

The Gospel of Luke

Dan Snaddon

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Luke 1

Luke is the longest of the Gospels and was written principally for the Greeks. Each Gospel presents the Lord Jesus from a different viewpoint.

Matthew as King of Israel.

Mark as the perfect Servant.

John as the Son of God.

Luke as the Son of Man. The human divine One.

The humanity our Lord is prominent in the Gospel. Luke alone tells us of the boyhood of Christ. He also reveals more of His prayer life than the other Synoptics. He mentions frequently His sympathy and compassion. This may account for our Lord's involvement with women and children.

Luke's Gospel is also known as the missionary Gospel. In it the Gospel goes out to the Gentiles, and the Lord Jesus is presented as the Savior of the world. Luke alone records the parables of the 15th chapter. The sending forth of the seventy and their subsequent mission.

The outline is very interesting.

The introduction. | Ch 1:1-4.

The Birth-Baptism-Genealogy-Temptation. | Ch 1:5-4:13.

The public ministry to the Triumphal Entry. | Ch 4:14-19:27.

The Rejection and Death. | Ch 19:28-23:56.

His Resurrection-Commission to His disciples- and His Ascension. | Ch 24:1-53.

Luke's introduction is masterly. He reveals himself as a historian as well as a doctor. His information came from two sources, written and oral. Verse 1 would describe the written sources.

The A.S.V. is very explicit in its interpretation of this verse. "For as much as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us."

Apart from Matthew and Mark we do not know who the others were.

Verse 2 describes his oral sources. "Those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses of and attendants on the Word have delivered them unto us."

Luke never claimed to be an eye-witness, but he interviewed those who were. Notice how he uses the "Word" as a name of Christ.

Verse 3 This verse shows that Luke, by his study, had gained an accurate understanding of the life of Christ. These he has put down in order, for the benefit of his most excellent friend Theophilus. The phrase "from the first" would be better translated "from above." In all other places where the word occurs it is so rendered.

To sum up—Luke's knowledge of the details of Christ's life was not only derived from written and oral sources, but was confirmed by divine revelation.

Verses 5-25 In these verses the birth of John the Baptist is foretold. In Verses 57-66 he is born and named. Verse 6 Note the character of the parents of John.

· "They were both righteous."

- “They walked in all the commandments and ordinances.”

- “They were blameless before the Lord.”

Verses 9-10 Notice the conditions prior to the message from heaven.

1. Zacharias as the priest was offering up prayer in the sanctuary.

2. The people were praying as they stood outside.

We need men and women of this caliber and attitude today.

When the angel appeared, Verse 11, Zacharias was afraid. Verse 12. On receiving the message that their prayer would be answered, and a son would be born to them. Verse 13. Verse 18 Zacharias was struck with the sheer impossibility of the promise.

His plaintive question expressed the pent-up doubts of his heart. “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well stricken in years.” He was stuck dumb. Unbelief brings dumbness.

Note now the character of the son who would be born. His name was to be John, “the favor or grace of Jehovah.” He would be great in the eyes of the Lord.

His greatness would be seen in three ways.

(1) He would be great in his personal separation to God.

He would not drink wine—made from grapes.

He would not drink strong drink—made from grain.

(2) He would be great in his spiritual endowment.

He would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth.

(3) He would be great in his role as the herald of the Messiah.

He would turn many to the Lord.

His ministry would be like Elijah's, seeking to bring the people into a right relationship with God.

In short, he would strive to gather out of the world a company of believers who would be ready to meet the Lord in the day of His appearing. This is a worthy ministry for each of us today.

The focus now changes from John to Jesus. Six months later the angel Gabriel reappears to a virgin called Mary. Verses 26-33 contain the message he brought to her. This is known as the annunciation. In essence it was that she was highly favored of the Lord. She was blessed among women. She would conceive and bring forth a son whose name would be Jesus.

Verses 32-33 show us the character of this son.

Verses 34-38 Jesus' miraculous conception. "How shall this be?" Mary asked in wonder, not doubt, "for I have never had relations with a man?"

God's answer to Mary's problem of "How?" was "The Holy Spirit will come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall over-shadow thee; and that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

In these few words we have the sublime statement of the incarnation. Note Mary's submission and surrender.

Verse 38. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."

Verses 39-56 Mary's visit to Elisabeth and Mary's Magnificat.

Mary may have gone to Elisabeth's to avoid the scandal which would arise in Nazareth when her condition became known. When Elisabeth heard Mary's voice, her unborn child leaped in her womb. Then the Holy Spirit controlled Elisabeth, guiding her speech and actions. Verse 41. Three persons in this chapter are filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist Verse 15—Elisabeth Verse 41—Zacharias Verse 67.

John was filled with the Spirit that he might prepare the nation for the coming of the Messiah. Verse 15-17.

Elisabeth was filled with the Spirit and she spoke for God. Verses 42-45. Zacharias was filled with the Spirit and he prophesied Verse 67.

Stress the importance of being filled with the Spirit.

Verses 46-56 These verses contain Mary's song magnifying the Lord. This song resembles the song of Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. The song is divided into three parts.

1. Mary praised the Lord for what He had done for her. Verses 46-49.
2. She praised the Lord for His mercy to those who fear Him in every generation. Verses 50-53.
3. She magnified the Lord for His faithfulness to Israel in keeping His promises made to Abraham and his seed. Verses 54-55.

Mary stayed with Elisabeth for 3 months, then returned to Nazareth.

Verses 57-66 tells us of the birth of John the Baptist. When the baby was born, the friends and relatives thought that he would be named Zacharias after his

father. Elisabeth told them, “His name is John.” Verse 63.

They appealed to Zacharias, who affirmed his name on a pad. Verse 63. Immediately after he wrote this, “His name is John,” his speech returned.

The rest of the chapter from Verse 67 is taken up with the prophecy of Zacharias concerning John. Liberated from the bonds of unbelief and filled with the Holy Spirit Zacharias was led to write this eloquent hymn of praise. In this song he praises God. Verse 68. “Blessed be the Lord God.” He praises Him for what He has done. 68-69. He praises Him for His faithfulness.

He describes the mission of John. Verses 76-77. He was the prophet of the Most High. He would prepare the peoples’ hearts for the coming of the Lord. He would proclaim Salvation through the forgiveness of sins.

He also likened Christ’s coming to the sunrise. For centuries the world has been in darkness. With the coming of the Lord the dawn would break. The light would illuminate those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death—the Gentiles. And would guide the nation of Israel in the paths of peace. Mal 4:2.

The chapter closes with the simple statement that John grew physically and spiritually, and that he remained in the wilderness until his public appearance to the nation of Israel.

Luke 2

In the previous chapter we learn of our Lord's conception. In Verses 1-7 of Chapter 2 we are told of the circumstances surrounding the birth, and the actual birth itself.

While Caesar Augustus was demonstrating his sovereign superiority over the Greek-Roman world, in reality he was really a puppet in the hand of God to further the divine program. The decree of Augustus brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem at exactly the right time for the Messiah's birth.

When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem it was crowded despite the urgent need and emergency the only place they could find was the stable of an Inn. While there Mary brought forth her first-born son, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. Verse 7. Thus God visited our planet in the form of a helpless Baby, in indescribable poverty, in an ill-smelling stable. He began His life in a manger, and ended it on a cross, and in between He had no where to lay His head.

The first announcement of this unique birth was not given to the religious leaders in Jerusalem. It was given to shepherds who were watching their sheep. Verses 9-10. These men were informed that a Baby had been born in nearby Bethlehem who was the Savior - Christ - Lord. Verse 11.

Verse 13. It was one angel who announced the birth, but heaven's pent up ecstasy could no longer be restrained. A multitude of angels appeared, praising God, and

saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men with whom He is well pleased." Verse 14. The men in whom God is pleased are those who repent of their sin and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Verses 15-20 As soon as the angels departed, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found, as the angels had said, the Babe lying in a manger. They then returned to their flocks glorifying and praising God.

Verses 21-24 The circumcision and dedication of Jesus. Three different rituals are described in this passage.

1. First there was the circumcision when Jesus was 8 days old. On this same day Jesus was named according to Jewish custom.

2. The second ceremony was concerned with Mary's purification. This took place 40 days after the birth of Jesus.

3. Then there was the presentation of Jesus to the Lord. At this time parents who could afford it were asked to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtle dove for a sin offering. Mary brought no lamb, but only two young pigeons, a reflection of the poverty into which Jesus was born.

Verses 25-35 Simeon's adoration and prophecy.

Simeon was a wonderful man. He was righteous - devout - waiting for the Messiah. The Holy Spirit was upon him. Verse 25. It was also revealed to Him by the Spirit that he should not die until he saw the Lord's Christ - Anointed. He was led by the Spirit to the temple. Verse 27. He took Jesus into his arms, worshipped God, and said: Verses 29-32.

