Son is except the Father?
20. Why did Jesus say, "Blessed are your eyes"?
21. Who else had desired to see what the disciples were seeing?
22. What are the similarities and differences in the stories of the lawyer and of the Rich Young Ruler?
23. How did Jesus get the lawyer to answer His own question?
24. Why didn't He give a direct answer?
25. How does the lawyer's answer summarize the whole law?
26. Why didn't the apostles give the same answer on the Day of Pentecost?
27. Why had the lawyer asked the question in the first place?
28. Why was he embarrassed at the turn of events?
29. Why did he ask, "Who is my neighbor?"
30. How does the story of the Good Samaritan answer his question?
31. What did Jesus tell him to do?
32. Where was the home of Martha and Mary?
33. Why did Luke omit some of the details about the journeys of Jesus?
34. What was Martha's problem?
35. What is "the one thing needful"?
36. Why was Mary not to be denied the part she had chosen?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told how Jesus met the problems of the disciples and of the crowds (1-36).
1. The problem about prayer (1-13).
    - a) A request for help: "Teach us to pray" (1).
    - b) An example to follow: The Lord's Prayer (2-4).
      - (1) How to address God.
      - (2) What to put first—the kingdom of God.
      - (3) When to mention material needs—daily bread.
      - (4) Why to mention forgiveness.
      - (5) Where to ask that God lead.
    - c) A story that explained: The Friend at midnight (5-13).
      - (1) When in need, don't be ashamed to ask God.
      - (2) God answers prayer: Ask, seek, knock.
      - (3) Praying is like talking to a father (11-13).
        - (a) A father gives good gifts to his children: Bread, not a stone; fish, not a serpent; egg, not a scorpion.
        - (b) The Heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.
  2. The charge about casting out demons (14-26).
    - a) The circumstances (14-16).
      - (1) Jesus had cast out a demon.
      - (2) When the demon was gone out of him, the dumb man spoke, and this caused the crowds to marvel.
      - (3) Some said He had cast out the demon by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.
      - (4) Others, to embarrass Him, wanted Him to show them a sign from heaven.
    - b) The three-fold answer (17-23).
      - (1) The divided kingdom.
        - (a) A divided kingdom is brought to desolation.
        - (b) Satan's kingdom can't stand if it is divided.
        - (c) If demons are cast out by Satan's power, his kingdom is divided.
      - (2) The reference to their own sons.
        - (a) Question: If I do it by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?

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- (b) Let them be your judges.
  - (c) If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you.
- (3) The strong man.
  - (a) It takes a stronger man to overcome a strong one. Jesus is stronger than Satan, for He had cast out the demon.
  - (b) The lesson: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth."
- c) The unclean spirit and the empty house (24-26).
  - (1) The unclean spirit left a man, went through waterless places and returned to the same man.
  - (2) Finding the place empty, he took seven other spirits more evil than himself and entered and dwelt in the man.
  - (3) The last state of the man was worse than the first.
- 3. The praise for the mother who bore Him (27-28).
  - a) A woman from the crowd said, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts from which you took nourishment."
  - b) But Jesus said, "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it."
- 4. The demand for a sign (29-36).
  - a) The Sign of Jonah and the Sign of the Son of Man (29-32).
    - (1) The sign-seeking evil generation would be given the sign of Jonah.
    - (2) Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites; the Son of Man would be a sign to them.
    - (3) A two-fold contrast that condemned that generation.
      - (a) The queen of the south and the wisdom of Solomon.
      - (b) The men of Ninevah and the preaching of Jonah.
  - b) The parable of the lighted lamp (33-36).
    - (1) A lamp is to enable men to see.
    - (2) The lamp of the body is the eye.
    - (3) Warning lest the light become darkness.

## STUDIES IN LUKE

B. Luke told how Jesus answered the criticism of the Pharisees and the lawyers (37-54).

1. The criticism of the Pharisees (37-44).
  - a) The occasion: a Pharisee who had invited Jesus to have lunch with him marvelled that He did not first "bathe Himself" before eating (37-38).
  - b) The answer: What makes a thing clean (39-40)?
    - (1) He said, "You Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup, but your inward part is full of wickedness."
    - (2) This was foolish, for the one who made the outside made the inside too.
    - (3) He added, "Give for alms those things which are within, and all things are clean to you."
  - c) He pronounced three woes upon the Pharisees (41-44).
    - (1) Their abuse of tithing.
    - (2) Their love of chief seats.
    - (3) Their likeness to "tombs that appear not."
2. The criticism of the lawyers (45-52).
  - a) The occasion: One of the lawyers at the luncheon said, "When you say this about the Pharisees, you reproach us also" (45).
  - b) He pronounced three woes upon the lawyers (46-52).
    - (1) Their loading men with burdens.
    - (2) Their building the tombs of the prophets.
    - (3) Their taking away the key of knowledge.
3. When they came out, the scribes and Pharisees angrily tried to provoke Him to say things that would enable them to condemn Him (53-54).

### *Teach Us to Pray*

#### *Scripture*

11:1-13 And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. 2 And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. 3 Give us day by day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.

5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and

shall go unto him at midnight, and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine is come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him; 7 and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee? 8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. 9 And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. 10 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 11 And of which of you that is a father shall his son ask a loaf, and he give him a stone? or a fish, and he for a fish give him a serpent? 12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion? 13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

### *Comments*

*as he was praying.*—The prayer life of Jesus must have made a profound impression on His disciples. Many strange, unscriptural, and sometimes fanatical things have been taught about prayer with the result that it has been almost completely discredited by many people. But what Jesus taught about prayer is sensible, understandable, and entirely practical. There is no better way to learn what prayer really means than to give attention to what Jesus said on the subject and to follow the example He set in His own prayer life.

*Lord, teach us to pray.*—While it is natural for man to pray under certain circumstances, the fact remains that we must be taught to pray if we are to do so intelligently and in accord with the Scriptures. The Old Testament, particularly the Psalms, gives us many examples of prayer and shows us how to pray. Jesus' instruction and examples of prayer show us that prayer is the privilege that God gives to His children to talk to Him about anything at any time anywhere. The prayers of the apostles and the early church which are given in the book of Acts add helpful information on the subject. A study of the prayers of Paul for the church—for example, those in Ephesians and Colossians and Romans—will enlighten us on this very important phase of the Christian life. Paul reminds us

that we do not know how to pray as we ought (Rom. 8:26). He says that the Holy Spirit helps our weakness—the separation from the immediate presence of God because of sin—by making intercession for us. Christ is also our intercessor (8:34). The book of Revelation has much to say about prayer. One of the most significant prayers recorded in it is the closing words of John as he prayed, “Come, Lord Jesus.”

*as John also taught his disciples.*—It seems strange that we have no recorded prayer of John the Baptist in the Bible. His disciples must have been greatly impressed by his prayers, for they said to Jesus, “Teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.” The account of his ministry stresses his stern warnings and harsh judgments on the very wicked men to whom he preached. He called on sinners to repent. His disciples reveal another side of John, for he also taught his disciples to pray.

John the Baptist was like Elijah in many ways. Elijah sternly rebuked king Ahab for his wicked ways, and ridiculed the nonsense of fanatical prophets of Baal for the demonstration of what they called prayer. But there is no greater example of prayer given in the Old Testament than the prayer of Elijah when he said, “O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Answer me, O Lord, answer me that this people may know that thou, O Lord, art God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back.” I Kings 18:36-37. God answered that prayer, and the erring people said, “The Lord, he is God.”

*When ye pray, say.*—Jesus told them how to address God. As children, they were to speak to the heavenly Father with respect that arises from love and reverence. They were to think of His kingdom first, for His rule must always have first places in the hearts of His people. “Thy will be done” explains the meaning of the kingdom in the heart of the individual. Paul admonished the church to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts and the word of Christ dwell in them richly (Col. 3:14-15). His kingdom—the church—that came on the Day of Pentecost was to be made up of saints who really let Him rule in their lives. Every Christian should examine his own heart often to make sure that God does rule in every area of it.

Jesus taught them that God was concerned about their daily bread. In simple language they were to say, “Give us day by day our daily



bread." The heavenly Father constantly gives an abundant supply of food. Then why is it that so many people of the world go hungry all their lives? Can it be because men do not do His will on earth? There are economic, political, and social aspects to the problem. The only solution to them seems to be the transforming power of the rule of God in the hearts of men.

Jesus taught the disciples to pray for forgiveness as they had forgiven those indebted to them. See Matt. 18:21-35 for His instruction on the extent to which this principle is to be carried out. Many find it difficult to practice forgiveness. Too often, it is a matter of words and not heart. Forgiveness means to remember the offense no more (Heb. 8:12). Unwillingness to actually forgive may come from our unwillingness to believe that God really forgives sins. The misery caused by an uneasy conscience may often be expressed in aggressive and hostile attitudes toward others, with or without provocation. But Jesus makes it clear that if you do not forgive, neither will the heavenly Father forgive you.

The petition, "And bring us not into temptation" causes a problem since God does not tempt man. James 1:13. But Jesus and James say exactly the same thing. The prayer is for God to lead; His leading does not take us into temptation, it delivers us from evil. The providential leading of God will never lead one to sin. It may allow us to undergo trials which genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will enable us to endure. See James 1:2-4 and I Cor. 10:12-13.

*Which of you shall have a friend.*—The parable of the Friend at Midnight shows that God's children need not be ashamed to ask Him for help when in need. The parable of the Widow and the Judge teaches the lesson of persistency in prayer (Luke 18:1-8).

The word translated "importunity" really suggests that the man whose company came at midnight was not ashamed to tell his friend that he had nothing to set before them. It does not say that he kept pounding on the door until his friend, to stop the annoyance, got up and gave him what he wanted. Neither should we be ashamed to tell the heavenly Father just what our problem is, for He knows what it is before we ask Him.

*Ask, seek, knock.*—The man of the parable did knock on the door of his friend; he did seek help; he did ask for the bread he needed. This is but the common sense thing to do. Apply the same principle in prayer, for God answers prayer.

*And which of you that is a father.*—God knows how to answer prayer

far better than any human father. No father gives a stone when his son asks for bread. If you know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more does God know how to answer the requests of His children?

*give the Holy Spirit.*—According to Matt. 7:11, Jesus said that the Father gives “good things” to them that ask Him. The Holy Spirit is the agent through whom He gives the good things. Luke, by using a figure of speech—metonymy—stresses the agent, but Matthew emphasized the good things given through the Holy Spirit.

### *Casting Out Demons by Beelzebub*

#### *Scripture*

11:14-26 And he was casting out a demon that was dumb. And it came to pass, when the demon was gone out, the dumb man spake; and the multitudes marvelled. 15 But some of them said, By Beelzebub the prince of the demons casteth he out demons. 16 And others, trying him, sought of him a sign from heaven. 17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. 18 And if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out demons by Beelzebub. 19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. 20 But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. 21 When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace: 22 but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him his whole armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils. 23 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth. 24 The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. 25 And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. 26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man cometh worse than the first.

#### *Comment*

*a demon that was dumb.*—Demon possession in this case caused the

man to lose his ability to speak. When it was gone, the dumb man spoke and the crowds marvelled.

*By Beelzebub.*—He is the prince of demons or Satan (11:18). Demons were under the control of the devil. Some were attempting to suggest that Jesus was in league with the devil because He cast out the demon. Others were demanding a sign from heaven. The fact that the dumb man spoke was not enough for them, for they had no intention of believing anything that proved Him to be the Son of God. There will still be unbelievers when the Son of Man comes in His glory with the angels of heaven, but it will be too late to change the inevitable result of willful unbelief in this life.

*But he, knowing their thoughts.*—Recognizing their insincerity, Jesus proceeded to answer their false charge with a three-fold argument.

(1) The divided kingdom. A divided kingdom cannot stand. If Jesus was casting out demons by Beelzebub, then Satan was working against himself and his kingdom could not stand.

(2) Their sons. If Jesus' work—He had demonstrated his power to cast out the dumb demon—was accomplished by Satan's power, by whose power did the Jewish exorcists pretend to cast out demons? For proof that they did not really cast out demons see Luke's account of the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:14-18). If they claimed that it was by divine power, they were making God inferior to Satan. Their charge was absurd. "Let them be your judges," said Jesus, for they would have to admit the superiority of His work. Jesus added, "If I by the finger of God—that is, the Spirit of God (Matt. 12: 28)—cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." The genuine miracle of Jesus proved that the Father was working through Him. This was evidence of God's rule over them which meant judgment to those who rejected it.

(3) The strong man's house. The one who overcomes a strong man—Jesus did not question the strength of Satan—and destroys his goods must be stronger than the one he overcomes. Jesus, the Son of God, is stronger than Satan. He proved it by casting out the demon that was controlled by Beelzebub.

*He that is not with me is against me.*—Jesus demanded open allegiance to Him. To reject His miracles and demand "signs from heaven" was to be against Him. There is no neutral position.

*The unclean spirit.*—After passing through waterless places where nothing could rest, the unclean spirit came back to the house which it had left and found it empty. Taking seven other spirits more evil

than himself, he entered the house and dwelt there. This seems to explain the state of those who are against Jesus, for He said, "He that gathereth not with me scattereth."

Could this refer to the man from whom Jesus had just cast out the demon? Those possessed with demons were never charged with responsibility for their plight. According to Matt. 12:44-45, Jesus applied it to that "evil generation" that refused to believe in Him. They were then planning to crucify Him, and for that awful deed they would suffer the most terrible destruction ever to be brought on a city (Matt. 24:21).