Simeon was prepared to die after he had met the Lord. Simeon then spoke to Mary. Verses 34-35. Anna the prophetess like Simeon was waiting for the Messiah. She was a member of the faithful remnant of Israel. She was over 100 years old. Having been married for 7 years and widowed for 84 years. Notice her character and her work. She was faithful in her attendance at the Temples public services. She served God - she fasted and prayed day and night. Anna came into the Temple as Simeon was speaking to Mary.

She also gave thanks to the Lord - then she witnessed to those in Jerusalem, telling them about Jesus.

The early years of Jesus are described in verses 40-52. The normal growth of the Lord is set forth in verse 40.

- Physically - He grew and became strong.
- Mentally - He was filled with wisdom.
- Spiritually - the favor of God was upon Him.

Matthew gives us a few more details of His childhood. The visit of the wise men - The flight into Egypt - Herod's slaughter of the children - finally the return from Egypt.

At the age of twelve Jesus emerges from 12 years of seclusion to visit His Father's house in Jerusalem.

Verse 57 is a classic, it should be studied by all believers. The moral excellence of Jesus is seen in the words - "He was subject unto them." Though the Creator of the universe, He took His place as an obedient child in this humble Jewish family.

In Verse 52 we have the true humanity and normal growth of our Lord depicted.

- His mental growth - He increased in wisdom.
- His physical growth - He increased in stature.
- His spiritual growth - He increased in favor with God.
- His social growth - He increased in favor with man.
- He was absolutely perfect in every aspect of His growth.

At this point, Luke does not mention the eighteen silent years which the Lord spent in Nazareth as the Son of a carpenter. These years teach us the importance of preparation and training. They warn of the temptation to jump from spiritual birth to public ministry.

Luke 3

In the first 20 verses we have a birds-eye view of the life of John the Baptist.

In the first six verses the beginning of his ministry is mentioned.

The nation was in a mess politically and religiously.

Politically, Israel was strangled by having one emperor, one governor, and three tetrarchs to hold them in subjugation.

Religiously, it was absolute chaos because they had two high priests.

At this time the Word of God came upon John. "There was a man sent from God whose name was John." At this time of religious apostasy, he was the only man to whom God could entrust His message for that generation. Desert: Moses, David, Elijah, the Lord.

On receiving this message from God, he immediately traveled to the area around Jordan. There he called on the nation to repent of its sins, and to show their repentance by being baptized. His ministry was the fulfillment of Isaiah 40:3-5. By his ministry John was seeking to prepare the nation for the coming of the Messiah.

John's ministry was effective - many responded. To the insincere he said that they were "vipers." Verse 7. They were pretenders, in that they had shown no repentance. Though they claimed to be of the seed of Abraham, yet they stood condemned. Note John's stinging words;

Generation of vipers - wrath to come - axe - hewn down - cast into the fire.

Stung with conviction the people asked for practical suggestions of how to demonstrate the reality of their repentance. Note the three suggestions.

1. Verse 11. Love your neighbor - share your food and clothing with him.
2. Verses 12-13. To the tax gatherers he said be strictly honest in all your dealings.
3. Verses 14. To the soldiers on active duty he said, avoid three sins which were common to military men. Extortion - slander - discontent.

From Verses 15 to 17 John exalts the Messiah. He says, "I am not worthy to untie His shoelace. My baptism is by water—outward—physical." Christ's baptism would be "with the Holy Spirit and with fire." Christ's ministry was two-fold.

1. He would baptize believers with the Holy Spirit. Pentecost.
2. He would baptize with fire a symbol of judgment.

In Verse 17, Christ is depicted as a winnower of grain. The wheat He gathers into His granary. The chaff is gathered and then burned.

Verses 18-20. John is imprisoned by Herod. John's imprisonment took place about 18 months later. John had reproved Herod for living in an adulterous relationship with his brother's wife.

The Baptism of Jesus. Verses 21-22.

Luke now turns our attention from John to Jesus. At this point the Lord Jesus moves out into His public ministry. The first incident recorded is His baptism. There are several interesting points in this account of His baptism.

First, there is the revelation of the Triune God.

Second, Luke alone records that Jesus prayed at His baptism. This is in accord with one of the dominant themes of Luke's Gospel.

1. He prayed here at the outset of His public ministry. - Chapter 3:21.

2. Approaching the peak of His ministry, when the crowds were following Him, He prayed. - Chapter 5:16.

3. He spent a whole night in prayer before He chose His disciples. - Chapter 6:12.

4. He prayed alone, prior to Peter's confession. - Chapter 9:18.

5. He prayed on the mount of Transfiguration. - Chapter 9:28.

6. He prayed in the presence of His disciples. - Chapter 11:1.

7. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. - Chapter 22:41,44.

Thirdly, Jesus' baptism was one of three times when God spoke from heaven, and commended the Lord for His ministry. The other two times were The Mount of Transfiguration, Luke 9:35; and when the Greeks came to see Jesus, John 12:20-28.

The rest of Chapter three is taken up with the genealogy of Jesus traced through Mary. On the other hand Matthew traces Christ's genealogy through Joseph.

Notice the phrase in Verse 23. "And Jesus began to be about thirty years of age." This denotes maturity.

Gen 41:46 "Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh."

2 Sam 5:4 "David was thirty years old when he began to reign."

Emphasize the importance of waiting—learning—training—maturing.

Luke 4

The temptation of Jesus. V1-13.

Notice the phrases.

- And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit. (Verse1)
- And was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. (Verse 1)
- And returned in the power of the Spirit. (Verse 14)

Our Lord was always filled with the Holy Spirit. This was the reason for His victory over temptation, for His fortitude under pressure, for His power over disease - demons - death.

For victory in our lives - for the joy of the Lord in our hearts we too must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be completely yielded to Him.

It means to be completely obedient to the Word of God.

It means to be cleansed from every known sin.

It means to be richly indwelt by the Word of God.

The temptation of Jesus took place in three different places. The wilderness - a mountain - the Temple in Jerusalem.

Notice the means Jesus employed to defeat Satan. He used the Word of God - the sword of the Spirit. Heb. 4:12

The first temptation concerned the body.

The second, the soul.

The third, the spirit.

They appealed respectively to the lust of the flesh - the eyes - the pride of life.

There are some who say that the temptation is meaningless if Jesus was not able to sin. The fact is that Jesus is God, and God cannot sin. The Lord never relinquished any of the attributes of deity.

Some say as God He could not sin, but as man He could sin.

He still is God and Man and it is unthinkable He could sin. The purpose of the temptation was not to see if He would sin but to prove He could not sin. Only a holy, sinless man could be our Redeemer. The impeccable Christ.

Between Verses 13 and 14, there is a gap of about one year. During this time the Lord ministered in Judea. The only record of this ministry is found in John 2 thru 5. When Jesus returned to Galilee He was in the second year of His public ministry, and His fame had spread through-out the region.

Verse 16—Jesus returned to His hometown, Nazareth. On the Sabbath He went to the synagogue, as had been His custom, and stood up to read. He read from Isaiah 66. Quote Vs 18-19. This passage was acknowledged by the Jews as a description of the ministry of the Messiah. Jesus said, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” In essence Jesus was saying that He was the Messiah of Israel.

Verse 22—Though they were impressed with His gracious words, they rejected Him as their Messiah. “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

Verse 24—In this verse the Lord expresses a principle which is true in every age. “No prophet is accepted in his own country.”

In Verses 25-27 Jesus cites two instances from the Old Testament where this actually happened. When there was famine in Israel, Elijah was not sent to any Jewish widow. He was sent to a Gentile widow of Sidon. There were many lepers in Israel when Elisha was preaching. He was not sent to any of them, instead he was sent to Naaman the Syrian.

Imagine the impact of these words on the Jewish minds. They placed women, Gentiles and lepers at the bottom of the social scale. The Lord was saying here that He placed all three above unbelieving Jews. And that Old Testament history was about to repeat itself. He would be rejected by the Nazarenes and Israel as a whole. He would then turn to the Gentiles as Elijah and Elisha had done. The Jews were infuriated, and would have pushed Him over the precipice. Doubtless this was another effort of Satan to destroy Christ. He miraculously walked through the crowd and left the city. As far as we know He never returned to Nazareth.

In Verses 31-32 we find the Lord in Capernaum. In contrast to the people of Nazareth they recognized His teaching was authoritative. His words were impelling, convicting with power.

Verses 33-37 describe a typical Sabbath day in the Lord's life. Jesus went into the synagogue and found a man who was possessed with an unclean spirit. When the man saw Jesus he cried out loud saying, “Let us alone.” In reality the spirit cried out in terror “Ahhhhh!”

Notice how the demon acknowledged the deity of Christ - "the Holy One of God." Contrast the Nazarenes statement in Verse 22 "Is this not Joseph's son?"

Jesus then commanded the demon to "keep quiet, and come out of the man." The demon did so after throwing him to the ground. The people were amazed at the authority and power of His words. The reality of demon possession is seen in this passage. Also, the Lord's power over demons and disease.

In contrast to this, believers today should be possessed, controlled, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Verses 38-41 we see the Lord's mastery over disease and demons. First over Peter's mother-in-law, then as the Sabbath ended He healed many and cast out demons.

Notice the testimony of the demons. Verse 41. "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God."

Verses 42-44 The people would have kept Him. But He moved on into other cities, preaching the good news about the kingdom of God.

Luke 5

Verses 1-11 describe the call of Simon, Peter, James, and John.

There are several important lessons in this portion.

1. The Lord used Peter's boat as a pulpit from which to teach the people. Then He rewarded him with a great catch of fish.
2. Peter and his partners had toiled all night and caught nothing. Self-directed service is futile. The secret of success in Christian work is to be guided by Christ.
3. Notice Peter's obedience. "At thy word I will let down the net." The Lord rewarded him by giving such a great harvest that the nets broke. The boat could not contain the fish so they beckoned to their partners to come and help them. There was such an abundance of fish that both the boats began to sink.

Note the reaction of Peter in verse 8. "Depart from me" etc. The vision of the glory of God produced in Peter a sense of his own unworthiness.

It was so with Job. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Isaiah saw the glory of God, and cried out, "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips."

Every true servant of God has seen the glory of God, and realized his unworthiness.

The result of this encounter with Christ was that he was commissioned and called to leave off catching fish, and

henceforth catch men. Nothing in this world can be compared with the incomparable privilege of leading a soul to Christ.

Verses 12-15 is the story of the healing of the leper.

Note that Dr Luke says that he was “full of leprosy.” He was in an advanced state, and hopeless humanly speaking. The leper had absolute confidence in Christ’s ability to heal. Verse 12. But he wondered if it was His will. “If thou wilt.”

Similarly Christians should recognize Christ’s power to heal, but should always pray, “If Thou wilt.”

Paul prayed three times for the removal of his thorn in the flesh. But it was not God’s will to remove it.

The Lord prayed, “Not my will but Thine be done.”

Verse 13 To touch a leper was dangerous medically - defiling religiously - degrading socially. The leprosy fled at His touch - immediately he was made clean.

Verse 14 The man was commanded to show himself to the priest. This was possibly the first healed leper the priests had ever seen. This should have alerted them that the Messiah was among them, but their hearts were blinded by unbelief.

Verses 16-26 A paralyzed man healed.

Notice the prelude to this marvelous miracle. “And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed.” The secret and source of power is prayer.

As the fame of Jesus spread, the hostility of the rulers increased.

See Verse 17. Describe the incident.

When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the palsied man, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." This caused a controversy. Verse 21.

Why did the Lord say that it was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven you" than "Arise and walk?"

In one sense it is just as easy to say one as the other. The point here is that it is easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," because humanly speaking there is no way of telling if it has happened. If you say "Rise up and walk" then it is easy to see if the patient is healed. To prove that He had forgiven the man's sins, He gave the paralytic the power to walk.

In healing the man He was proving His Deity. He said, "Arise take up your couch, and go into thine house" Verse 24.

Verse 25 He rose up, picked up his bed and went home glorifying God. The crowd was amazed, and they too glorified God. They acknowledged that they had seen incredible things. The pronouncing of forgiveness of sins and a miraculous miracle to prove it.

Verses 27-28 The call of Levi.

Levi was a tax-collector. One day Jesus passed his office, and invited him to become His follower. Levi or Matthew immediately forsook all and followed Jesus.

Apply the call of Jesus to the audience.

Verses 29-39. The feast of Levi.

Three possible reasons for arranging this feast.

1. He wanted to honor the Lord.
2. He wanted to witness publicly to his new allegiance.

3. He wanted to introduce his old friends to Christ.

The Pharisees and scribes criticized Jesus for eating with sinners. The reply of Jesus is a classic. See Verse 31-32. Sick people need a doctor - healthy people don't.

In so saying Jesus said, "My actions are in accord with My purpose in coming into the world."

They also interrogated Jesus on the custom of fasting. They said John the Baptist fasted - his disciples also. Jesus replied that there was no reason for His disciples to fast while He was still with them. The time would come, after He was taken forcibly from them, then they would fast.

Verses 36-39

The three parables that follow teach that a new dispensation had begun, and there could be no mixing of the old and the new.

In the first parable the old garment speaks of the law. The new garment speaks of grace. The two can't possibly mix.

The second parable teaches us the folly of putting new wine into old skins. They will burst. The joy of the Lord as pictured in the new wine, cannot be contained in the old outmoded forms and ordinances of Judaism.

The final parable says that no man having drunk of old wine will drink new wine. He says, "the old is good enough." This reflected on the reluctance of the religious Jews to forsake Judaism for Christianity.

Luke 6

Verse 1-11 Disputes over the Sabbath.

One Sabbath day the Lord and His disciples were walking through some grain fields. The disciples plucked some grains, rubbed them in their hands and ate them. This was permitted. Deut 23:25.

The Pharisees objected to this because it was done on the Sabbath. The Lord answered by using an incident in the life of David. The law of the Sabbath was never intended to forbid a work of necessity. Ox in the ditch etc.

David and his men were being hunted—they were hungry. They went to the house of God and ate the shewbread, which was reserved for the priests. God did not count David guilty, because of the extenuating circumstances.

In the present situation, Christ and His disciples were hungry. They ate because of necessity; therefore the law of the Sabbath was not broken.

Verse 6-11 In this second instance Christ heals on the Sabbath.

There was a man in the synagogue with a paralyzed hand. Maybe he was put there by the religious leaders. They watched to see how he would react.

He knew their thoughts - asked the man to stand up with Him. Then He addressed His critics. Is it lawful on the Sabbath days to do good, or to do evil; to save life, or to destroy it? Verse 9.

There was no answer from His adversaries—so Jesus healed the man. Verse 10. The Pharisees and scribes were furious. They wanted to condemn Jesus, but He had done no work—He only spoke a few words and the man was healed.

Note the truth here - the Sabbath was designed by God for man's good. When rightly understood it did not prohibit a work of mercy or necessity.

Verse 12-16. Jesus calls His disciples.

Please note and emphasize the all night prayer vigil before the Lord chose the twelve disciples. The Lord at this time prayed for wisdom and for guidance in His choice of the men who would be His followers. He no doubt also prayed God's blessing upon them.

How dependent the Lord was upon His Father.

Stress at this point the importance of prayer.

Following this night of prayer Jesus chose twelve men from the larger group that followed Him. These were chosen to represent Him as His ambassadors. First to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then later to the great Gentile world.

These men were comparatively young. In the prime of their life.

Examples of young men being called by God.

- Young Martin Luther
- the college students John and Charles Wesley
- George Whitefield
- D.L. Moody
- Charles Spurgeon (16 years)

· William Booth.

These men make interesting character studies.

1. Peter - A man of contradictions - truly possessed of two natures - capable of ascending to the highest and descending to the lowest. Eventually, in old age, about A.D. 70 sealed his testimony with a martyr's death.

2. Andrew, Peter's brother excelled as a personal worker. He first led Peter to Christ. Little is said of him, he appears to have been helpful, and served in a humble capacity. He too was martyred - nailed on a cross.

(3) (4) James and John the sons of Zebedee. Like the two mentioned previously they were fishermen. They were the sons of thunder — stormy — energetic young men. James was the first of the twelve to be put to death. John lived to be over 90 years of age, and though suffering much for Christ, died a natural death.

(5) (6) Philip and Bartholomew, also called Nathaniel. They were friends before they knew the Lord, and closer comrades afterwards.

(7) Matthew was a tax collector for the Roman government, his office was in Capernaum. He left all to follow Christ, and probably devoted his wealth to the cause of Christ.

(8) Thomas, sometimes called the doubter. Faithful, devoted, ready to die with Christ if necessary. He seems to have carried the Gospel to India.

(9) (10) James the son of Alphaeus, we do not know much about him. He and his brother Judas were the cousins of Jesus. Judas may have been the author of the epistle of Jude. Sometimes this Judas is called Thaddeus.

(11) Simon Zelotes was formerly a member of a secret order whose objective was to overthrow the Roman usurper. He turned from this to Christ as the true Deliverer of Israel.

(12) Judas, the traitor. He was probably the most cultured of the twelve. He was the treasurer of the group. He fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, selling the Shepherd of Israel for 30 pieces of silver. He is referred to as the “son of perdition.”

The disciples were not men of outstanding intellects. The thing that made them great was their relationship with Jesus Christ. They were probably young men in there twenties when the Lord called them.

Give an appeal here for young men to keep an open heart to the call of Christ.

Verses 17-19

The following discourse is not the same as the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount was delivered on a mountain. This address was delivered on a plain, or level place. The first had blessings but no woes. This address had both blessings and woes. The people came to Him from every quarter. Sick people - demon possessed people pressed around Him to be healed.

Verses 20-26 Blessings and woes.

The Savior began His address by bringing the attention of the audience to the four blessings and the four woes.

1. “Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God.” Here Jesus is speaking of a self-imposed poverty for His sake. He was referring to those who purposely chose to be poor in order to share Christ with others. The kingdom of God belongs to people of this caliber.