*Praise for the Mother who Bore Him*

*Scripture*

11:27-28 And it came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the multitude lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck. 28 But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

*Comments*

*a certain woman of the multitude.*—The crowd had just witnessed the remarkable miracle of casting out the dumb demon. The woman paid tribute to Christ in an indirect way by voicing her praise for His mother. It was a perfectly natural thing for her to do. The words in no way tend to praise Mary beyond the suggestion of appreciation for the mother of Him who had been such a blessing to the distressed man. Mary herself had said that all generations would call her blessed. That was because she was to have the privilege of giving birth to the Savior of the world.

*Yea rather, Blessed are they that hear the word of God.*—Jesus approved the praise for His mother. But He said that those who hear the word of God and keep it are to be congratulated. All who do God's will are to share in the praise that belongs to His servants.

*Seeking a Sign*

*Scripture*

11:29-36 And when the multitudes were gathering together unto him, he began to say, This generation is an evil generation: it seek-

eth after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of Jonah. 30 For even as Jonah became a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation. 31 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and shall condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here. 32 The men of Nineveh shall stand up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, a greater than Jonah is here.

33 No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it in a cellar, neither under the bushel, but on the stand, that they which enter in may see the light. 34 The lamp of thy body is thine eye: when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. 35 Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness. 36 If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light.

### Comments

*it seeketh after a sign.*—Jesus called that generation evil because it was seeking after a sign. See Paul's comment on this attitude of the Jews in I Cor. 1:22-25. It was not wrong to want genuine proof before accepting even the word of Christ; the wrong lay in the fact that sign after sign had already been given and still they refused to believe. They wanted some sign from heaven, but they said His miracles were of the devil.

*the sign of Jonah.*—A sign is a mark that points out the distinction between persons or things. It may be the exhibition of divine power used to establish the claims of God's messengers. See John 20:30-31. Jesus explained "the sign of Jonah" by saying that Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites. The experience he had before coming to Ninevah marked him as a prophet of God. Because of it, they believed the thing he was preaching about the destruction of Ninevah.

But "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so the Son of Man would be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. 12:40). His resurrection was to be the sign that would mark Him as The Prophet (Acts 3:22-26). *a greater than Solomon is here.*—more correctly, *something greater*

than Solomon. The queen of the South, the queen of Sheba, came to see the wisdom of Solomon (I Kings 10:1-7; 3:10-28). In the Judgment, she would condemn that generation, because they were privileged to see something greater than the wisdom of Solomon. That was the wisdom of Christ. Paul calls Him "wisdom from God" and says that in Him "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden" (Col. 2:3; I Cor. 1:30).

*a greater than Jonah.*—that is, something greater than Jonah had offered as evidence to cause the men of Ninevah to believe. That something was the resurrection of Christ. When Jonah preached judgment to Ninevah, the men of Ninevah repented, that is, changed their minds about the thing he preached. That repentance was expressed by sitting in sackcloth and ashes and turning away from their evil ways. The generation to which Jesus preached should have changed their minds about judgment. Instead of saying that they were Abraham's children and assuming that nothing could ever happen to them, they should have been aware that they were like trees ready to be cut down and burned. On the Day of Pentecost, three thousand of them did repent and get themselves baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

*No man, when he hath lighted a lamp.*—The parable of The Lamp illustrates the meaning of Jesus' words about signs. He did not come to leave people in the dark about Himself. He was about to light the lamp of truth about Himself by His resurrection.

The eye is like a lighted lamp that is placed where people can see. But that evil generation was not willing to see the light of evidence in His miracles that proved Him to be the Son of God. They only saw evil; He cast out the dumb demon, but they only saw the power of Beelzebub. The light of the resurrection is the last great proof to lead men to believe in Him as Lord (Rom. 10:9-10).

### *Christ Criticized by Pharisees and Lawyers*

#### *Scripture*

11:37-54 Now as he spake, a Pharisee asketh him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. 38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first bathed himself before dinner. 39 And the Lord said unto him, Now ye the Pharisees cleanse the out-

side of the cup and of the platter; but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness, 40 Ye foolish ones, did not he that made the outside make the inside also? 41 But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, all things are clean unto you.

42 But woe unto you Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God: but these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. 43 Woe unto you Pharisees! for ye love the chief seats in the synagogues, and the salutations in the marketplaces. 44 Woe unto you! for ye are as the tombs which appear not, and the men that walk over them know it not.

45 And one of the lawyers answering saith unto him, Teacher, in saying this thou reproachest us also. 46 And he said, Woe unto you lawyers also! for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 Woe unto you! for ye build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 So ye are witnesses and consent unto the works of your fathers: for they killed them, and ye build their tombs. 49 Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send unto them prophets and apostles; and some of them they shall kill and persecute; 50 that the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; 51 from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zachariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary: yea, I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation. 52 Woe unto you lawyers! for ye took away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And when he was come out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things; 54 laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth.

### Comments

*a Pharisee asketh him to dine with him.*—This was not the earliest meal of the day nor the latest. Luke makes a difference between the two in 14:12. The Pharisee had probably invited Jesus to have lunch with him. Why did they continue to invite Him to their homes, since they used the occasions to criticize Him?

*had not first bathed himself.*—See Mark 7:3-4 for the customs of the Jews. Jesus did not observe this ceremonial washing. He was

criticized for His failure to conform. The Pharisees also criticized His disciples for the same thing (Matt. 15:1-20). In neither case was it a matter of sanitation. The Jews were offended because He did not observe their traditions. He condemned them because they made God's word void by their traditions.

*And the Lord said unto him.*—He had an answer for their criticism. He said that the Pharisees were more interested in outer cleanliness than in inward purity. He left no chance for them to misunderstand; He was talking about their impure hearts. He was aware of their motives in inviting Him to dine with them. He knew that they were full of extortion and wickedness. His judgment was severe. He said, "You foolish ones, don't you know that he that made the outside of the cup made the inside also?" They were not using good sense. It was just as important to keep the inside clean as the outside. This was a blow against their hypocritical display of righteousness.

*But give for alms those things which are within.*—When you give something to help the poor, give what is within and all things are clean unto you. This was His answer to the issue of cleanliness. What He was giving was out of a pure heart. His motives were pure in helping such as the man with the dumb demon. If they had invited Him from a pure motive, they would not have been critical about ceremonial cleanliness. But their purpose was to condemn; it came out of an inward part that was full of extortion and wickedness.

*But woe unto you Pharisees.*—The three woes condemn the Pharisees for (1) abuses in the matter of tithing, (2) pride expressed in the desire to have the chief seats in the synagogue, and (3) their contaminating influence over the people.

They were careful to give a tithe of those things that were relatively insignificant, but passed over such matters as justice and love of God. They loved the exalted places in the synagogues and the salutations in the market places that showed their power over the people. But the worst criticism was the last, for they were like tombs that men walk over without realizing that the tombs were there. But they were ceremonially contaminated even though they were unaware of it. They had come in contact with death, and were "unclean." In the same way, they were being contaminated by the Pharisees without realizing what was happening to them.

*And one of the lawyers.*—"Teacher, when you say this about the



Pharisees, you are condemning us too." Jesus didn't hesitate to accept the challenge; He pronounced three woes on the lawyers also. They were loading burdens on men that were hard to bear, but refused to touch them with a finger. See also Matt. 23:4. They were building the tombs of the prophets. This is slightly different from the charge against the Pharisees whom He likened to hidden tombs. The lawyers were building the tombs of the prophets ostensibly in their honor, but they were joining with the Pharisees who were seeking a cause to kill The Prophet. Their hypocritical display simply proved that they were true children of those who had been guilty of murdering the prophets of God. The responsibility for shedding innocent blood, from Abel to Zachariah, was to fall on that generation which was soon to crucify the Son of God.

*for ye took away the key of knowledge.*—They had taken away the key to salvation which is the knowledge of the Scriptures. They had done it by their traditions, teachings, and practices. They had not entered the door of salvation that God had opened for His people, and they were hindering others who wanted to do so.

*the scribes and Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently.*—They were waiting for the opportunity to condemn Him. Their anger had been aroused by the rebuke He had administered. They were waiting to get even. Their provocative attack was designed to cause Him to say something that would give them cause to condemn Him.

### *Summary*

The lessons which Jesus taught stimulated His disciples and the crowds to ask questions. The disciples wanted Him to teach them how to pray. He answered with an example, an illustration, and some additional explanatory remarks. The Lord's Prayer showed them how to use the elements of prayer; the story of the Friend at Midnight showed them the right approach to make; the remarks that followed showed that prayer is like the requests of a son for his father to give him the things he needs.

Not everyone was interested in learning from the Teacher; many only watched for an opportunity to criticize Him. The miracle of casting out the dumb demon caused some to say that He had performed it by the power of Beelzebub. But others ignored it and demanded a "sign from heaven."

## STUDIES IN LUKE

Jesus answered their false charge by a three-fold argument: (1) the divided kingdom, (2) the work of Jewish exorcists, and (3) the story of the strong man. His devastating rebuttal led to the verdict: "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." Indeed, they were like the empty house occupied by a demon and seven others worse than himself; their last state would be worse than the first. Rejecting Him would lead to their destruction.

Their demand for a sign was to be answered in the "sign of Jonah." The resurrection would establish His claims, for by it He was to be designated the Son of God.

A Pharisee had invited Him to have lunch with him. Jesus did not observe the ceremonies of these self-appointed leaders. He answered their criticism by showing the need for purity within, something they so evidently lacked.

The lawyers who were present took up the debate and accused Him of condemning them also. Jesus answered with a list of hypocritical practices of which they were guilty. By their example and by their teaching, they had taken away the knowledge of God's Word which is the key to salvation.

As He left the Pharisees house, the scribes and Pharisees continued to harass Him, hoping to find some excuse to condemn Him.

### *Questions*

1. What led the disciples to ask Jesus to teach them to pray?
2. How did He teach them?
3. Where else may we find information on this important subject?
4. What is known about the prayer life of John the Baptist?
5. What may we learn from the contrast between the prayers of the prophets of Baal and the prayer of Elijah?
6. What are some of the things Jesus taught the disciples to say when they prayed?
7. Why pray for forgiveness?
8. What is the point of the parable of the Friend at Midnight?
9. Why did Jesus say, "Ask, seek, knock"?
10. What does the reference to a son's requests to his father teach about prayer?
11. What part does the Holy Spirit have in answering prayer?
12. Why did some charge that Jesus was casting out demons by Beelzebub?

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

13. What were the three answers Jesus gave to this false charge?  
What is meant by each of them?
14. Why did He say, "He that is not with me is against me"?
15. What is the lesson of the unclean spirit?
16. Why did the woman from the crowd speak words of praise about His mother?
17. Why did Jesus answer her by speaking about those who hear the word of God?
18. What kind of a sign were some seeking?
19. What is meant by the "sign of Jonah"?
20. Why is the resurrection of vital importance to us?
21. What did Jesus mean by saying that something greater than Solomon is here?
22. How does the parable of the Lamp explain Jesus' answer to their request for signs?
23. Why did the Pharisee invite Jesus to dine with him?
24. Why did he criticize Jesus?
25. How did Jesus meet the criticism?
26. What did He mean by giving those things for alms that are within?
27. On what issues did He condemn the Pharisees?
28. What was the reaction of the lawyers to His criticism of the Pharisees?
29. What did He say to the lawyers?
30. What was the key of knowledge?
31. How had they taken it away?
32. What did the Pharisees and scribes do as Jesus left the house?

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told about Jesus' warnings and encouragements for His disciples (1-12).
  - 1. The circumstances: Opposition of the Pharisees (1).
  - 2. The warning: Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (1-3).
    - a) The leaven of the Pharisees is hypocrisy.
    - b) Their hypocrisy would be exposed; nothing was covered up that would not be uncovered.
    - c) The exposure would be complete: Things whispered in darkness would be heard in the light; things heard in the inner chamber would be shouted from the house-top.
  - 3. The encouragement (4-12).
    - a) As friends, He told them of God's protective care (4-7).
      - (1) Do not fear those who can kill the body—the Pharisees were plotting His death.
      - (2) Rather fear Him who has power to cast into hell.
      - (3) God cared for the sparrows, but they were of more value than many sparrows.
  - 4. Another warning: Confessing and denying Him (8-9).
    - a) Those who acknowledge Him before men, He will acknowledge before the angels of God.
    - b) Those who deny Him, He will deny before the angels.
    - c) One speaking against the Son of Man may be forgiven, but blaspheming the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.
  - 5. Added encouragement when brought before authorities (10-12).
    - a) Do not be anxious about what to say.
    - b) The Holy Spirit would teach them in that very hour what to say.
- B. Luke told about the man who came to Jesus about his inheritance (13-21).
  - 1. The circumstances (13-15).
    - a) He asked Jesus to tell his brother to divide the inheritance with him.
    - b) Jesus said, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?"