2. "Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled." This does not refer to the hungry multitudes in the world today. Instead it refers to disciples of Christ who live sacrificially in order to further the work of the Lord. These shall be filled with spiritual blessings.

3. "Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh." Jesus is referring here to the tears shed for His sake. Tears for the lost - perishing mankind. Tears over the divided and impotent state of the church. Those who sow in tears will reap in joy.

4. "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you—separate you from their company—reproach you—cast out your name as evil." This blessing is not for those who suffer for their own folly. It is for those who are despised - excommunicated - reproached - slandered because of their loyalty to Christ.

The key to understanding the four blessings is the phrase, "for the Son of man's sake." The four blessings describe the ideal believer in the kingdom of God who lives sacrificially - austere - soberly - enduringly.

Verses 24-26 The four woes.

The four woes describe those who are least esteemed in the kingdom of God, but counted great by the world.

1. "Woe unto you that are rich; for ye shall receive your consolation." The meaning of this verse is, that those who have wealth and who refuse to use it for the Lord's glory and the benefit of His people, they have already received the only reward they will ever get.

2. "Woe unto you that are full; for ye shall hunger." These are believers who believe only the best of this world is good enough. The Lord says that they will

hunger in a coming day when the rewards are given out for faithful service.

3. “Woe unto you that laugh now! For ye shall mourn and weep.” This woe is aimed at those who seek to satisfy themselves with the pleasures of the world, and seem oblivious to the fact that men and women are perishing. Those that laugh now will weep and mourn when they look back over wasted opportunities, self indulgence, and their own spiritual improvement.

4. “Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.” When all men speak well of you it is a sure sign that you are not living and proclaiming the message of the Gospel faithfully. The fathers in Israel praised the false prophets because they tickled their ears, they told them what they wanted to hear. The false prophets were more interested in the favor of men than in the praise of God.

Verses 27-38

The instruction given here is almost entirely against human reasoning.

Verse 27 “Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.” This is contrary to human nature. But it is what the Lord demands from His followers. To obey these precepts is to manifest the spirit of Christ. The Lord continues His instructions in Verses 28-30. Read and explain.

Verse 31 This is the golden rule.

Verses 32-34 These verses show us how the unsaved would act under certain circumstances. Much more is expected from a disciple of Christ. See Verse 35.

Verse 27-35 describes the way God treated us - He was merciful to us.

Verse 36 "Be ye also merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

Verse 37 Judge not - condemn not - forgive.

Verse 38 Love is manifested in giving.

The Christian ministry is expenditure. Those who give generously are rewarded generously. The picture here is of a man sowing seed. The more he sows, the greater his harvest. He is rewarded with good measure - pressed down - shaken together - and running over. A fixed principle in life is that we reap according to our sowing. Our actions react upon us. What we measure out to others is measured back to us again.

Verse 39 teaches us we cannot take another person beyond our own spiritual experience. If we attempt to do so the next result is disaster.

Verse 40 The disciple is not above his teacher: but every student when he is mature will be like his teacher. The more a teacher teaches his students, the more they become like him. But he cannot take them beyond his own degree of intelligence.

Verse 41-42 teach us that before we should correct or condemn others, our lives must be exemplary before our fellow-men and God.

Verses 43-44 Good trees bring forth good fruit.

Bad trees bring forth bad fruit. We judge a tree by the kind and quality of the fruit it bears. So it is in the area of discipleship.

Verse 45 A disciple who is morally pure and spiritually healthy brings forth good fruit from the treasures of his heart. On the other hand, a man who is basically impure can only bring forth bad fruit.

Verses 46-49

“Why call ye Me Lord,” Lord=Master, “and do not the things that I say?”

The word Lord means master meaning He has complete authority over our lives. To call Him Lord and fail to obey Him is absurdly contradictory.

The story of the two builders is often applied to the gospel. There is a further meaning. The wise man comes to Christ for salvation - hears the words of instruction - and obeys them, though battered by storms, he stands firmly. The foolish man on the other hand, hears the instructions - disobeys the teaching. He builds his life on carnal ideas. When the storm comes, he has no foundation and is swept away.

Luke 7

At the conclusion of His discourse Jesus went into Capernaum. While there, some Jewish elders came to the Lord to ask help for a Roman centurion. This centurion was kind to the Jews, even building a synagogue for them.

Like all centurions in the New Testament he is presented in a good light. See Luke 23:47 and Acts 10:1-48.

When the centurion's servant took sick, he asked the Jews to ask Jesus to heal him. This was quite a predicament for the Jews, because they did not believe in Jesus.

They said that he was "worthy." Verse 4.

When he met Jesus, he said, "I am not worthy." Verse 6.

Note the humility and faith of the centurion. Verse 7. He did not consider himself worthy enough for Jesus to enter his house. He did not consider himself worthy enough to come to Jesus in person. He believed that Jesus could heal without being bodily present.

Verse 8 This verse is a wonderful admission of Christ's power. He said, I am under the authority of the Roman government and I carry out their orders immediately. The soldiers under my command obey me instantly.

In saying these things he was recognizing the Lord's authority over disease, in other words he was saying, "Just speak the word and my servant will be made whole."

This was faith at its highest and best. Jesus marveled at him. No one in Israel had made such a bold confession of Jesus' absolute authority. Such faith could not go unrewarded. When the centurion returned home, he found his servant completely restored.

This is one of two times in the Gospel's where we read that "Jesus marveled."

1. He marveled at the faith of the Gentile centurion.
2. He marveled at the unbelief of Israel. Mark 6:6.

Verses 11-17 The raising of the widow's son.

Nain was a small village south-west of Capernaum. According to Luke this is the Lord's first encounter in the realm of death. He had already shown His power over demons and disease. Now He shows His complete mastery over death. He had compassion on the weeping mother, who was a widow.

Jesus stopped the funeral procession, touched the frame on which the body was being carried. Ordered him to arise - he immediately sat up - began to speak. Jesus then delivered him to his surprised but happy mother. Great fear came upon all who witnessed this scene. They glorified God. They felt He was working in their midst. They believed that Jesus was a great prophet.

Dr. Luke's case-book records Jesus' restoration of three "only children." The widow's son—Jairus' daughter 8:42—child possessed with demons 9:38.

Verses 18-36 Jesus communicates with and commends John the Baptist.

News filters through to John the Baptist in prison of the miracles Jesus was performing.

Verse 19 John sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if He was the Messiah.

This incident shows the weakness of the flesh. The best of men suffer brief lapses of faith. Physical oppression can lead to mental depression.

Jesus answered their question by allowing them to see the miracles He performed. Verses 21-22.

Now He says to them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard."

Verse 23 The Postscript—this could be considered a rebuke to John. Or an appeal to him not to abandon his faith.

Verses 24-35 Jesus praises John.

John was more than a prophet. Verse 26.

He was the messenger of God. Verse 27.

He was the greatest of all the prophets. Verse 28.

He was accepted by the people and tax collectors.

He was rejected by the Pharisees and lawyers.

Jesus likened this group to children playing in the street, not wanting to play either wedding or funeral.

John gave them an example of austerity, and self-denial. They did not like this—they criticized him and said he was demon possessed.

Jesus, on the other hand, identified Himself in a normal way with the common people including publicans and sinners.

The Pharisees were unhappy about this - they called Him a glutton and a wine-drinker.

We see from this discourse the impossibility of pleasing everyone. Verse 35 “But wisdom is justified by all her children.” Wisdom here represents Christ. The followers of Christ are wisdom’s children. Even though Christ is rejected by the masses, His true followers will vindicate His claims by lives of love, holiness and devotedness.

Verses 36-39 Jesus anointed.

This incident illustrates wisdom being justified by one of her children. When God cannot get religious leaders to appreciate Christ, He will get harlots to do so.

Jesus is invited to Simon the Pharisee’s house for a meal. A sinful woman appeared in the room at the same time. She brought an alabaster flask of perfume with her.

As Jesus reclined on a couch, eating, His head near the table. She stood at His feet and wept, washing them with her tears and drying them with her hair. She also kissed them repeatedly, and anointed them with the costly perfume. This is sacrifice and worship at its highest. Nothing was too good for Jesus.

Verses 40-50 The parable of the two debtors.

Simon’s attitude was altogether different. He felt that prophets and Pharisees should be separate from sinners. If Jesus were a prophet, he concluded, he would not have allowed this sinful woman to have touched Him.

At this point Jesus told the story of the money lender who had two debtors. One owed \$50.00, the other \$5.00. When neither of them could repay, he cancelled their debts. Jesus now asked Simon which of these men would love him the most. Simon answered correctly: “The one to whom the most was forgiven.” In answering this,

Simon condemned himself, as Jesus proceeded to show him. Since entering Simon's house the woman had poured out her affection and love on Him. She washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. She also kissed His feet repeatedly, and anointed His head with oil. This was an expression of appreciation and devoted love by the woman, to the Lord, for the blessing of forgiveness of her sins.

On the other hand, Simon had not even extended the common courtesies to the Lord, showing little appreciation or love. He and his colleagues remained unmoved - aloof and unsaved. The woman's sins were forgiven through her faith in Christ. The action of the woman is worship at its highest and best.

Luke 8

Verse 1. Notice the busy itinerary the Lord had. The disciples accompanied Him. As He ministered to others there were those who ministered to Him.

Several women are mentioned—they had at least one thing in common: they had been delivered from demons and disease.

- Mary Magdalene, she may have been a titled woman; was delivered from seven demons.
- Joanna was the wife of Herod's household manager.
- Susana was another and many others unnamed.

These all shared their substance with the Lord and His disciples. Their kindness to the Lord did not go unrecorded or unnoticed.

Verses 4-15 The parable of the sower.

This parable was told to the multitude then explained to the disciples. We have the sower, the seed, four kinds of soil, and four results.

1. The wayside soil was trampled by men, the seed devoured by birds.
2. In the rocky soil the seed withered for lack of moisture.
3. In the thorny soil growth was choked by the thorns.
4. In the good ground the seed brought forth one hundred grains for each seed.

The disciples asked the Lord the meaning of the parable. Verse 9. The seed is the Word of God. Verse 11 = His own teaching.

1. The wayside hearers heard the Word in a superficial way. This made it easy for the devil to snatch it away.

2. The rock-hearers heard the Word too - but they remained unrepentant. No encouragement was given to the Word, so it withered and died.

3. The thorny ground hearers seemed to get along for a time. They evidently were not genuine, for soon the cares - riches - pleasures of life took control, and the Word was stifled.

4. The good ground hearers represent true believers. They believed - received - and allowed the Word to mold their lives. They were teachable and obedient. They developed true Christian character and produced fruit for God.

Verses 16-18 The parable of the lighted lamp.

This parable is an exhortation to all who have truly received the Word. The Lord says here that they have lit a lamp and it should be set on a lamp stand. He should live - preach - and teach the Word at every opportunity. Note the two things which should not be done with the lighted lamp.

It should not be hidden under a vessel. Under a bushel. Hiding our lamp under a bushel speaks of our witness being obscured with the rush of business. We should use our business as a pulpit for propagating the Gospel.

Secondly the lamp should not be hid under a bed. The bed speaks of rest and comfort, sloth and indulgence. These can obscure the light, and keep it from shining.

Verse 17 Seems to suggest that if we hide our light, that despite ourselves it will burst through to our embarrassment.

Verse 18 We should be careful HOW we hear. If we share what we have with others, God will reveal greater truths to us. If we continue to hide what we have, God will take it away from us. The principle seems to be: What we don't use, we lose.

Verses 19-21

At this point we see Him surrounded by eager listeners. So much so that His mother and His brothers could not get near Him. On being informed that they desired to see Him He answered, "My mother, and My brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it." In Christ the spiritual relationship is much stronger than natural ties.

Verses 22-25 Jesus stills the storm.

In the remainder of this chapter Jesus shows His power over the elements, demons, disease, and death. All these obey His Word—only man refuses.

This storm probably was of satanic origin. Note the humanity of the Lord—He was sleeping. Note His Deity—he rebuked the winds and waves. The disciples revealed their lack of faith. They did not realize the extent of His power. Sometimes we are no different from them. When the storms of life are raging we too often despair.

Verses 26-29 The demoniac healed.

When Jesus arrived in Gadara He was met by a demon possessed man.

This was an extreme case of demon possession.

This man had been possessed for a long time.

He had discarded his clothes.

He shunned society.

He lived in tombs.

He had been bound by ropes and chains, but he had broken loose.

He was driven by a legion of demons.

When he saw Jesus, the devils in him pleaded with Jesus that He would not send them into the deep - abyss - Hell. They besought Him that He would send them into a herd of pigs. He gave them permission to go there, and the 2,000 pigs rushed into the Sea of Galilee and were drowned.

The news quickly spread. Crowds of people came to see. They saw two things:

1. The healed demon possessed man sitting - clothed - and in his right mind, at Jesus' feet.

2. They saw 2,000 dead pigs in the sea.

Their reactions—they asked Him to return to the other side and leave them alone. The healed man was then sent back to his friends to testify.

Sometime later Jesus returned to Decapolis and was met by a very sympathetic crowd. Could this have been because of the faithful witness of the healed man?

Verses 41-49 Two great miracles.

When Jesus returned to the western shore of Galilee He was met by Jairus. His daughter was sick, and he asked Jesus to come to his house and heal her. He consented to

do so, but as he went to the house the crowd pressed round Him.

In the crowd there was a timid, desperate woman. She had been sick for 12 years - she had spent her life-savings, but was no better.

She knew Jesus could heal her and getting close to Him she touched Him in faith and was healed. See Verses 45-48. The touch of faith brought deliverance.

After this miracle a messenger came from Jairus' house, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." Verse 49. But Jesus said to Jairus "Fear not, only believe." As soon as He arrived at the house, He went to the room where the girl was. He took her by the hand—said "Child arise" and she arose immediately.

Luke 9

Verses 1-6 The twelve disciples sent forth.

The disciples were invested with awesome power.

Verses 1-2.

At this point they would have the opportunity to practice the principles the Lord had taught them.

They were to trust Him for the supply of their material needs.

1. They were to take nothing for their journey. Verse 3. No walking stick-wallet-food-money-extra coat.

2. They were to stay in the first house that made them welcome. Verse 4. No moving around looking for more comfortable lodging.

3. They were not to prolong their stay among those who rejected the message.

4. They were to shake the dust from their feet as a testimony against them.

Verse 6 They traveled throughout Galilee preaching the Gospel and healing.

Verse 7-9 Herod's perplexity.

Word was sent to Herod that someone was performing mighty miracles in his territory. Immediately his conscience began raising questions. The memory of John the Baptist still haunted him.

Some said that Jesus was John risen from the dead.

Others said that He was Elijah. Herod said it cannot be John for I beheaded him. He wished he could see Him,

but never did until just before the Savior's crucifixion. This illustrates the power of a Spirit-filled life.

Verses 10-17 The feeding of the five thousand.

The disciples returned from their preaching tour, and reported to the Lord the things that had happened. He took them away to a quiet place.

Verse 11 The people followed them.

He received them-spoke to them-and healed those who needed healing.

The disciples dilemma-Five loaves and two fish to feed 5,000. Humanly speaking this was an impossible situation. He asked His disciples to seat the crowd.

Then He took the loaves and the fishes, gave thanks to God for them, and miraculously they were multiplied in His hand. The multitude were fed and there were twelve baskets left over.

This incident is filled with spiritual truth for us today.

- The 5,000 represent lost humanity-starving for the bread of God.
- The disciples picture helpless Christians, with limited resources.

The Lord's command "Give ye them to eat," is simply a re-statement of the great commission. The lesson is that if we give what we have, the Lord can multiply it to feed the spiritually hungry. This world could be evangelized in this generation if believers would surrender to Christ all that they are and have.

Verses 18-22

Verse 18 Note that Jesus is praying again. When He was finished praying, He asked them, “Who say the people that I am?”

All kinds of rumors were in the air. Jesus was on every tongue. Some thought He was John raised from the dead. Others said He reminded them of Elijah—Jeremiah or at least a prophet. They recognized Him as a great person. Is this not the situation today? He is being discussed far beyond the boundaries of the Christian Church.

Jesus was leading up to a crisis when He asked the question, “Who say ye that I am?” This is the watershed of our Lord’s teaching ministry with the twelve. Up to this point He had been leading them to a deeper appreciation of Himself. Two truths were about to emerge that would establish His identity forever, and publicly set the course of His life to the Cross.

1. “Thou art the Christ of God.”

2. “The Son of man must suffer many things.”

Verses 23-26 Christ’s invitation to take up the Cross.

The Lord had just announced the taking up of His Cross. Now He invites His disciples to take up theirs.

(1) This passage teaches that a true disciple of Christ must deny himself. He willingly renounces any right to choose or plan his life. He gladly recognizes the Lordship of Christ. He accepts the reproach of the world, submits to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

(2) Then secondly he must take up his cross daily. The natural tendency of everyone is to save or preserve his life. We live selfishly-complacently-routinely. We bask in comfort-luxury-and ease. Smug in our own

achievements. We may enjoy to the full the fruits of our attainments, but miss the true purpose and joy of life. On the other hand we may lose our life for the Savior's sake. We relinquish our selfish ambitions, and yield ourselves unreservedly to Him. We abandon our life and seek the kingdom of God and find new life full of joy unspeakable, and peace that passeth understanding. New life in Christ.

Verse 25 The context of this verse determines its meaning. It was spoken to the disciples and is a continuation of the previous thought introduced by the Lord.

1. Material riches can be a deterrent against full surrender. The Lord said, in effect: Suppose you could acquire all the gold and silver in the world. Could own all the real estate and all the stocks and bonds. But in the effort to acquire this you missed the true purpose in life. Where is the profit or what good is it to you?