## CHAPTER TWELVE

- c) Then He warned: "See that you keep yourselves from all covetousness, for life doesn't depend on the abundance of your possessions."
- 2. The parable of the Rich Fool which Jesus used to illustrate His point (16-20).
  - a) A rich man's land produced well. He asked himself, "What am I to do, for I have no place to store the harvest?"
  - b) He answered his own question, "I'll build bigger barns and store the grain; then I'll say to myself, You have plenty for many years; take a good rest, eat, drink, and enjoy life."
  - c) God asked a question, "Fool, they are requiring your life from you tonight; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"
  - d) Jesus said, "That's the way it is with the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."
- C. Luke told how Jesus continued teaching His disciples the meaning of being rich toward God (22-53).
  - 1. He told them not to be anxious about food and clothing (22-34).
    - a) God's care made it unnecessary (22-28).
      - (1) Life is more important than food and clothing.
      - (2) God cares for the birds and the flowers; how much more for you, "O you of little faith?"
    - b) God's kingdom must have first place (29-34).
      - (1) The pagans seek for these things, but the Father knows about your needs.
      - (2) God's way: "Seek His kingdom, and these things will be added unto you."
      - (3) His encouragement: "Fear not little flock, it is the the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."
      - (4) His directive: "Sell what you have, give alms; and you will have treasure in heaven."
      - (5) The secret: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
  - 2. He told them to be alert concerning the Lord's coming (35-48).
    - a) It will be at an unknown time (35-40).

## STUDIES IN LUKE

- (1) Be prepared as servants who have the lamps burning as they watch for master's return.
- (2) As no one knows when a thief may come, so "in an hour that you think not, the Son of man is coming."
- b) It will be a time of giving rewards (41-48).
  - (1) In response to Peter's question, He told about the reward for the faithful.
  - (2) Then He told of punishment for the unfaithful according to their responsibility: many stripes, few stripes.
3. He urged them to be aware of the purpose of His mission (49-53).
  - a) It was like kindling a fire, but He had a baptism that He must undergo (49-50).
  - b) He warned that He had not come to give peace, but division even between members of a family (51-53).
- D. Luke told how Jesus chided the multitudes for being unable to read the signs of the coming storm (54-59).
  1. Why can't you interpret this time? (54-56).
    - a) They were able to read the weather signs.
    - b) Why couldn't they see the coming storm about which He had just given warning?
  2. Why can't you make the right decision about the thing you face?
    - a) He illustrated His meaning by showing that it is good sense to settle out of court before the case goes against you.
    - b) He pointed out the impossibility of escaping after the decision has been rendered by the Judge.

### *The Leaven of the Pharisees*

#### *Scripture*

12:1-12 In the meantime, when the many thousands of the multitude were gathered together, insomuch that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. 3 Wherefore whatsoever ye have said in the dark-

ness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. 4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom ye shall fear; Fear him, who after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not: ye are of more value than many sparrows. 8 And I say unto you, Every one who shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God: 9 but he that denieth me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God. 10 And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. 11 And when they bring you before the synagogues, and the rulers, and the authorities, be not anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: 12 for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say.

### Comments

*In the meantime.*—This warning followed the incident of the Pharisees and lawyers confronting Jesus as He came out of the house where He had been a guest of a Pharisee. His disciples could expect the same kind of treatment, for He had not called them to an easy task.

*the many thousands.*—Many things had attracted the crowds to Jesus, but the thing that caused them to gather at this time seems to have been the open discussion that was going on between Jesus and the Pharisees. One wonders if they really saw through the hypocrisy of the Pharisees? Perhaps not. See 12:57.

*he began to say unto his disciples first of all.*—The lessons recorded in this chapter were primarily directed to the disciples, but the multitudes overheard what He was saying. At the close of the lesson, Jesus directed a warning to the crowds about interpreting the times.

*the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*—Leaven is nearly always used in the Scriptures as a symbol of evil. At the time of the Passover, all leaven was excluded from the homes of the faithful people of Israel. Paul used this fact to teach that the whole Christian

life was to be observed "not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7-8).

But leaven is also used in the parable of the Leaven to indicate the effective working of the gospel message. The reason it can be used in both ways is seen in the manner in which it works. It has the power to transform whatever it touches. To expose oneself to the hypocritical teaching of the Pharisee was to run the risk of becoming like the Pharisees. On the other hand, to come in contact with the message of Christ is to come under the transforming power of the Gospel with the hope of becoming like Him (II Cor. 3:18).

*nothing covered up.*—The leaven of the Pharisees, said Jesus, is hypocrisy. When they spoke, it was as if they were speaking from under a mask of pretense at speaking the truth. They spoke falsehood under the guise of truth. But there was nothing that they covered up that would not be uncovered. Jesus had unmasked the Pharisees and the lawyers at the luncheon when He pointed out what they really were. See 11:37-52. Just so, hypocrisy was to be unmasked whenever it was confronted with the truth of Christ.

Jesus' own teaching was not intended to be made a secret thing, for it was to be shouted from the house tops that everyone might know what He taught (Matt. 10:26-27).

*Be not afraid of them that kill the body.*—The conversation had arisen out of the attack of the enemies of Jesus who were trying desperately to find an excuse for killing Him. His disciple also would face persecution. But they were not to fear those who might kill the body, but rather fear God for He alone could punish the wicked by casting them into eternal punishment. That this is a reference to God and not the devil seems evident from the remarks that follow encouraging the disciples to remember God's tender care for them. The devil, of course, can afflict the saints of God. He can bring trials upon them to prove their faith, but the genuine thing in their faith enables them to endure the trial (James 1:2-3, 12). Jesus did two things to encourage at this point: (1) He called them friends and (2) He reminded them that God was watching over them.

*five sparrows sold for two pence?*—On another occasion Jesus used the same thought and spoke of two sparrows that were sold for a penny (Matt. 10:29). Jesus repeated His lessons with variations from time to time. If we carefully note the context when such



variations occur, it will avoid the supposition that mistakes were made in reporting the incidents of the teaching ministry of Jesus.

The point of the lesson is this: the disciples of Jesus are of much more value than many sparrows. Not a single sparrow is forgotten in God's sight; He won't forget the friends of His Son.

*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*—This indicates the meticulous care exercised by the Father over the friends of Jesus. Why, then, should they fear those who would destroy the body?

*Every one who shall confess me before men.*—If they were to be known as friends of Jesus, they would have to acknowledge their allegiance to Him in the face of threats from those who might even kill the body. In his second letter to Theophilus, Luke reports instances in which that very thing was done (Acts 4:19-21; 5:33-42).

The disciples were to acknowledge Him as the Christ of God (Luke 9:20). The Son of Man acknowledges them as His friends. But to disown Christ before men would mean that He will disown them before the angels of God. Did Peter remember this when he disowned Jesus at the trial? Did the remorseful Judas think of it as he was about to take his own life after he had betrayed his Friend into the hands of the enemy?

*And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of man.*—Even the heinous sin of speaking against the Son of Man can be forgiven. But forgiveness involves repentance which is produced by responding to the Spirit-breathed Word of God. But there is one sin that cannot be forgiven.

*blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven.*—Were the Pharisees and lawyers whom Jesus had just reproved guilty of this sin? Jesus spoke by the Spirit, a fact that cannot be overlooked without failing to see why He mentions blasphemy of the Spirit in connection with forgiving those who speak against the Son of Man. Forgiveness depends on hearing and obeying the words He spoke by the Spirit (Acts 1:3; Luke 10:21-22). Rejecting this message constitutes an eternal sin when the rejection is final and complete. It is a sin that can be committed in this life, for Jesus said that it has no forgiveness in this life or in the life to come (Mark 3:28-30; Matt. 12:31-32). The reason is plain: Forgiveness depends on faith and repentance that must issue in obedience to the Word. The mind can be closed to the truth about Christ; the will can reach the place

where it can no longer respond to the appeal of God's love. Such a person is "past feeling." "It is impossible to renew such a one to repentance." See Eph. 4:17-19; Heb. 6:4-6.

Since it was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit to attribute the miracles of Jesus to the power of the devil, some say that the sin cannot be committed today. But this overlooks the fact that the miracles He performed by "the finger of God," that is, the Holy Spirit, were done to prove that He was speaking the truth of God. Rejecting this evidence was the fatal step. Jesus, of course, knew that these hardhearted men had completely and finally closed their minds to the truth.

*when they bring you before the synagogues.*—Just as Jesus had been put on trial by His oppressors so His disciples were to be brought before the authorities in the synagogues. But they did not need to fear such experiences, for the Holy Spirit was to enable them to speak the necessary words of truth in that hour (Acts 4:8, 13, 19-20). This promise was made to the apostles and not to the people in general. The Holy Spirit did guide the apostles into all the truth and enable them to leave the written record of it in the Bible (John 16:13-14; 20:30-31). When we face difficulties and trials, we can speak the truth by correctly using the message God gave us in the Bible.

To take this specific promise which Jesus made to the apostles and attempt to make it apply to believers in general is to disregard the fact that Jesus exercised special control over the apostles through the Holy Spirit. Jesus explained the function of the Holy Spirit to the apostles when He said, "He shall not speak for himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:13-14).

The Bible is the guidebook which we are expected to follow today (Rom. 2:16; II Tim 3:14-17).

### *The Man God Called a Fool*

#### *Scripture*

12:13-21 And one out of the multitude said unto him, Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me. 14 But he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you? 15 And

he said unto them, Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. 16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

### Comments

*And one out of the multitude.*—The lessons of this section were primarily for the disciples, but the crowds were listening also. This incident became the occasion for further instruction to the disciples on being rich toward God.

A man from the crowd asked Jesus to tell his brother to divide the inheritance with him. Jesus did not become involved in the family problem, for there was another issue before them that was of vastly greater importance. The eternal inheritance was being neglected. What He said about that became the basis upon which the man could settle his own problem with his brother. Jesus was the Savior, not just a social reformer; but in saving man from his sins, He pointed to the only effective way to overcome all kinds of injustice, social or otherwise. When we let the Word of Christ rule in our hearts we will be ready and willing to treat all men as God intended that they should be treated (Matt. 7:12; Col. 3:16).

*for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth.*—Jesus had just reminded the one who volunteered to follow Him that the Son of Man had no place to lay His head. He had also taught the disciples that God was mindful of their physical needs and that they were to ask Him for their daily bread. The point of Jesus' lesson was this: There is more to life than a material inheritance; life is not made up of possessing things. This life is temporary; the eternal inheritance is infinitely more important. To illustrate His point, Jesus told about the man God called a fool.

*What shall I do?*—He was completely selfish; he had not thought for the needs of others. The only thing he could think of was to build larger barns and store up more grain.

*take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry.*—Jesus did not say that the possession of wealth was wrong; it was the wrong use of it that He condemned. Neither is there anything wrong about rest, food, and proper enjoyment of life unless this be the only end in view. The rich fool prepared for the earthly life as if it were to continue forever.

*Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee.*—God called him "fool" because he had taken no thought for this eventuality. He had neglected the basic truth for all men, "It is appointed unto man once to die and then cometh the judgment" (Heb. 9: 27). In the very night in which he was prepared to live forever on this earth they were requiring him to give account of his life.

*whose shall these be?*—This question seems to be directed to the man who had asked Jesus to settle his problem about his inheritance. What if he did get the brother to divide their inheritance? A more important question: Was he rich toward God?

### *How to be Rich Toward God*

#### *Scripture*

12:22-34 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for *your* life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. 23 For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. 24 Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds! 25 And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit unto the measure of his life? 26 If then ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 28 But if God doth so clothe the grass in the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *shall he clothe* you, O ye of little faith? 29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, and what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. 30 For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. 31 Yet

seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you. 32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell that which ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

### Comments

*Be not anxious for your life.*—The man of the parable was overly anxious about eating and drinking and the enjoyment of this life. The disciples could be concerned about the kingdom of God, for they were to enjoy the providential care of God in this life. That did not mean that they didn't have to work, but it did mean that they could trust God who provides abundantly for all His creatures. The soul is more important than the food, and the body than the clothing it must have. To illustrate His point, Jesus called attention to God's care for the birds. They do not plant or reap or have barns in which to store food, but God cares for them. He added, "You are of much more value than the birds."

*add a cubit unto the measure of his life.*—Anxiety may shorten life, but lengthening it is another thing. Why then be anxious over things? Jesus illustrated this thought by pointing to the lilies of the field and to the fact that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them.

*cast into the oven.*—Dried grass and flowers were used as fuel for the oven where wood may not have been plentiful. God clothes the grass with such glory even though it is to last for a few short months; but how much more will He care for the saints who are destined to live forever with Him in the heavenly kingdom?

*but your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*—Jesus did not advocate the extremes of asceticism. He reminded the disciples that the Father knew of their needs and told them what to do that they might be met.

*Yet seek ye his kingdom.*—The kingdom of God is eternal and must have first place in the lives of the disciples of Our Lord. It was the good pleasure of the Father to give this kingdom to those who trusted in Him. Jesus challenged them to sell their possessions and give alms, for they were to be concerned about the treasure in heaven that does not fail. When life is over—for that is the point

of the lesson based on the parable of the Rich Fool—it will be clear why Jesus urged this course upon His disciples in contrast to giving attention to things that perish and do not make one rich toward God.

*For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*—Is your heart set on the things of God or on the things of this life? To be rich toward God is to have the heart set on the glories of His kingdom and the life eternal which the faithful will inherit.

### *The Coming of the Son of Man*

#### *Scripture*

12:35-48 Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; 36 and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. 37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and shall come and serve them. 38 And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find *them* so, blessed are those *servants*. 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. 40 Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh.

41 And Peter said, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all? 42 And the Lord said, Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will set him over all that he hath. 45 But if that servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he expecteth not, and in an hour when he knoweth not, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint his portion with the unfaithful. 47 And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*; 48 but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. And to whomsoever

much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more.

### Comments

*Let your loins be girded.*—This is the familiar figure of one gathering up the long flowing robes worn in that day and binding them about the body so as to be able to move without hindrance. It came to be a symbol of alertness and readiness for action. Jesus warned of the need to be alert, since His coming is at an unknown time.

The rich fool of the parable is still under consideration, for he illustrates the one who is not prepared for the future life. The account of the marriage feast and the coming of the bridegroom as given in Matt. 25:1-13 illustrates the point.

*in what hour the thief was coming.*—Paul used this figure in relation to the Second Coming: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (I Thes. 5:2). Since His coming is at an unknown hour, it is necessary to watch and be ready at all times. The rich fool of the parable did not know when his life would end or when he would be called upon to give account of himself to God. The Lord has delayed His coming through this time of God's longsuffering, but no one knows when it will end or when his time to prepare will be over. Of one thing we are sure: the Lord is coming! "Be ye also ready."

*unto us, or even unto all?*—Peter's question had to do with the story of the thief at night that showed the necessity of faithfulness in view of the unknown time of Christ's coming. Did it refer to the apostles or to all the people?

Jesus did not answer directly with "no" or "yes." He did answer in a manner that let Peter know that He was talking primarily to the apostles. They were to be wise stewards taking care of the Master's household while He was away. See I Cor. 4:1-2 for Paul's lesson on the necessity of faithfulness on the part of the apostles and others who share the responsibility of caring for the church of the Lord.

*But if that servant shall say in his heart.*—Jesus often presented both sides of an issue. His disciples were to be faithful and wise stewards, but if they should be unfaithful there was punishment awaiting them. Did Peter remember this lesson when he denied that he had never known such a person as Jesus?

*many stripes . . . few stripes.*—The degrees of punishment have to do with the servants: willful unfaithfulness merits many stripes; ignorance, few. But all unfaithfulness is punishable.

Does this passage teach degrees of punishment in hell? No wise servant should have to learn the lesson by experience. That punishment is too awful for the mind to fully appreciate just how terrible it is. The wise person will do all that is necessary to avoid it completely. Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels. No one who commits himself to the Lord and remains faithful will experience its pain and anguish, for there is the crown of life for those who are faithful to the Lord until death (Rev. 2:10).

The Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11-27) suggests that there will be a difference in the rewards to the faithful, perhaps that they are to be in proportion to the ability to enjoy them. But to be in the kingdom of heaven will be reward enough (II Pet 1:10-11).

### *The Mission of the Son of Man*

#### *Scripture*

12:49-53 I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what do I desire, if it is already kindled? 50 But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! 51 Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: 52 for there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. 53 They shall be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother in law against her daughter in law, and daughter in law against her mother in law.

#### *Comments*

*I came to cast fire.*—The lesson about the purpose of His mission came directly out of what He had just said about faithfulness. It was no easy task to which His servants had been called. Some, no doubt, thought that the reign of the Messiah would be one of peace and easy living. Some were looking for a temporal kingdom that would provide an abundance of food—they had a sample when He fed them on the loaves and fish. But actually for many His kingdom was to be marked by persecution, bitterness, hardship, want and death. See Paul's description of what it meant for him to serve Christ (II Cor. 4:7-11; 11:23-28).



Fire is used as a symbol of purification in some instances, but in this context Jesus meant the destructive power of fire. There was to be strife in families because of Him; some would be for Him and others would oppose Him bitterly.

*if it is already kindled?*—Jesus came to cast fire upon the earth. That fire was already kindled, for people were taking sides for or against Him. Some of the Pharisees were plotting to kill Him. But He continued to challenge His disciples to a life of complete dedication to Him. Many were responding by taking up their cross daily and following Him.

*But I have a baptism.*—Jesus' mission was to start men thinking about Him. The sacrifice on the cross was one thing He still had to accomplish. There were many things pressing upon Him which He had to care for before He could do this last thing the Father had given to accomplish (John 10:18; 17:4; 19:30). For one thing, He had to prepare His disciples for their mission of taking the Word of the Cross into all the world.

Jesus reminded the disciples that they must share His experience (Mark 10:38). There was a cross in the mission of the Master, and there was a cross in the mission of His servants.

### *Signs of the Coming Storm*

#### *Scripture*

12:54-59 And he said to the multitudes also, When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. 55 And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass. 56 Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? 57 And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? 58 For as thou art going with thine adversary before the magistrate, on the way give diligence to be quit of him; let haply he drag thee unto the judge, and the judge shall deliver thee to the officer, and the officer shall cast thee into prison. 59 I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the very last mite.

#### *Comments*

*When you see a cloud rising.*—Jesus had just been telling the disciples what His earthly mission would do to their lives and to the

lives of others who would take sides for or against Him. He also warned the crowds about the coming storm.

People were able to read weather signs, why couldn't they interpret the signs that pointed to the rejection of the Son of God and the resulting destruction that was coming upon Jerusalem? The setting of this whole lesson is the bitter opposition to Jesus expressed by the Pharisees and lawyers (11:52-12:1).

*And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?*—With all the evidence about them, why couldn't they make the right decision by themselves? That decision called for them to align themselves with Christ; for if they let the matter go before God the Judge of heaven, they would lose their case. And many of them did just that (Luke 19:42). Before Pilate they rejected their King, and on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit spoke through the apostles and charged them with the guilt of having crucified Him whom God made both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:23, 36).

*with thine adversary before the magistrate.*—The crowds were in danger of considering Christ as their adversary. He appealed to them to settle the issue before it was too late.

In Matt. 5:25, the same figure is used, but there it refers to the necessity of brethren adjusting their differences before attempting to approach God in worship.

*Thou shalt by no means come out.*—A person in debtor's prison had no possible way of earning money to effect his release. There is no escape from the final state of punishment into which sinner must go.

### Summary

The scribes and Pharisees continued their attack on Jesus after leaving the house where He had dined with the Pharisee. This became the occasion for His warning to the disciples. The false teaching of the Pharisees was like leaven, transforming all who came in contact with it into hypocrites like the Pharisees. But their hypocrisy was exposed by Jesus.

For the encouragement of the disciples, Jesus told them about God's protective care. He called on them to acknowledge Him even in face of all the threats of their enemies. He reminded them that the Holy Spirit would teach them what to say in the hour of need.

A man came to Jesus asking Him to tell his brother to divide their inheritance. Jesus told the story of the man God called a

## CHAPTER TWELVE

fool. He pointed out that life does not consist in possessions; the important thing is to be rich toward God. Jesus explained they could be rich in this way: it meant putting the kingdom of God first, for He said, "where your treasure is, there will be your heart also."

Since life is temporary, it is necessary to be alert to avoid being caught unprepared when the Lord comes again. When He comes, He will reward the faithful and punish the wicked.

His mission was like kindling a fire. Already there was the struggle going on between members of one's own family over their relation to Him.

Jesus chided the multitudes for their inability to see what was about to happen to them. He urged them to agree with Him before it was too late, for there will be no escape from punishment on the Judgment Day for those who fail to acknowledge Him before men.

### *Questions*

1. What was the occasion of Jesus' warning about the leaven of the Pharisees?
2. What was it that had caused the crowds to gather at this time?
3. Why did Jesus say that the leaven of the Pharisees was hypocrisy?
4. What important lesson did Paul teach using the figure of leaven to illustrate it?
5. How can leaven be used as a symbol of false teaching and also of teaching that is true?
6. What effect does the truth of the Gospel have on those who hear it and obey it?
7. What did Jesus do about the hypocritical teaching of the Pharisees?
8. What did Jesus tell the apostles to do about what He taught them?
9. Why did He say that they were not to be afraid of them that kill the body?
10. Of whom were they to be afraid? Why?
11. What lesson did He teach by calling attention to the sparrows?
12. What lesson did He teaching by calling attention to the fact that the hairs of their heads were numbered?

## STUDIES IN LUKE

13. Why did Jesus demand allegiance from His disciples?
14. What examples are given in the Scriptures of men confessing their faith in Him even in face of death?
15. Why could a word spoken against the Son be forgiven when blasphemy against the Holy Spirit couldn't?
16. What is this unforgivable sin?
17. What would the Holy Spirit do for the apostles when they were brought before the authorities of the synagogues?
18. How does God provide for the answers we may be called on to give today?
19. What was the request of the man from the crowd?
20. Why didn't Jesus do as the man requested?
21. What important lesson did Jesus teach by the story of the man God called a fool?
22. What foolish thing was the man doing?
23. What was his fatal mistake?
24. What does it mean to be rich toward God?
25. What is one to do to become rich toward God?
26. What did Jesus tell the disciples that would keep them from being anxious about food and clothing?
27. What can anxiety do for life? What can't it do?
28. What is the Father's concern about man's need for food and clothing?
29. How does one seek first the kingdom of God?
30. What did Jesus say about the heart and treasure?
31. What is meant by "Let your loins be girded"?
32. Why did Jesus liken His coming to a thief in the night?
33. Why did Peter want to know if Jesus was talking to all or just to the apostles?
34. How did He answer Peter's question?
35. What is the lesson of the unfaithful servant?
36. What about degrees of punishment?
37. What did Jesus mean by casting fire upon the earth?
38. In what way was it already kindled?
39. What did He mean when He said, "I have a baptism"?
40. What warning did Jesus give the crowds which He based on their ability to read the weather signs?
41. What storm warnings should they have been able to see?
42. What did He mean by saying that they should agree with their adversary?

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### *Outline*

A. Luke continued the account of Jesus' ministry of teaching and healing (1-21).

1. The lesson on repentance (1-9).

a) It was based on two tragic incidents (1-5).

(1) The Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices (1-3).

(a) The question: "Were they sinners more than all Galileans?"

(b) The answer: "No, but unless you repent you will likewise perish."

(2) The eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell (4-5).

(a) The question: "Were they offenders more than all others who dwelt in Jerusalem?"

(b) The answer: "No, but unless you repent you will likewise perish."

b) It was illustrated by the parable of the Fig Tree (6-9).

(1) Time to repent: A man came seeking fruit for three years; finding none, he ordered it cut down.

(2) The limit to God's longsuffering: The vinedresser said, "Give it special care for one more year; then if it doesn't bear fruit, cut it down."

2. Healing the woman with a spirit of infirmity (10-17).

a) The circumstances (10-13).

(1) She had had it for eighteen years.

(2) Jesus said, "Woman you are freed from your weakness."

(3) Jesus laid His hands on her and immediately she was able to stand up straight and praise God.

b) The reaction of the ruler of the synagogue (14).

(1) He complained that the miracle had been performed on the sabbath.

(2) The indignant ruler said, "There are six days in which work is to be done; on those days come and be healed, but not on the sabbath."

c) The Lord's answer to the complaint (15-16).

## STUDIES IN LUKE

- (1) He called attention to their hypocritical actions, for they led their animals to water on the sabbath.
- (2) He pointed out that this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound eighteen years, should be set free on the sabbath day.
- d) The effect of His remarks (17).
  - (1) The adversaries were put to shame.
  - (2) The people rejoiced for the glorious things that were done by Jesus.
- 3. A question about the kingdom: What is it like? (18-21).
  - a) It is like a grain of mustard seed that grew into a tree large enough for birds to build nests in.
  - b) It is like leaven which was hid in the meal until all of it was leavened.
- B. Luke continued the account of Jesus' journeys that led Him to Jerusalem (22-35).
  - 1. The question: Are there few that are saved? (22-30).
    - a) The circumstances (22-23).
      - (1) Jesus was teaching as He went through the cities and villages on His way to Jerusalem.
      - (2) Someone asked, "Lord, are they few that are saved?"
    - b) The answer (24-25).
      - (1) "Strive to enter by the narrow door."
      - (2) But many would try to enter after the door was shut.
    - c) The tragic state of those who were too late to enter (26-29).
      - (1) Their pitiful plea: We ate and drank in your presence; we taught in your streets.
      - (2) The just sentence: Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.
      - (3) The tragic state of the lost: Weeping and gnashing of teeth.
      - (4) The glorious state of the saved: Many from the east and west, from the north and the south sitting at the heavenly banquet in the kingdom of God.
    - d) The lesson summarized: Jesus said, "There are those who are last that will be first; and first that will be last."

2. The Pharisees' warning: Herod would like to kill you. (31-35).
- a) They urged Him to leave the area because of Herod's threat.
  - b) Jesus' answer, "Take this message to that fox: I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am finished with my work."
  - c) It was His intention to go to Jerusalem, for no prophet perishes outside of Jerusalem.
  - d) Jesus mourned over the city as He thought how they were guilty of killing the prophets; their house would be left desolate, but some would say, "Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord."

*Repent or Perish*

*Scripture*

13:1-9 Now there were some present at that very season who told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they have suffered these things? 3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. 4 Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? 5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 And he spake this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. 7 And he said unto the vinedresser, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why doth it also cumber the ground? 8 And he answering saith unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: 9 and if it bear fruit thenceforth, well; but if not, thou shalt cut it down.

*Comments*

*Now there were some present.*—This section continues the lesson which Jesus had been giving the people while meeting the com-

plaints of the Pharisees (11:53; 12:54). Care must be exercised to keep the chapter divisions from letting us assume that a new subject begins with the new chapter. Sometimes this is true, but there are times—as in this case—when the thought runs over into the new chapter.