2. Verse 26 Another deterrent to total commitment to Christ is the fear of shame. Why should the creature be ashamed of the Creator? Why should the sinner be ashamed of the Savior?

There is always this possibility of being ashamed. The Savior warns that those who are ashamed of Him and ashamed of His Word. When He comes in His triple-splendored glory, He will be ashamed of us. Dreadful thought.

The mention of His glory in Verse 26 is the introduction to what follows.

The Lord said that some of the disciples who were standing there would see the kingdom of God before

they died. Verse 27. This was fulfilled on the Mount of Transfiguration.

Verse 28-36 gives a description of the transfiguration.

About eight days afterwards Jesus took Peter, James and John up into a mountain to pray. As He prayed the appearance of His countenance changed. This is a glorious truth: prayer can change the look of a man's face.

The Lord's face glowed with a heavenly radiance. His clothing gleamed with dazzling brightness. This prefigured the glory which would be His during His coming kingdom. While He was on the earth His glory was veiled under flesh. During the millennium His glory will be fully revealed.

The picture here is awesome but glorious. We see the Lord clothed in most excellent glory, not in the rags of humiliation. We see Moses in a glorified state, representing those who have died in Christ. We see Elijah shrouded in glory, representing those who will be translated or raptured into the kingdom. Peter-James-and John are the representatives of Israel during the millennial.

Then there is the multitude at the foot of the mountain, representative of the nations who will be brought into the kingdom. They talk about the Lord's decease or exodus. His death was not a cessation of existence, but a departure from one place to another. The disciples missed some of this spectacular; they were asleep. These same disciples slept during the agony in the garden. When they awakened they saw Christ's glory. In an effort to preserve this heavenly atmosphere Peter proposed building three tents, etc. Then Moses and

Elijah disappeared—a cloud of glory enveloped them—they were very much afraid.

God spoke from the cloud. Verse 35. As soon as the voice of God was past—Jesus was left standing alone. This is how it will be in the millennium; He will have the preeminence in all things. He will not share His glory.

Verses 37-43 The unclean spirit cast out.

The next day Jesus and His disciples left the mountain and descended into the valley. From the multitude there came a distraught father, who pleaded for help for his demon-possessed son. This was a sad case; the demon was extremely violent. It tore him, and bruised him so badly that he foamed at the mouth. What added pathos to the condition was that the man had gone to the disciples with his problem, but they were not able to help.

Why could not the disciples help the boy? Was it their lack of faith? Was it dependence on flesh? Were they taking things for granted?

The power of God was available—the power of God was able—the human vessel was weak. The Lord was grieved and said, “O faithless and perverse generation.” The power was there, but the faith was weak.

Jesus healed the child, even though the demon resisted. They were astonished at His mighty power.

Verses 44-45 Jesus foretells His death.

Fresh from the glory of the mountain of Transfiguration, the Lord reminds His disciples of the gloom of the cross. This is the second time that the Lord predicts His death. Chapter 9:22. The disciples could not understand.

Perhaps they were still thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom.

Verses 46-48 Humility is the secret of greatness.

Not only did the disciples expect a glorious kingdom to be set up, but they hoped to hold positions of prestige and power in it.

Verse 46 Already they were arguing among themselves who should be the greatest. To offset this wrong Jesus brought a little child beside Him. Then He said, "Whosoever receiveth this child in My name, receiveth Me."

The truth that Jesus is proclaiming here is that true greatness in God's sight is loving children-caring for those who are passed by by the world.

"The least among you shall be great." Those who humble themselves and associate with humble-insignificant believers. Those who identify themselves with the lowliest of God's children just as the Savior did—these are the greatest in God's estimation.

Verses 49-50 It is surprising to find John in this role of prejudice.

They had found someone casting out demons in Jesus name, and evidently he had been successful. Those who witnessed this took exception to it. The Lord rebuked them and said, "Forbid them not; for he that is not against us is for us."

Note two things here.

1. There can be no neutrality as far as the Person and work of Christ is concerned. If men are not for Him, they are against Him.

2. In Christian service we must realize that no earthly society, however holy can lay exclusive claim on divine power. God is sovereign and can use whom He will.

The Galilean ministry of the Lord closes at this point. From now until Ch 19:28, the narrative covers the journey to Jerusalem.

Verses 51-56 The spirit of intolerance rebuked.

Verse 51 Jesus knew that His life was drawing to a close, and that between His being translated back to heaven and His present circumstances, lay the cross. To face this hour, He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem.

Enroute a Samaritan village was inhospitable to Him, because He was determined to go on to Jerusalem.

“They would not receive Him.” Verse 53. It was their last opportunity.

John and James were angry at their treatment of the Lord, and asked for power to call down fire from heaven to consume them, just as Elijah had done.

Jesus rebuked them, and reminded them again that this was the acceptable year of the Lord, and not the day of vengeance of our God.

Verses 57-62 The test of discipleship.

1. We have the volunteer disciple. He offered himself to the Lord—he was self-confident—self-reliant—his zeal was greater than his knowledge—he had never counted the cost. When the terms of discipleship were presented to him, Verse 58, they were too much for him, and we never hear of this man any more.

2. Verses 59-60 present another case. The Lord said to this man “Follow Me.” This man must have had potential

and evidently he was willing. But there was something he wanted to do first. Verse 59. The words “Lord” and “me first” cannot go together. Jesus said, “Let the spiritually dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.” Nothing should come between us and our service for God.

3. Verses 61-62 The third example of hindrances to discipleship. Like the first this man was a volunteer. He also said “Lord”—“me first.” The lesson here is that, nothing is to come between me and my service for the Lord. The expression, “Not fit for the kingdom of God” refers to service, not to salvation.

Luke 10

Verses 1-16 The mission of the seventy.

In Chapter 9 the twelve were sent forth to preach. This is the only account in the Gospels of the Lord sending forth seventy disciples. These seventy disciples were sent along the route the Lord would traverse on His way to Jerusalem.

He sent them forth by two's. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

Verse 3 Note what the Lord of the harvest says:

The harvest is great.

The laborers are few.

Pray that the Lord will send forth laborers.

In praying this we too must be willing to go.

Verse 4 "Go your ways." To all outward appearances they were as lambs among wolves.

1. Their conduct on the road is described Verses 1-4.

2. Their conduct in their place of lodging is described Verses 5-7.

3. Their conduct in the city that receives them is given in Verses 8-9.

4. Their conduct in the city who does not receive them is given in Verses 10-12.

Verses 16-19 The Lord mentions three cities in which He had taught and performed miracles. They had refused Him. He describes the judgment that would befall them.

Chorazin and Bethsaida have been so thoroughly destroyed that their exact location is not known today.

Capernaum became the home of Jesus after He moved from Nazareth. This city was exalted to heaven. But it despised the Lord Jesus, and it was cast into hell.

Verse 16 He who listens to the Word through God's servant—listens to God speaking. They who refuse to hear, not only refuse to hear the Lord, but also God. Awesome thought.

Verses 17-20 At the end of their mission the seventy returned. They were elated that the demons had been subject to them, through the name of Jesus.

Verse 18 Our Lord's reply is significant but difficult. It could mean that He saw in their victories over the demons a preview of the eventual fall of Satan from heaven.

J.F. Brown paraphrases the words. "I followed you on your mission, and watched its triumphs; while you were wondering at the subjection to you of demons in My name, a grander spectacle was opening to My view; sudden as the darting of lightning from heaven to earth, lo! Satan was beheld falling from heaven."

This fall is still future Rev 12:7-9. This will take place during the tribulation and prior to the coming of the Lord to earth.

A second explanation is interesting. These words are a warning against pride. "Yes, says Jesus, you are quite proud because demons were subject to you. But just remember the first sin. It was pride that caused the fall of Lucifer and his subsequent casting out from heaven." See that you avoid this sin.

Verse 19 Quote.

God's servants are immortal until their work is done.

Verse 20 His final admonition to them was: Rejoice not, that the demons are subject unto you. Only time Jesus said "Rejoice not." Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

Verses 21-24 "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit." Jesus was being rejected by the masses, and He looked with gratitude upon His humble followers and rejoiced in the Spirit.

Then He thanked the Father that He had revealed the truths of the kingdom to them. They were not the intellectuals or the scholars of the day. They were babes with faith-devotion-who gave unquestioning obedience.

Verse 22 "All things are delivered unto Me by My Father." God has put the entire universe under the authority of His Son.

"No one knows who the Son is but the Father." There is a mystery connected with the incarnation that no one but the Father can fathom. See how spiritual and far above human understanding all this is. The Father only knows the Son-the Son only knows the Father.

To varying degrees we can understand the Father, because the Son has revealed Him. What a privilege the disciples had and we have, in that prophets and king desired to see these things, but were not permitted.

Verses 25-37 The Lawyer and the Good Samaritan.

Lawyers were men who were experts in the teaching of the Law. This man tried to trap or trick the Lord.

“Master what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Perhaps he expected the Lord to repudiate the Law.

Jesus replied, “What is written in the Law?” Verse 27 conveys the lawyer’s answer. Verse 28 Jesus replied, “Do this and you will have eternal life.”

If the lawyer had been honest he should have replied, “I am lost and helpless with no hope of eternal life for I cannot keep the Law.” Instead, he sought to vindicate himself by asking: Who is my neighbor?

To answer the question the Lord told the following story. Verses 30-37. The victim probably was a Jew. He lay half dead on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho.

Verse 31 By chance a certain priest came down this road. When he saw the unfortunate man he kept on walking.

Verse 32 A Levite also came down, he showed a little more interest in that he looked at the man, but he too kept on going.

Verse 33 introduces us to a certain Samaritan. He was hated by the Jews. He had compassion on the Jewish victim.

Verse 34 He took care of his wounds, and brought him to an inn.

Verse 35 He made generous provision for his care.

Verse 36 Jesus virtually asks, Who was neighbor to this man? The priest, the Levite or the Samaritan?

Verse 37 The lawyer replies “the Samaritan,” for he showed mercy to him. The Lord replies, “Go thou and do likewise?”

Application.

The wounded man is a picture of the sinner. The priest and Levite represent the inability of the Law to help. This could be applied to religion today.

The Samaritan represents Christ. The Jews called Him this in derision. John 8:48. He was the one who brought help. He took him to the inn—this represents the local church. Then he said, “When I come again I will repay.”

Verses 38-42 Mary and Martha.

Our Lord wants our love more than our service. Our Lord wants us to sit at His feet. He wants to convert us from Martha’s to Mary’s in the same way as He wants to convert us from lawyers to neighbors.

The Lord does appreciate our service—but our service should be the product of our love and worship. See John 12.

The Birth of Christ

Luke 1:26-38

These verses contain the matchless story of the Annunciation. The story is matchless indeed, mysterious, magnificent, and majestic.

It is the story of the angel Gabriel coming to Nazareth. The story of a messenger sent from heaven, bringing to earth stupendous tidings.

This messenger sent from God, came to Nazareth a city of Galilee. Galilee was held in contempt by those in Judea. Nazareth was perhaps the most infamous city in the despised province. Describe this Nathaniel's statement, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth."

Leaving the Place mentioned, let us look at the Personalities involved. Verse 27 A virgin, whose name was Mary. A certain man whose name was Joseph.

Of Joseph we know little. Matt 1:19 and 13:55 inform us that he was "a righteous man" and that he was "a carpenter."

Now let us look at Mary. The Protestant Church has altogether wronged Mary. Mariolatry is idolatry.

In our rebound from the false position which the R.C. church has taken we have over-reacted and consigned her to a place of almost oblivion. In verse 27-28 we have Mary's character as seen by God.

- She was a virgin.
- She was highly favored.
- The Lord was with her.

· Blessed art thou among women. This means: Favored of God art thou before and above all other women.

Mary was the elect of God for the fulfillment of the tremendous honor of being the mother of the Messiah.

Verse 31 is the message from heaven.

“Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus.”

The glorious future of this Christ Child is revealed in verse 32-33 (More later).

Up to this point Gabriel has been doing all the talking.

Now Mary startled by the messenger and the message asks a perfectly natural question.

Verse 34—“How shall this be, seeing I know not a man.”

The angel’s answer is found in verse 35.

“The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee as a shining cloud; and so this holy, pure, sinless Thing which shall be born of you, will be called the Son of God.”

In this verse we have announced the miraculous conception of our Lord. We do not believe in the Immaculate Conception of Mary - but we do believe in the miraculous conception of the Lord.

Verse 38—This verse depicts Mary’s surrender and submission to the will of God.

“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”

All this was beautiful from the Divine standpoint, but was questionable from the human point of view.

She was betrothed to a righteous man named Joseph. There came to Joseph the shocking realization that his wife-to-be was pregnant. What were the alternatives he had to cope with the situation. He could make her a public example. Matt 2:19. Stoning to death. Or he could put her away privately. Matt 2:19. Cancel the engagement.

At this point the angel appeared to Joseph and allayed his fears. Joseph then married Mary right away. Then there must have been questioning - whisperings - suspicions. Explanation of the circumstances was impossible - Who would ever believe?

This background explains verse 39.

“Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste.”

She stayed in the hill country in seclusion for 3 months. After returning to Nazareth, Caesar Augustus issued an edict that every person living in the Roman Empire should return to his own city to be registered.

Joseph and Mary took their uncomfortable journey toward Bethlehem. Six hundred fifty years before this God had decreed that His Son would be born in Bethlehem.

While in Bethlehem - Christ was born - in a stable - cradled in a manger. There in that little town of Bethlehem, the Son of God, in human form, had entered the stream of human history.

The unfathomable depths of divine counsels was revealed. The healing of the nations was issuing forth, but nothing was seen on the surface of human society, but the slight rippling of the water.

The angels describe Him perfectly, "There is born to you this day a Savior - Christ - Lord. At the Annunciation the angel said "He shall be great" etc.

Describe His Babyhood - childhood - manhood -
Resurrection - Ascension - coming again - His kingdom -
His eternal glory.

His is the greatest of all names, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." Phil 2.

The two shining ones announced His second coming, "This same Jesus" etc.

In response to His last message from heaven "Surely I come quickly," John replies "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" Rev 22:20.

The Miraculous Birth

The miraculous birth of the Lord Jesus is one of the foundation stones of our Christian faith.

The prophet Micah prophesied in the fifth chapter of his book that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, in the district of Ephratah - in Judah.

There were several Bethlehems in Palestine.

But Micah said that Christ would be born in Bethlehem in the district of Ephratah.

This was one of the smaller villages bearing this name, but in no way was it the least for out of it would come a Ruler in Israel.

Mary was living in Nazareth expecting almost daily the birth of her wonderful Baby.

But prophetically He must be born in Bethlehem.

How can we get Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem?

God put into Caesar Augustus' heart to tax his subjects.

While he demonstrated his sovereignty and power, he did not realize that he really was a puppet in the hand of God to further His divine program.

The decree brought Mary and Joseph approximately 60 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem at exactly the right time for the predicted Messiah's birth.

Bethlehem was crowded when they arrived, and despite the emergency there was no room for them in the Inn. The only place they could find was a cave where the sore animals were kept. Born among cattle in poverty.

In this stable Mary brought forth her first-born son. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, she laid Him in a manger.

“No beautiful chamber.”

Thus did God visit our planet in the form of a helpless Baby, in the poverty of an ill-smelling stable. Jesus my Savior to Bethlehem came, etc.

His life began in a manger, and ended on a cross and in between these two events He had nowhere to lay His head.

The angels appeared to the terrified shepherds.

Not to the elite of Jerusalem.

Note the message.

“Unto you is born this day” etc.

“A Savior who is Christ the Lord.”

“A Savior,” which is expressed in the name Jesus, etc.

Then He is the CHRIST the Anointed One, the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world.

He also is Lord, God manifest in the flesh.

One angel announced, etc. See V13. “A multitude of angels.” There’s a tumult of joy.

Simeon. He was waiting for the Messiah.

It was revealed to him, by the Holy Spirit, that he would not die before seeing the Lord’s Christ.

V28. He took the Lord into his arms and with Mary and Joseph presented Him to God. Then he prophesied that the Child Jesus would be “a light to bring salvation to

the Gentiles" (First advent), and to shine in glory on your people Israel (Second advent).

V34

Note Simeon's prophetic words.

1. "This CHILD was destined for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." The unbelieving would fall, be punished. Those who repented of their sins and received the Lord Jesus as Savior would rise and be blessed.

2. This child would be a sign from God that would be spoken against.

His pure presence on earth, exposed the wickedness of the human heart, and they hated Him without a cause.

3. Yes, a sword will pierce through your soul. Referring to Mary.

He predicted the grief she would experience when she witnessed the crucifixion of her Son.

4. "The thoughts of many hearts would be revealed." For or against.

The first Christmas was the sweetest, greatest, and most profound event etc.

Emmanuel, God had come to live among men.

At His birth the angels sang "Glory to God" etc.

The shepherds came and saw the Child.

Sometime later the wise men came and worshipped Him.

The heavens were aglow with the glory of God.

At the Lord's birth, heaven and earth were moved.

The world has turned Christ's birthday into a meaningless holiday.

Business has commercialized it.

Generally the Savior has been replaced by the myth of Santa Claus.

The church has tried to make Christmas beautiful.

Symbols - carols - cards - nativity scenes - trees - tinsel - toys - lights.

With all the additions we have obscured Emmanuel, the Christ child, the Savior of the world.

Listen to the message of the angel. The true message of Christmas, "Fear not for I bring you good tidings of great joy" etc.

The first Christmas was God's message to a despairing world.

Gabriel said, "You shall call His name Jesus" etc.

Isaiah said:

"Unto us a child is born" etc.

As the years rolled on the Babe of Bethlehem became the man of Sychur's Well, The Stranger of Galilee, and finally became the Man of Calvary.