Jesus had been speaking of judgment from which there is no escape. Apparently, in answer to His remarks, the people told about those Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices as an example of the kind of punishment He had described. But they had missed the point. Jesus said, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse than other sinners?" He had just told them about the necessity of settling cases out of court before it was too late to escape punishment. He had also spoken of the sin of failing to acknowledge Him before men (12:8-9). Those who wait until He comes again will find that it is too late. The case of the Galileans seems to suggest that it was not that they were worse sinners, but that they had reached a point where repentance was impossible, since repentance must be observed before death, not after.

*whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*—No details are given about how this happened. It is well known that the Roman soldiers were used to put down riots. They were none too careful about how they did it. It is possible that some disturbance had occurred while the people were offering their sacrifices. The soldiers may have killed the trouble makers on the spot. Their blood could have mingled easily with the blood of the animals which they were sacrificing.

*sinners above all Galileans.*—It seems to be admitted that those Galileans were sinners; what they had done that was wrong is not stated. The point is: they were not worse than other Galileans who were sinners. While others might not share the fate of those whom Pilate destroyed, they, nevertheless, were facing certain destruction that called for immediate action if they were to avoid it.

*except ye repent.*—Repentance is the change of the will that leads to changed conduct. In this case, the thing that should have led to that change of mind was the threat of punishment which would be worse than that which Pilate had inflicted.

The Scriptures point out at least three motivating forces that are designed to lead men to repentance, that is, change their minds and decide to do something about their situation. They are (1) the



goodness of God (Rom. 2:4), (2) godly sorrow for sin (II Cor. 7:10), and (3) the judgment to come (Acts 17:30-31).

To those who had failed to acknowledge Him, Jesus said, "Repent or perish." It was an urgent matter; there was no time for delay. *the tower of Siloam fell.*—This is a case of accidental death; there was no apparent connection between it and any particular thing they had done. Were they worse sinners than others? No. But they did face the future that involved eternal punishment if they failed to acknowledge Christ before men.

*And he spake this parable.*—This parable illustrates the fact that God does give men time to repent. We are reminded of the long-suffering of God in the days of Noah (I Pet. 3:20). He is long-suffering, for He does not wish that any should perish but that they should repent (II Pet. 3:9). The church at Ephesus was warned to repent or have their candlestick removed (Rev. 2:5). The history of Israel suggests that God will not tolerate the sinful conduct of men forever (Heb. 3:7-4:13; I Cor. 10:5-10).

*these three years I come seeking fruit.*—There is no lesson to be drawn from this time reference. It was probably the normal time to wait for the tree to produce, or it could suggest that the tree should have been producing all that time but hadn't done so. The tree represents the nation of Israel that was not producing the fruits of righteousness. They had been given ample time, for prophet after prophet had tried to bring them to repentance. The time of judgment was at hand; all that was left for the tree was expressed by the owner of the tree, "Cut it down."

*Lord, let it alone this year also.*—This is a plea for longsuffering toward a sinful people. One more year, and then if there is no fruit let it be cut down. Special care was given the tree. The year of unusual care may be the unusual privilege of the Israel to have the Lord in their midst to teach them what they should do to be pleasing to God and encourage them in every way to do it. He taught them; He healed their sick; He warned them of judgment to come; He revealed the loving Father to them; He even told them that He was to offer Himself for the sins of the people. What more could be done? And if they failed to respond, their fate would be worse than that of the Galileans or the eighteen on whom the tower fell.

*Healing a Woman**Scripture*

13:10-17 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath day. 11 And behold, a woman that had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years; and she was bowed together, and could in no wise lift herself up. 12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. 13 And he laid his hands upon her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. 14 And the ruler of the synagogue, being moved with indignation because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, answered and said to the multitude, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the day of the sabbath. 15 But the Lord answered him, and said, Ye hypocrites, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? 16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the sabbath? 17 And as he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame: and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

*Comments*

*teaching in one of the synagogues.*—Luke reports a good many such incidents, but there is a reason for doing so in each case. This miracle had a two-fold purpose: (1) To teach a lesson about the kingdom of God and (2) to help a person whom Satan had bound for all those eighteen years.

*a woman that had a spirit of infirmity.*—This is probably another case of demon possession, for the woman had a spirit of weakness, that is, the spirit had caused her to be weak. It was impossible for her to straighten up, and she had been that way for eighteen years. Satan had bound this daughter of Abraham, a faithful person in spite of her affliction.

*Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.*—Jesus laid His hands on her and immediately she was able to straighten up. But she had already been set free from the infirmity. A person who had been for so long in her condition would scarcely be expected to realize that it was possible to straighten up. The old habit would have to be

overcome. The touch of the Master's hand gave the necessary encouragement. Jesus did the same for the demon possessed boy (Mark 9:27).

*And the ruler of the synagogue.*—The woman glorified God for what He had done for her, but the ruler of the synagogue indignantly condemned Jesus because He had done this on the sabbath. Was this just a pious attempt to discredit Jesus so that he might hold his own power over the people? At any rate, Jesus made his remarks look rather foolish.

*the Lord answered him.*—He was the Lord of the sabbath and knew why the regulation had been given. It was not just for pious pretense or hypocritical display. He said, "You hypocrites, does not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him to water?" Then shouldn't this daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound these eighteen years be loosed on the sabbath? Who could say "no"?

*all his adversaries were put to shame.*—They were seemingly placing more value on animals than human beings. They should have been ashamed. But the people rejoiced over the glorious thing that had been done.

Man's work could be done in six days; but there was no time limit for the glorious work of God. And what better day was there to loose a faithful daughter of Abraham whom Satan had bound?

### *What is the Kingdom Like?*

#### *Scripture*

13:18-21 He said therefore, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it? 19 It is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his own garden; and it grew, and became a tree; and the birds of the heaven lodged in the branches thereof.

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? 21 It is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened.

#### *Comments*

*He said therefore.*—The response of the people to the miracle of healing the woman suggested the growth of the kingdom as illustrated by these parables. It is true that Matthew records them in

another context which simply shows that Jesus used the parables more than once.

*It is like unto a grain of mustard seed.*—The seed is small but the plant that grows from it is large enough for birds to build their nests in. Jesus had planted the seed of the kingdom, the Word of God; the people were already beginning to praise God for the things that He was doing for them.

When the kingdom was ushered in on the Day of Pentecost, the beginning was in reality small, for only three thousand out of the many that had heard the Lord or who may have heard the apostles responded to the gospel. Soon the number came to be about five thousand; then a great company of the priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7). Ultimately, it will be a countless number that will wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb and make them white (Rev. 7:9-17). In triumph, the voices of heaven said, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

*It is like unto leaven.*—While the parable of the Mustard Seed shows the visible, outward growth of the kingdom as presented in the history of Acts and the prophecy of Revelation, the parable of the Leaven shows how this growth is to be accomplished. See note on 12:1. The teaching of Jesus was already transforming the lives of people. The record in Acts shows how the gospel as it was preached by the apostles transformed lives of men and women. The transforming power of the gospel is equally effective today. But the gospel must be preached, for the leaven must be hid in the meal. The church loses sight of its mission when it turns aside to any other issue than the effective implanting of the leaven of God's Word in the minds and hearts of people.

### *Are the Saved Few?*

#### *Scripture*

13:22-30 And he went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and journeying on unto Jerusalem. 23 And one said unto him, Lord, are they few that are saved? And he said unto them, 24 Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. 25 When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye

begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us; and he shall answer and say to you, I know you not whence ye are; 26 then shall ye begin to say, We did eat and drink in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets; 27 and he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. 28 There shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves cast forth without. 29 And they shall come from the east and west, and from the north and south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 And behold, there are last who shall be first, and there are first who shall be last.

### *Comments*

*Lord, are they few that are saved?*—Just why the disciples asked this question, Luke does not say. It could have come about from various causes. The demands that Jesus made on His disciples were such that some wouldn't follow Him. The thought of the cross and self-denial was too much for some. Opposition to Christ was great, for most of the leaders were against Him. Great wickedness prevailed then as now in the lives of the many. Jesus had said that many go through the wide gate to destruction.

*Strive to enter in by the narrow door.*—The point is: make sure that you enter by the door that leads to salvation. That door is narrow, suggesting that few enter through it (Matt. 7:14). Some will expect to enter on their own terms, but will be unable to do so. Some will be too late.

*and hath shut the door.*—It may appear strange that Jesus would ever close the door of salvation. Some presume on His grace and mercy and do nothing about entering while the narrow door of salvation is open. The time will come when the door will be closed, and no one may enter then.

God did shut the door of the ark in the days of Noah. He did close the door of entrance to the Promised Land to the rebellious Israel. The day of God's longsuffering will end; when it does it will be too late to ask for admittance into the heavenly kingdom.

*Lord open to us.*—The pitiful plea of the procrastinator will not avail once the door is closed. The fact that people attended the feasts when Jesus was eating with them in His day will not be sufficient grounds for entrance to the heavenly banquet.

*Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.*—Is this harsh? Yes. But workers of iniquity are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. The very nature of heaven excludes them. See Rev. 21:8; 22:14-15. The time to put off the works of darkness is now (Rom. 13:11-14). It is necessary to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, if we expect to be a part of the company in the heavenly banquet.

*weeping and gnashing of teeth.*—The anguish of those who might have been in heaven with the Lord is awful to contemplate.

*when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob.*—Part of the punishment of the wicked will be to see what they have missed. The language seems to indicate that Abraham, Isaac, and the prophets will be recognized in heaven. If they will be, we may assume that all the saints will be recognizable in heaven. The individual will not lose his identity through the change that takes place in passing from this life to the presence of the Lord.

*yourselves cast forth without.*—Sin separates the saints from the sinners in this life even though they are like the wheat and tares that grow in the same field. But the separation will be made distinct after death. See 16:26.

*And they shall come from east and west.*—The mission of Jesus was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He sent the Twelve and the Seventy to the same group. But after His death, He sent the apostles into all the world with the eternal good tidings. Those who respond from east, west, north or south will sit down in the heavenly banquet with the saints of all the ages. The number will be like the multitude that no one could number (Rev. 7:9). But this is "few" in comparison to the many who neglect the great salvation. *last who shall be first.*—These words are used in a different context in Matt. 19:30. There the question was about the relation of the apostles who left all to follow Jesus to others who might follow Him. Those who bore the load in the first days of the kingdom will not be ahead of the last faithful Christian who dedicates his life to Christ before the end of the day of salvation comes. The parable of the Vineyard given by Matthew shows this to be so (Matt. 19:16).

The context in Luke, however, indicates that Jesus was thinking of the nation of Israel who had been first in God's consideration but were to be rejected because they were failing to produce the fruits of righteousness. Others, however, would be invited and the banquet table would be filled (14: 23-24). The gospel invitation reads, "Whosoever will may come" (Rev. 22:17). Jesus said to the Jews,

"The kingdom shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43). It would be a mistake to say that that nation is made up of Gentiles, for it is a nation of believers, whether Jews or Gentiles. See Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:14-18; Col. 3:10-11.

### *The Warning From Herod*

#### *Scripture*

13:31-35 In that very hour there came certain Pharisees, saying to him, Get thee out, and go hence: for Herod would fain kill thee. 32 And he said unto them, Go and say to that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am perfected. 33 Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. 34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killeth the prophets, and stoneth them that are sent unto her! how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her own brood under her wings, and ye would not! 35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

#### *Comments*

*In that very hour.*—There is a close connection between this incident and the one in which Jesus answered the question about whether few are saved. The warning came in the very hour when He was teaching.

The threat of Herod raised another question, since some thought of Jesus as a temporal king. If Herod should kill Him, how could the kingdom become the mighty force which He had described in the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven? But His kingdom was spiritual and He had no fear of the threats of petty rulers like Herod or even the mighty Caesars.

*Herod would fain kill thee.*—This is Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee and Perea. Jesus was operating in Perea at this time. The father of this ruler had tried to kill Jesus at His birth. Herod Antipas had caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. Perhaps the Pharisees were aware of all this and thought there was some real threat to Jesus' safety in the matter. It may be, of course, that they were trying to

discourage people from following Him. At any rate, Jesus was unmoved by the warning.

*Go say to that fox.*—He called Herod a fox because he was cunning like a fox.

*Today, tomorrow, and the third day.*—No threat of violence from any ruler could stop the program of the Son of God. He intended to go on casting out demons and performing cures. He was waging war against the devil and all who were associated with him, Herod included.

The suggestion about today, tomorrow and the third day simply indicates that Jesus was moving steadily toward the goal for which He came into the world. There is no reference in the remark to the years of His ministry or the time of His resurrection. See John 10:18 for Jesus' own view of His mission which He would accomplish in Jerusalem.

*and the third day I am perfected.*—That is, I am finished with my earthly task. See John 17:4; 19:30.

*no prophet perish out of Jerusalem.*—He had set His face to go to Jerusalem (9:51; 13:22; Matt. 20:17). Jerusalem was the center of the nation. The temple was there; the sacrifices for the sins of the people were continually being offered there. Jerusalem was the place where He would offer Himself as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the people. See Heb. 9:11-15; 10:1-10; 13:10-14. Jerusalem was the city "that killeth the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto her."

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.*—According to Matthew, the lament occurred after the Triumphal Entry and shortly before the death of Jesus (Matt. 23:37-39). Luke indicates that Jesus first uttered these words as He was approaching Jerusalem while still in Herod's territory. Some find it difficult to believe that He could have spoken these deeply emotional words more than once. But who can say that He didn't? Luke had made a careful study of all that he wrote. He was in a better position to know than today's critics. Since Jerusalem was the heart of the nation that Jesus had tried so hard to win back to God, why should it be thought impossible that their rejection and plan to kill Him should cause such extreme sorrow? He had tried to gather them under His protective care but they would have none of it.

*Behold, your house is left unto you.*—The word *desolate* is given in italics in the American Standard Version to indicate that it is



supplied by the translators to make the meaning complete. R. S. V. supplies "is forsaken" for the same purpose. Whether He meant the temple or the nation, Jesus said your house is left to you. There was nothing more He could do for them. Within a few short years the invading armies of Rome would bring desolation to Jerusalem. *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*—The words are quoted from Psa. 118:26. According to Matthew, they were uttered after the Triumphal Entry, but Luke has them before. Assuming that Jesus could have spoken them on two different occasions, the problem is to determine the meaning in each context.

According to Luke, Jesus was anticipating His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, for at that time the people did say, "Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord (19:38). According to Matthew, they may anticipate a time of acceptance after the death and resurrection of Jesus (Matt. 22:39). There are many who are acknowledging Him as King in the period that began on Pentecost and will end with His Second Coming.

### *Summary*

Things were happening fast in the busy ministry of Jesus. He was meeting the opposition, teaching the disciples and the crowds, and healing the sick. He was hurrying to Jerusalem, for no prophet would perish outside of Jerusalem.

He taught a lesson on repentance. It was based on two tragic events, the death of the Galileans and of those on whom the tower of Siloam fell. But these were not worse sinners than all other, for all will perish who do not repent. The lesson of the fig tree showed that time was running out; the warning was: "Repent or perish."

Jesus clashed again with the ruler of the synagogue when He healed a woman on the sabbath. Ridiculously, the ruler held that there were six days for work to be done but not on the sabbath; he called the healing "work." Jesus' answer drew a sharp contrast between their attitude toward the ox or the ass and the woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom He had loosed from Satan's bonds. The people were with Him, for they glorified God for what they had seen that day.

The growth of the kingdom was presented in two parables. Like the mustard seed, it would grow to great proportions; like the leaven,

the gospel of the kingdom would transform those who hide that Word in their hearts.

As He was going on the way to Jerusalem, someone asked Him, "Lord, are there few that are saved?" The answer seemed to say, "Yes," but all should strive to enter the kingdom and be one of them.

Word came about Herod's threat to kill Him. Jesus said to tell "that fox" that nothing could interfere with His program. But as He thought of Jerusalem where He was to die, He mourned over the city that was rejecting her King.

### *Questions*

1. How does Luke indicate the continuity between the events reported in this chapter and those of the previous chapters?
2. Why was the question raised about those whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices?
3. What lesson did Jesus teach from it?
4. Why mention those on whom the tower of Siloam fell?
5. What lesson did Jesus teach from this incident?
6. What is repentance?
7. What are the forces that lead to repentance?
8. What will happen to those who do not repent of their sins?
9. Does accidental death suggest that God is punishing the one involved?
10. What do the Scriptures teach about the longsuffering of God?
11. What lesson did Jesus teach from the parable of the Fig Tree?
12. What is represented by the three years mentioned in the parable?
13. What is represented by the year of special care given the tree?
14. What was the purpose of healing the woman in the synagogue?
15. What was her difficulty? How long standing?
16. Why did Jesus say, "You are loosed from your infirmity?"
17. Why is it called a "spirit of infirmity?"
18. Why did Jesus lay His hands on the healed woman?
19. What did the ruler of the synagogue say about the miracle?
20. What is the point of the contrast between what Jesus had done and the custom of the Jews?
21. Why did Jesus refer to the woman as a daughter of Abraham?
22. What effect did Jesus' answer have on the adversaries?

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

23. What was the reaction of the people?
24. Why did Jesus speak of the growth of the kingdom at this point?
25. How does the parable of the Mustard Seed illustrate the nature of the growth of the kingdom?
26. What do the Scriptures say about the ultimate growth of the kingdom?
27. What lesson does the parable of the Leaven teach about the growth of the kingdom?
28. What must be done with the Word in order for it to transform the life of an individual?
29. Why did they ask if the saved are few?
30. What did Jesus' answer imply?
31. What do the Scriptures say about the limit God places on the "Day of Salvation"?
32. Why is the door to salvation called "narrow"?
33. What will happen to the "workers of iniquity" who come too late?
34. Why "weeping and gnashing of teeth"?
35. What do the Scriptures teach about recognition of persons in heaven?
36. What does being on the outside and looking in on the heavenly banquet suggest as to the nature of punishment of the wicked?
37. Why did Jesus speak of those coming from east, west, north, and south?
38. How are all these to be invited?
39. What is meant by saying that the last shall be first?
40. Why did Jesus refer to Herod as a fox?
41. Was this a real threat or were the Pharisees trying to frighten Jesus?
42. What was Jesus' answer to the reported threat?
43. What did Jesus mean by reference to the third day?
44. Why was He going to Jerusalem?
45. Why did He mourn over Jerusalem?
46. What was to happen to "their house"? Why?
47. Where is the quotation about the coming of the Lord found?
48. To what does it refer?

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told about some things that happened when Jesus went into the house of a ruler of the Pharisees to eat (1-24).
  - 1. The miracle He performed (1-6).
    - a) The circumstances.
      - (1) It was in the house of the Pharisee.
      - (2) It was on the sabbath.
      - (3) They were watching Jesus.
      - (4) A man with dropsy was there.
    - b) The miracle.
      - (1) Jesus asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath or not?"
      - (2) They refused to answer.
      - (3) Jesus healed the sick man and let him go.
    - c) The victory: After He had healed the man, He followed up His victory by thoroughly discrediting those who had hoped to embarrass Him.
      - (1) He said, "Which of you who has an ass or ox fall into a well, will not pull him out on the sabbath?"
      - (2) They couldn't answer these questions.
  - 2. The lesson on humility (7-14).
    - a) The lesson for guests (7-11).
      - (1) They had been choosing the chief seats at the table.
      - (2) He illustrated His lesson by referring to the wedding feast, suggesting that guests should take the lowest place until invited to a place of greater honor.
      - (3) His point: "Every one that exalts himself shall be humbled and every one that humbles himself shall be exalted."
    - b) The lesson for the host (12-14).
      - (1) Don't invite those who can repay you; invite the poor, the maimed and the lame.
      - (2) In doing so you will be rewarded in the resurrection of the just.

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3. The parable of the Great Supper (15-24).
  - a) The occasion: One of the guests had spoken of eating in the kingdom of God—heaven.
  - b) The points of the parable.
    - (1) Invited guests offered weak excuses for not attending.
    - (2) The angry master of the house sent a second invitation to the poor.
    - (3) Because there was still room, He sent a third invitation that His house might be filled.
    - (4) None of those invited the first time were to taste his supper.
- B. Luke told about Jesus' challenging message to the crowd (25-35).
  1. The cost of discipleship (25-32).
    - a) Jesus told them what was involved.
      - (1) Hating members of one's own family.
      - (2) Taking up the cross and following Him.
    - b) Jesus illustrated the lesson.
      - (1) Counting the cost to build a tower.
      - (2) Considering the number of troops necessary to meet the enemy.
  2. The necessity of complete surrender (33-35).
    - a) He said, "The one who does not renounce all cannot be by disciple."
    - b) He illustrated His meaning with the parable of Salt.
      - (1) Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness what then?
      - (2) The answer: Good for nothing but to be thrown out.
    - c) The solemnity of His words: "He who has ears, let him hear."

### *Jesus Healed a Man With Dropsy*

#### *Scripture*

14:1-6 And it came to pass, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. 2 And behold, there was before him a certain man that had the dropsy. 3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath,

or not? 4 But they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go. 5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a sabbath day? 6 And they could not answer again unto these things.

### Comments

*when he went into the house.*—He had gone into the house of a ruler of the Pharisees on the sabbath to have a meal. The Pharisee could have been a ruler of the synagogue or he could have held some other position of authority among the Jews.

*there was before him a certain man.*—This sick man was in the immediate presence of Jesus. Had he been invited or was he—as in the case of the woman of the city (8:37-38)—one of the poor who had come in uninvited? The fact that Jesus sent him away after the miracle may suggest that he had come in of his own accord. On the other hand, it is possible that he had been invited for the very purpose of baiting a trap for Jesus. The Pharisees were looking for an excuse to destroy Him. Had they heard how He had discredited the Pharisees and lawyers on other occasions (6:7-11)? Were they aware that Jesus had put His adversaries to shame when He healed the woman with a spirit of infirmity?

Luke says they were watching Him closely. See also Mark 3:2. Other had tried and failed; perhaps they were hoping that they would succeed in embarrassing Him before their own group.

*And Jesus answering.*—A question was implied by the presence of the sick man. In the minds of those watching, the question was this: "What will He do?" Jesus spoke in answer to the implied question.

*Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?*—The lawyers, no doubt, who were present had debated the question on many occasions. They should have known the answer. But they were unwilling to risk an answer at this time, so they entered a state of silence and left the issue up to Jesus.

*And he took him and healed him.*—This is evidently what they were hoping He would do. But before they could launch their attack, He fired a question at them that they could not or would not answer. *Which of you shall have an ox or ass fall.*—When you have an ox or an ass fall into a well, what do you do, even if it is on the sabbath? The answer was clear; they would pull it out. A human being

was in distress; Jesus had extended a helping hand, even though it was on the sabbath.

Some texts add the word "son" to the list, but there is some question as to the correctness of the text in this matter. The comparison is stronger when it is between the man with dropsy and animals.

*And they could not answer.*—He had easily answered the question implied by the presence of the sick man, but they could not refute His logic when He drew the comparison between man and animal. They had to admit that He was right or keep still.

### *A Lesson on Humility*

#### *Scripture*

14:7-14 And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, 9 and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; and when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. 11 For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not *wherewith* to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

#### *Comments*

*And he spake a parable.*—There was an implied question in the presence of the sick man. Jesus called attention to a situation which all were able to observe and pointed out a lesson which it also implied. It was the right of the host to seat the guests in places of honor, but these rude people so lacking in humility were occupying

the places of honor without waiting to be assigned to them by the host.

*sit not down in the chief seats.*—That is, do not recline on the couch reserved for the honored guest until invited to do so. To avoid the embarrassment of being asked to move to a place of lower distinction, Jesus advised that they occupy the lower place first and wait until they were invited to occupy a place of greater honor. When the host says, "Friend, move up to a place of higher honor, you will be approved in the presence of all who are reclining at the feast with you."

It is evident that Jesus had not been invited to the place of honor that was rightly His, since He is the Son of God. A good question: To what place do we invite the Lord when we have banquets? *For everyone that exalteth himself.*—See Mark 10:42-45 for a similar lesson which Jesus taught the disciples. Peter says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Pet. 5:6). Humility is a virtue that should have been observed in the banquet which Jesus was attending. It is essential for those who hope to attend the heavenly banquet about which Jesus had been teaching. See Micah 6:8.

*to him also that had bidden him.*—The lesson on humility applied not only to guests but also to the host. It is evident that the motive of the one who invited Jesus was not what it should have been. He may have been seeking to take advantage of Jesus' own popularity. One poor man had been permitted to come into the house, but the guests for the most part were his rich neighbors and friends.

*When thou makest a dinner or supper.*—Or as we would say, a luncheon or dinner, for Jesus referred to a noon meal and an evening meal. The "feast" was a banquet.

*lest haply they also bid thee again.*—This was not to say that the rich man could not have his neighbors and friends as guests in his home; but this could be done from the wrong motive, for some expected to be invited into the homes of their guests.

The gospel invitation, as the parable of the Great Supper shows, is to the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind—that is, sinners who need the cleansing power of the Lord.

*and thou shalt be blessed.*—In the Book of Acts, Luke quotes these words of Paul, "Ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). There is a blessing in helping



the needy. All of us need to help others, for in doing so we help ourselves in a way that nothing else can.

*recompensed in the resurrection of the just.*—There will be a time when you will be paid back for what you have done for the poor. That will be in the resurrection of the just.

The resurrection, of course, is not limited to the just, but they are the ones who will be blessed in the resurrection. Paul spoke of the resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15). Jesus said, "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). There is one resurrection at which time both the just and unjust will be raised.

### *The Great Supper*

#### *Scripture*

14:15-24 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: 17 and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. 22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

#### *Comments*

*Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*—Heaven is thus represented as a great feast. The idea seems to have been

suggested by the remarks Jesus had made about inviting the poor to lunch or dinner. How fortunate it will be for those who shall have the privilege of being present at that heavenly banquet. Jesus used the occasion for two things: (1) to point out the general disregard for God and His Son whom He sent to tell those who had been invited to come to the feast, and (2) to indicate that although these had slighted the invitation, others would be invited and the places at the heavenly banquet would be filled.

*A certain man made a great supper.*—Jesus vividly set forth God's concern for the Jewish people and their disregard for all His efforts to get them to respond to His directions for their lives as His chosen people. They had known since God constituted them a nation at Sinai that they were invited to the heavenly banquet.

*he sent forth his servant.*—This seems to be a reference to the ministry of Jesus, a last effort to get the nation of Israel to respond to God.

*And they all with one consent began to make excuse.*—"They that were his own received him not" (John 1:11) is John's way of saying that the Jews in general—not just the Pharisees—had rejected the appeal of Jesus. On another occasion Jesus told the parable of The Wedding of the King's Son (Matt. 22:1-14). It teaches the same general lesson about the rejected invitation.

The Jews were God's chosen people, but, by the time Jesus came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they had assumed an attitude of utter indifference to God that exactly fits the description of the excuse-makers of this parable. Their excuses were insulting to the one who had invited them and wholly without justification. They were not the kind to buy a piece of land or a team of oxen without knowing something about them. The excuses were ridiculous. The one who said he couldn't come because he had just married a wife was disregarding the Law of Moses (Deut. 24:5). During the first year of marriage a man was excused from military duty so that he might have time for just such occasions as described in the parables.

While the Jews in general rejected Christ, the publicans and sinners did turn to Him for forgiveness and help. This is the second invitation which was extended by Jesus.

*and yet there is room.*—There is room in the heavenly banquet for others than the outcasts of the ancient Jewish society. So a third invitation was sent to those that might be found by the roads that let away from the crowded cities. This may suggest that the poor

had found shelter along the hedges that grew by the roadside. These were compelled to come in. Jesus is still emphasizing the fact that the invitation is extended to the humble.

The great commission is suggested by the third invitation. See Mark. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20. This third invitation is not limited to Gentiles, for the gospel invitation includes Jews as well as Gentiles. "Whosoever will, may come."

Jesus told the Jews who failed to produce the fruit of the kingdom that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to another nation that would produce the fruits of it (Matt. 21:43). That nation is composed of believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles (Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 3:28). The book of Romans proves that there is no distinction between Jews who are sinners and Gentiles who sin, for all sinners are objects of God's mercy and are in need of His grace. All are to come on the basis of faith expressed in obedience, since that is all that any sinner can offer (Rom. 3:21-25; 1:5; 6:1-4; 12:1-2).

*and constrain them to come in.*—By what means was the servant to constrain them to come in? Certainly not physical force. In all probability, the simple appeal of good food was enough to compel the hungry to come. But many are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Many are like the Rich Fool who was satisfied with material things and thought nothing of food for the soul.

Since the third invitation represents the gospel invitation, we may ask what force compels one to respond to it? The gospel is the power of God to save the believer. The force of the facts of the gospel—the evidence of the resurrection of Christ who died to save the lost—is sufficient to compel the earnest enquirer to believe that Jesus is the Christ (John 20:30-31). The gospel of God's love is a motivating force sufficient to lead one to repentance (Rom. 2:4). But even this force cannot reach those callous hearts that are past feeling because of long indulgence in sinful practices (Eph. 4:17-20). The gospel message about the power of the blood of Christ to wash away sin is a compelling force to the weary sinner (Heb. 9: 14-15; I Pet. 1: 19). The sinner that recognizes his need for a clean conscience will be compelled to come to the Lord for cleansing (Heb. 10:22; I Pet. 3:21).

Sinners were drawn to Christ for they saw in Him the embodiment of the message He proclaimed. Nothing less will be effective

in the efforts of His followers who seek to compel others to come to Him.

*that my house may be filled.*—This is the answer to the question about few being saved.

*none of those men that were bidden.* —Jesus again and again pointed out the fate of those who were rejecting Him. They will not taste of His supper; they will be on the outside watching those who come from the four corners of the earth to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

### *Counting the Cost*

#### *Scripture*

14:25-35 Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? 29 Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, 30 saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. 33 So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. 34 Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill; men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

#### *Comments*

*and hateth not his own father, and mother.*—On another occasion Jesus stated this same lesson in a positive form: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). Therefore we are forced to understand the expression "hate" in the light of this positive statement. It simply means that when it comes

to a matter of devotion to Christ or parents, Christ must be first in the absolute sense; parents, by contrast, are to be hated, for they cannot be put before Him.

But Jesus upheld the Old Testament law that required children to honor their parents (Ex. 29:2; Deut. 5:6; Eph. 6:2-4). He severely condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who made the Word of God an empty thing by their tradition that said if a man gave to God what he might spend to care for his parents he was not required to care for them (Matt. 15:3-6). Evidently, they were merely saying that they were giving to God, but in reality neither giving to God nor caring for their parents. Actually, caring for aged parents in obedience to God's command would have been giving to God.

Except for those cases in which parents bitterly opposed Christ, there would be no conflict in loving Him and parents also. See 12:49-53.

*and his own life.*—This shows that Jesus did not intend for a man to hate his parents in the ordinary sense of the term. But nothing—not even the dearest members of one's own family or life itself—can be exalted above Christ, if one is to be His disciple.

*bear his own cross.*—Jesus demands absolute priority in the thinking and love of His disciples. Selfish ambition has no place in the life of His followers. He had explained this to the disciples before (9:23). Now the multitudes are to learn the same lesson. Jesus was not willing to accept any disciple who was not willing to meet the demands of discipleship. See 9:57-62. If He had been interested in merely becoming the popular leader of an irresponsible crowd—a charge made at the time of His trial (23:2)—He would have made no such demands.

*For which of you desiring to build a tower.*—The high standard of discipleship made it necessary for those who would be His followers to count the cost before entering the service of the Lord. In our eagerness to see people become Christians, do we sometimes fail to observe Jesus' warning about counting the cost? Jesus' reference to building a tower and to the number of troops necessary to meet the enemy illustrates the lesson. Count the cost before beginning such projects, if you are to avoid the embarrassment of possible failure. Not just those who enlist, but those who fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith are to receive the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:7-8; Rev. 2:10).

*that renowneth not all that he hath.*—Paul is an excellent example

of one who renounced all for the sake of Christ (Phil. 3:8-11). But no less is required of all other followers of Christ. Jesus had already illustrated this in the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:44-45). All these remarks explain the meaning of true self-denial. See also Paul's challenge to Timothy as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:3-4).

*he cannot be my disciple.*—This is absolute! There is no place for half-hearted discipleship in the service of the Lord. See Jesus' warning to the lukewarm Laodicean church (Rev. 3:14-22).

*Salt therefore is good.*—This is still another illustration of the necessity of weighing the issues involved and remaining faithful to the end. Salt in this context is a symbol of dedication to Christ. Without dedication, a disciple is ineffective in his efforts to influence others for Christ; he is certainly to be rejected in the end.

Jesus used this same expression in another context (Mark 9:49-50). He had been discussing the destruction of the wicked in hell and added, "For everyone shall be salted with fire." He was referring to His teaching about hell which would act as a deterrent to wickedness. He said, "Have salt in yourselves"—that is, have this knowledge about the fate of the wicked in your minds that it might keep you from such destruction.

On still another occasion, Jesus spoke of His disciples as the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). In all probability, this means that the disciples by Christlike character and conduct and by teaching the truth of His Word are to preserve others from destruction.

*but if the salt have lost its savor.*—If the salt loses its salty taste, what then? It is fit for nothing but to be cast out. A disciple who loses the necessary dedication and consecration to Christ as suggested by cross-bearing and self-denial will be rejected; such a person cannot be His disciple.

*He that hath ears to hear.*—Thus Jesus emphasizes the lesson He has just taught. His hearers should heed His challenge and His warning.

### Summary

Opposition to Jesus became more intense as He came closer to the day when He would lay down His life for His people. His great popularity with the common people was a real challenge to the leaders who were determined to destroy Him, one way or another.

Another Pharisee invited Him to his house to eat. But a man with

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dropsy was there and they were watching Jesus to see what He would do, for it was the sabbath. He accepted the challenge; He healed the man; He embarrassed those who hoped to embarrass Him, for they were not able to answer the logic of His questions about their own acts on the sabbath.

Jesus was also watching the guests on that occasion. He saw them choosing the chief seats without waiting to be asked by the host to take the place of honor. He taught the powerful lesson, "Everyone that exalts himself be humbled and every one that humbles himself shall be exalted." And He was aware that the host had invited his rich friends who would in turn invite him to their homes. Jesus said to him, "Invite the poor, and you will be rewarded in the resurrection of the just."

One of the guests began to speak about the fortunate state of those who would be at the heavenly banquet. Jesus responded with the story of the Great Supper. God had invited His chosen people to come to the feast, but they made lame excuses for their insulting disregard for Him. Then Jesus indicated that the gospel invitation would be given to the sinners of all classes and that the heavenly banquet table would be filled, but those who had been invited would not get to taste the supper.

It is a serious matter to be a disciple of Jesus. He demands first place in the hearts of all who would be His followers. Not even father or mother may be put before Him. Before undertaking discipleship, count the cost. Complete dedication to Him is the price. Salt that loses its saltiness is good for nothing. A disciple who loses his devotion to Christ is worthless. Jesus closed His remarks with the solemn warning, "He who has ears, let him hear."

### *Questions*

1. Why did the Pharisees invite Jesus to eat with them?
2. How account for the presence of the sick man on that occasion?
3. Why does Luke say that they were watching Him closely?
4. What day of the week was it?
5. What question did Jesus put to the lawyers? Why?
6. Why didn't they answer Him?
7. How did Jesus defend His action of healing the man on the sabbath?

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8. What contrast did His remarks make between what He had done and what they were accustomed to do?
9. What were the guests doing that led to Jesus' lesson on humility?
10. What did He suggest that they do?
11. What happens to the one who exalts himself?
12. What did Peter say about humility?
13. What did Jesus say to His host about the guests he had invited?
14. Where should he have been looking for his reward?
15. What do the Scriptures teach about the resurrection of the just and unjust?
16. What was the occasion for the parable of the Great Supper?
17. What did Jesus show about the attitude in general toward God's invitation to the Great Supper?
18. What excuses had the Jews made for not responding?
19. To what class was the second invitation given?
20. How was this fulfilled during the ministry of Jesus?
21. Why was a third invitation given?
22. What does the third invitation represent?
23. To whom is the third invitation sent?
24. How can people be compelled to respond to the invitation?
25. How did Jesus illustrate the necessity of counting the cost of discipleship?
26. What did Jesus demand of those who were to be His disciples?
27. What is the significance of His remarks about salt in this context?
28. How are we to understand His remarks about one's parents?
29. What was the Old Testament law about caring for parents?
30. What had the Pharisees done that had nullified this law?
31. How does Jesus illustrate the meaning of cross-bearing and self-denial in this context?
32. Why did Jesus make such demands on His disciples?
33. Is the demand any less now?
34. What did Jesus mean when He said that everyone shall be salted with fire?
35. In what sense are His disciples the salt of the earth?
36. What did He mean by the reference to salt that has lost its taste?



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37. What is to be done with the disciple that is like salt that loses its saltiness?
38. Why did He say, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"?

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### *Outline*

- A. Luke told about another complaint of the Pharisees and scribes (1-2).
  - 1. The complaint was made when publicans and sinners were being attracted to Jesus in large numbers (1).
  - 2. The Pharisees and scribes muttered their grumbling complaint: "This one is welcoming sinners and is eating with them" (2).
- B. He told how Jesus answered their complaint with three parables about the lost (3-32).
  - 1. The parable of the Lost Sheep (3-7).
    - a) Jesus' question in answer to their complaint: What man who has a hundred sheep, if one of them gets lost, would not leave the ninety-nine and go after the lost one until he finds it?
    - b) What would he do when he finds the sheep? He would call his friends to rejoice with him, saying, "I have found my sheep that was lost."
    - c) The lesson applied: There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over the ninety-nine
  - 2. The parable of the Lost Coin (8-10).
    - a) Jesus' question: What woman who has ten pieces of silver wouldn't, if she loses one, search the house until she finds it?
    - b) What would she do when she finds it? She would call her neighbors and say, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece that was lost."
    - c) The lesson applied again: There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine persons who need no repentance.
  - 3. The parable of the Lost Son (11-32). In this parable Jesus gave detailed answers to all the problems involved in the complaint that He was receiving and associating with sinners.
    - a) The story of the prodigal son (11-20a).
      - (1) A man had two sons; the younger demanded his inheritance which the father gave to him.
      - (2) Soon the young man took all he had and went into a far country and wasted it in riotous living.

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- (3) After he had spent all his fortune, a famine occurred in the land; so he took a job herding swine.
  - (4) He became so destitute that he actually ate what the swine ate, but no man gave him a thing!
  - (5) When he came to his senses, he said, "How many servants in my father's house have food in abundance, and I am perishing in hunger!"
  - (6) He resolved to go back to his father and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven in your sight; I am not worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired servants."
  - (7) The lost son followed out his resolution and went to his father.
- b) The wonderful welcome the lost son received from his father (20b-24).
- (1) The father saw him coming from afar; he was deeply moved and, running to meet him, embraced him and kissed him.
  - (2) The son acknowledged his sin before his father; he said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven in your sight; I am not worthy to be called your son."
  - (3) But Jesus said that the father ordered the servants to bring a robe and put it on him and a ring and put it on his finger and put shoes on his feet. He ordered them to kill the fatted calf and prepare a feast so that all of them might eat and make merry.
  - (4) He also told how the father revealed his very heart when he said, "This my son was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found."
  - (5) They began to make merry!
- c) The murmuring complaint of the older brother (25-32).
- (1) As he neared the house, he heard music and dancing and asked, "What's the meaning of this?"
  - (2) They told him that his lost brother had returned, and that his father had welcomed him with the feast because he had received him safe and sound.
  - (3) The older brother got angry and wouldn't come into the house even though the father urged him to do so.

- (4) His bitter complaint:
  - (a) I served you all these years and never disobeyed a command of yours.
  - (b) You never gave me anything that I might make merry with my friends.
  - (c) But when this son of yours who devoured your living with harlots comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!
- (5) The father's answer. This is Jesus' answer to the complaint of the Pharisees that he was receiving sinners.
  - (a) "Son, you have been with me always, and all that is mine is yours too."
  - (b) "But it is right to make merry and be glad, for this your brother was dead and is alive; he was lost and is found!"

### *Christ Receives Sinful Men*

#### *Scripture*

15:1-2 Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. 2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

#### *Comments*

*all the publicans and sinners.*—Jesus had just been talking about the cost of discipleship and the demands which He was making on those who would be His followers. But the crowds of publicans and sinners—social outcasts who were looked upon with contempt by the Pharisees—continued to draw near to hear Him teach. It seems that the high standard of discipleship served to attract those who really knew what it meant to need the Savior. The challenge of the cross will draw men to Christ where a diluted "gospel" of ease will fail.

The Pharisees were always ready to seize upon these occasions to condemn Jesus. They were eager to make it appear that He was a "friend of sinners" when, as a matter of fact, He is *the* Friend of sinners.

Tax-collectors were generally looked upon as guilty of abusing their office and, of course, were classed as sinners.

*murmured.*—Jesus had on a few occasions been invited to have dinner with Pharisees, but when He ate with publicans and sinners these same Pharisees were quick to condemn Him. They tried to make it appear that He was a sinner too—guilt by association.

This same Satanic scheme is seen in various places in the ministry of Christ and His apostles. The Pharisees had tried to discredit Jesus in the eyes of the people by saying that He was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Paul and Silas faced the possibility of having their work ruined because of the demon-possessed person who followed them at Philippi (Acts 16:16-18).

*receives sinners.*—Jesus had made it clear that He had come to seek and save sinners—not any kind of sinners, but those who repented. He required His followers to renounce all and take up their cross and follow Him daily. Pharisees, of course, felt that they needed no repentance.

In answering the charge of the Pharisees, Jesus takes them at their own estimate of themselves and still shows that they were wrong in condemning Him for His attitude toward sinners. In the three parables that follow, He more than justifies His position.

### *Parable of the Lost Sheep*

#### *Scripture*

15:3-7 And he spake unto them this parable, saying, 4 What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? 5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. 7 I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance.

#### *Comments*

*this parable.*—Jesus used three parables or illustrations to answer the complaint of the Pharisees. They were three devastating blows at their false position. In them, Jesus more than justified His action in receiving sinners and eating with them, for His mission was to seek and save the lost.

The church, as the body of Christ, has the same mission. Evangelism is the first business of the church. But one wonders if the church has lost sight of its purpose in the world. Social reform—and there is need for so much work in this area—is not the first business of the church. Only the gospel can transform the hearts of men (Rom. 12:1-2). When that happens, he can transform the society in which he lives. The leaven of the gospel must be hidden in the heart before an effective transformation of society can be expected. It is the gospel that saves from sin, and it is sin that is causing all the trouble in the world today.

It is not the task of the church to take over the responsibility of the home and relieve parents of their duty to train the child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But many parents expect some faithful Bible school teacher to give their children all the religious training they will ever get; they seldom stop to thank the teacher for this work of love.

Much that is done in youth programs today merely serves to relieve parents from a responsibility that is theirs. Many parents never open their homes for youth meetings or provide transportation for groups of young people or funds for the necessary expense of the work. Yet these same people are quick to complain if "the church" fails to meet the problems of youth. Of course, parents who are active workers in the church will find that the association with other Christian parents helps immensely in the task of guiding young people in this evil day.

In many instances, the church faces the real danger of leaving its first love—love for Christ—by failing to do its first work which is the work of preaching the gospel to save sinners.

It is the responsibility of the church to uphold the standards of conduct that meet the approval of God. In no place is this more true than in upholding the Biblical standard for the Christian home. *one of them lost.*—This is the point of the parable. Jesus was justifying His effort to save the lost sinner. No one could argue that it was wrong to look for the sheep that was lost, and it took only little effort to apply this principle to the sinner who was certainly lost.

The sheep that got lost may have wandered off from the rest of the flock; perhaps it was still young and had not learned the dangers that beset its path. The case is different with men. Some are lost because they do not have the kind of home that God intended all

children to have. Children from broken homes or from homes where Christ and His Word are not honored have little chance to escape from the alluring appeals of sin today.

*the ninety and nine.*—The ninety-nine represent the Pharisees who felt that they were righteous and needed no repentance. The nine coins that were not lost and the elder brother who "never disobeyed a command" of his father also represent what the Pharisees thought they were. Jesus didn't argue this point with them. He was justifying His effort on behalf of those who knew they were sinners and needed His help.

*Rejoice with me.*—If the Pharisees had really needed no repentance they would have rejoiced when the sinner was saved. Heaven did; why didn't they?

*need no repentance.*—Repentance is the decision to forsake sin and live the kind of life that is acceptable in the sight of God. Both John and Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom that called on sinners to repent and produce the fruit of righteousness. Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. Of course, the Pharisees needed repentance just as much as any other sinner, but they were unaware of it. The case of the elder brother shows this to be true.

### *Parable of the Lost Coin*

#### *Scripture*

15:8-10 Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a lamp, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she find it? 9 And when she hath found it, she calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

#### *Comments*

*ten pieces of silver.*—Much has been said about what these represent. The tendency to treat the illustration as an allegory may cause one to lose sight of the real lesson. The parable simply says that the woman had ten pieces and lost one. What woman would not search diligently until she found the lost coin? So Jesus again justified His effort to find the lost sinner.

There is nothing to suggest that this parable teaches anything

different from that which is taught by the parable of the Lost Sheep, for the lost sheep and the lost coin represent the lost sinner.

Without reading too much into the stories, it is possible to see that the sheep got itself lost while the woman lost the coin. Was it through carelessness, or neglect, or irresponsibility? These parables are not about sheep and coins, but people! People are lost sometimes by neglect or indifference or carelessness on the part of others who should show some concern for their fellowmen. Who cares about the drop-out? In some Bible classes, one has to attend three times to become "a member." But he can be absent indefinitely without having anyone bother to find out why. Who speaks to the lonely stranger at church? Are some lost because no one has time to show them that the Savior cares?

*joy in the presence of the angels of God.*—If angels rejoice over the sinners who repent, why condemn Jesus for His effort to save them? The contrast is so great that we wonder if the Pharisees were beginning to regret the unfortunate position they had taken?

### *The Parable of the Lost Son*

#### *Scripture*

15:11-32 And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12 and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country; and there he wasted his substance with riotous living. 14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that country; and he began to be in want. 15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16 And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17 But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: 19 I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned



against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 and bring the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: 24 for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. 25 Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called to him one of the servants, and inquired what these things might be. 27 And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. 28 But he was angry, and would not go in: and his father came out, and entreated him. 29 But he answered and said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, and I never transgressed a commandment of thine; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: 30 but when this thy son came, who hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou killedst for him the fatted calf. 31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine. 32 But it was meet to make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

### Comments

*A certain man had two sons.*—Note the progress of thought in the three parables: a lost sheep, a lost coin, a lost son. The sheep got lost; someone lost the coin; but the son was an intelligent human being created in the image of God with the ability to think and decide his course of action. He deliberately left his father's house and wasted his life in riotous living.

*to feed swine.*—The wastefulness of sin led to degradation in sin. Jews were proud shepherds of sheep. They loved David, their shepherd king. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd. But for a Jew to become a swineherd was to sink to the lowest possible state of disgrace. Swine, according to the Law of Moses, were unclean. But this destitute son who was really lost actually ate with the swine.

*no man gave to him.*—He had friends while his money lasted, but none when it was gone. Those who lead others to sin usually abandon them when they are of no further use to them. This should be

a strong warning to those who run with the crowd that cares nothing for God or Christ or the Bible.

*But when he came to himself.*—When he realized that he was needlessly wasting his life, he resolved to do something about it. Repentance is mentioned in each of the parables, but in this one Jesus shows what it means to repent. It arose out of the awareness of the sinful, lost, and utterly hopeless state of the son who had wasted his life. It is the resolution to do something about the situation. It is inspired by the memory of home and all that it meant to be a son. It is accompanied by a sense of genuine humility that recognized that the right to be called "son" had been forfeited. It was a sense of appreciation of the privilege of becoming a servant in the father's household. It is the decision of the lost son who said, "I will arise and go to my father."

Sinners do have a responsibility for their condition and can do something about it; they can follow the instruction of the Word of God and go back to the Heavenly Father through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ who died that their sins might be blotted out. Repentance is accompanied by confession to the father of the sin committed against heaven in the father's sight. Few people have the courage to make such an acknowledgement before God. Too many are like the Pharisee who "needed no repentance." Such are not saved from their sins; they merely "join" the church! They are not really hungry for the "bread in the father's house." They act as if they were doing God a favor by casting their influence with His church. Phariseism is present in so many places today!

*And he arose and came to his father.*—The prodigal had left his father's house by his own free choice; he was returning as a result of the decision he had made to go to his father and home. Those who teach that we are born with a tendency to sin fail to see that it was absolutely unnecessary for him to have left in the first place. Neither was it necessary to waste his inheritance. James plainly says that "each man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed" (James 1:14). His own lust is his desire for that which is evil. God did make man with the ability to choose between the heavenly home and the alluring thing that Satan offers, but He did not make man incapable of resisting the devil. James says, "resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Being made in the image of God, man is capable of deciding whether he will please God or Satan—it is just that simple. The prodigal went into sin by

his own deliberate act; he returned to the father by his own deliberate choice, because he wanted to escape the intolerable state of sin. *But while he was yet afar off.*—The father didn't wait until he came knocking at the door; he saw him afar off and ran to meet him.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (II Cor. 5:19). He came from heaven to Calvary to meet the sinner who had the courage to start toward heaven. The starting point was the decision to get up and go to the father.

*moved with compassion.*—God's love and pity for a lost son is shown in the father's attitude toward his son who had the courage to want to get out of his sad state. This is Jesus' answer to those who were criticizing Him for receiving sinners.

*And the son said unto him, Father.*—Only part of the words of verses 18-19 are restated here. According to the footnote, the son repeated the confession as he planned it. Some may ask, "Did the father interrupt the son's confession?" It is impossible to tell from the text. The son planned the confession. For the son's sake, the father probably heard him out. After all, it was brief, but very necessary. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). One of the hardest things we may be called on to do is to admit that we have sinned, but the prodigal said to his father, "I have sinned." The Pharisee, of course, according to his own opinion of himself, didn't need to make such a confession. He was one of the ninety-nine that didn't need to repent. But John says that if we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar and His word is not in us (I John 1:10).

*Bring forth the robe.*—There is nothing in the father's action that indicates that anything less than full restoration of the lost son had ever entered his mind. It reveals the true story of the grace and mercy of the Heavenly Father. The sinner who repents and gets himself baptized into Christ, washing away his sins in the blood of the Lamb, becomes a member of the family of God with all the rights and privileges of a child of God.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psa. 103:12). He has said through the inspired apostle, "Repent and turn again that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). He has promised in the Word, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more forever" (Heb. 8:12). How wonderful is the grace of our Heavenly Father!

To be effective in the proclamation of the gospel, the church must return to the high standard of Christian living that meets God's approval (Rom. 12:1-2). Too many try to live half in Egypt and half in the Promised Land. The Father has not required the impossible, for He has provided the armor with which to withstand the devil. With the shield of faith, the Christian can quench all the fiery darts of the evil one (Eph. 6:16).

*let us eat and make merry.*—The feasting and joy in the father's house is contrasted with the famine and sorrow of the life of sin.

*for this my son was dead and is alive again.*—Sin brings death (Rom. 6:23). Did the critical Pharisee now see why Jesus was receiving sinners? He had reached the climax of His argument; with the finding of the lost son there was cause for real rejoicing by all.

*Now his elder son.*—The elder son presents a clear picture of the Pharisee's estimate of himself; he was like one of the ninety-nine that didn't need to repent. But he was angry that the father had received his lost son back into the family.

*I never transgressed a commandment of thine.*—If there had been any doubt that Jesus had the Pharisees in mind when He spoke of the ninety-nine, the nine, and the elder brother, this should remove it. The elder brother reacted exactly as the Pharisees had done.

The claim of the elder brother is remarkable to say the least. But the father didn't stop to argue the point with him; he accepted it at face value, but argued that it was appropriate to welcome his lost son who had returned.

*this thy brother was dead.*—The elder son in his anger had disowned his younger brother, just as the Pharisees had disowned the publican and sinner. With contempt, he said to his father, "This son of yours" devoured your living. He spoke as if he were in no way related to him. But the father, correcting this attitude, said, "This brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."

A more devastating answer to the position of the Pharisee could hardly be imagined. Only hearts that were completely hardened could fail to respond to the logic and love of Jesus' defense of His mission of seeking and saving the lost.

Sinners are dead through their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Christ shed His blood that their sins might be blotted out and that they might be made alive together with Him and sit with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:4-10).