At His birth there was no room for Him in the Inn.

Thirty-two years later there was no room for Him in the world---they crucified Him.

There is little room for Him in our world today.

He is despised and rejected by men.

Have you room in your heart for Him today?

Have you any room for Jesus, etc.

Room for pleasure, room for business.
Room for Jesus, King of glory.
Hasten now His word obey.
Swing the heart's door widely open.
Bid Him enter while you may.
"Behold I stand at your door and knock" etc.
Jesus my Savior to Bethlehem came,
Born in a manger to sorrow and shame;
Oh, it was wonderful - blest be this name!
Seeking for me, for me.
Born among cattle in poverty sore.
There's a tumult of joy
O'er the wonderful birth.
For the Virgin's sweet Boy
Is the Lord of the earth.
Ay! the star rains its fire
While the beautiful sing.
For the manger of Bethlehem
Cradles a Kind.
No beautiful chamber
No soft cradle bed
No place but a manger
Nowhere for His head
No glory but sadness

No room in the Inn.

Some Thoughts on Prayer

Luke 18:1

Webster's definition of prayer is interesting. He says it is an earnest request—an entreaty—a supplication—it is spiritual communion with God.

Burns, the Scottish national poet said, that, "Prayer is a correspondence fixed with heaven."

A survey of the Scripture shows us that prayer has many different facets. Supplications—prayers—intercessions—giving thanks. It means to ask—to beseech—to call God to one's assistance.

Prayer should also denote the acknowledging of a need—then an asking—an entreaty to God for the fulfilling of that need.

All prayer should be addressed to God—offered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Note our advantages over O.T. saints. The Holy Spirit is the sole interpreter of our needs. He is the One who makes intercession for us before God. Rom 8. We are exhorted to pray in the Spirit.

James says that, "the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." This means that the prayer, in wrought by the Holy Spirit, of a righteous man greatly prevails with God.

Faith is essential to prayer (answered). Without faith impossible to please. There must be unshaken faith in His love, wisdom and power. Matt 21:22. "And all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, 'Believing,' ye shall receive." Jas 1:5-8.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith with no hesitating or doubting. For the one who doubts is like the waves of the sea, blown hither and thither by the wind. Let not such a person think that he will receive anything he asks from the Lord.”

Faith is the recognition of the Omnipotence of God. The committal of ourselves and our affairs to the faithfulness of God.

From earliest of times man has practiced prayer or communion with God. Adam communed with God. Enoch walked with God, that is, he communed with God continuously. Noah walked with God also. These men maintained an unbroken communion with God.

The prayers of the patriarchs and prophets were more than a recital of well-known and well-worn phrases—to them prayer was the out-pouring of the heart. These men of God knew little of the mechanics and philosophy of prayer, but they certainly knew a great deal about its power.

This brings us to approach our subject with the prayer of the disciples, “Lord teach us to pray” Luke 11.

The power of prayer.

Let us look at a few examples of the power of prayer. Nehemiah—Moses. Daniel 6:10. “Daniel went into his house—opened his windows toward Jerusalem—kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed—and gave thanks before his God—as he had always done.”

Notice these features in this prayer:

1. Place of prayer - “he went into his house.”

2. Courage in prayer - "His windows being opened."
3. Direction in prayer - "toward Jerusalem."
4. Attitude for prayer - "He kneeled upon his knees."
5. Regularity in prayer - "Three times a day."
6. Thanksgiving in prayer - "Gave thanks before his God."
7. Continuances in prayer - "As he did previously."

In praying, he defied the king and his own enemies. He was delivered from the lions—his would be murderers were themselves killed by the lions—Daniel prospered—and finally God was glorified.

In Chapter 9 we see Daniel praying again. This time there are tremendous issues at stake. Daniel has been reading Jeremiah 25, and realizes that the seventy years of captivity are almost over. He knew his people were unprepared to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem.

Daniel began to pray. The result of his prayers was that God prepared 42,000 people to leave Babylon and return to Jerusalem.

Ezra 1 also tells us that Daniel's prayers stirred the heart of king Cyrus. He let the faithful go. As the result of Daniels prayers there took place one of the greatest revivals in Israel's history.

The prayer of Daniel moved God to stir king Cyrus, prepare 42,000 people to leave Babylon, return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of God. Brethren and Sisters, prayer works and is powerful. We have a decided advantage in prayer, over the Old Testament saints.

(1) Their prayers in the majority of cases were taken up with secular temporal things. The New Testament urges believers to pray for and seek after “spirit blessings.” Eph 1:3. Ours is a fuller revelation than that enjoyed by saints in the old economy.

(2) Another decided advantage we have is that of using the name of Jesus in our prayers to God. Even the mightiest intercessors of old did not use the name of Jesus. Jesus said “Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name” John 16:2. The full merit of the Cross could not be pleaded until Christ’s atonement was complete. Now in all confidence we can rely on the Lord’s declaration, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, ‘in my name,’ He will give it to you.” John 16:23.

(3) The third prayer-advantage in this age is the pledge of Christ to act as our personal Intercessor. “I will pray the Father for you.” John 14:16. Heb 7:25.

Such a power and resource was denied them.

“Great Advocate! Almighty Friend!

On Thee our humble hopes depend;

Our cause can never, never fail

For Thou dost plead and must prevail.”

(4) A further advantage we have is the fact that Christ assures us that He Himself will answer our supplication. “Whatsoever ye ask—that will I do.”

Not only are we authorized to use the peerless name of Jesus, we have His Word that He will hear and answer our prayers.

(5) One other advantage is that we have the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the realm of prayer. As the result of the finished work of Christ, the Holy Spirit in all His fullness has been given to us.

This is seen to advantage in the lives of praying saints in The Acts. It was the Spirit Who led them. He waits to lead us into “a broad land of unknown wealth.”

Notice how the early church put into effect our Lord’s teaching on prayer.

- The Church was born in the atmosphere of prayer. Acts 1:4.
- In answer to prayer the Spirit was poured out upon her. Acts 1:4 - 2:4.
- Prayer continued to be the Church’s native aim. Acts 2:42; 6:4,6.
- There remained in the Church’s thinking a close connection between prayer and the Spirit’s presence and power. Acts 4:31.
- In times of crises the Church had recourse to prayer. Acts 4:23; 12:5-12.
- Throughout the Acts church leaders emerge as men of prayer. 9:40; 10:9; 16:25; 28:8.
- These godly men urge other believers to pray with them. 20:28-36; 21:5.

Lack of prayer in the assemblies.

There is a lack of real prayer in most assemblies. There is little real waiting on God to know His mind and will. Few assemblies spend more than 15 to 20 minutes per week in prayer.

The time has come for assemblies to see prayer as fundamental and foundational or many will continue to drift. To avoid this drift some are trying all kinds of schemes and programs. Never does there seem to be a call to prayer. Time spent in the presence of God would find us:

1. Subdued by His Omnipresence.
2. Staggered by His Omnipotence.
3. Silenced by His Omniscience.
4. Solemnized by His Holiness.

Notice the request of the disciples. "Lord, teach us to pray." They had learned somewhat of the connection between His virtuous life in public, and His secret life in prayer. He was a Master in the art of prayer—none could pray like Him. The disciples wished to be enrolled in His school of prayer.

While it is true that the youngest child can pray, it is also true that prayer is among the highest and holiest work to which a man can rise. Prayer is fellowship with the Unseen and most Holy One and the powers of the eternal world are placed at one's disposal.

Jesus never taught anyone to preach, but He taught them to pray. It is more important to know how to address God than to address man. Power with God is primary—Power with man is secondary.

The parable of Luke 11 is a perfect storehouse of instruction in regard to true intercession.

1. There is "the love" which seeks to help the needy around us. "My friend is come unto me."

2. Then “the need” which urges the cry: I have nothing to set before him.

3. Then follows “the confidence” that help can be had. Which of you shall have a friend, and say, “Friend lend me three loaves.”

4. Then comes the “unexpected refusal”—I cannot rise and give thee.

5. Then comes the persistence that takes no refusal. Because of his importunity.

6. The reward of persistent prayer. He will give Him as many as he needeth.

The above principles set forth the way of prayer and faith in which we can experience the blessing of God.

Another O.T. example of the power of prayer is given to us by James.

James 5:17-18. “Elijah was a man with the same nature as we have, he prayed ‘earnestly’ that it might not rain; and it rained not for the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Out of obscurity, Elijah bursts into the O.T. scene. 1 Kings 17. His first words were: “As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand.” (Standing).

This man had lived in the presence of God for a long time, and knew the mind of God. This man communed with God. This man of God shut up the heavens for 3 ½ years with a prayer. With the “key of faith” he locked up heaven and made Ahab tremble. With the same key he opened heaven and the rain fell again. 1 Kings 18.

To encourage us to pray and receive answers James says that “the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” There is more to this verse than many have discovered. The effectual—that is, the inwrought prayer—inwrought by the Holy Spirit.

The fervent prayer, the earnest—ardent—intense prayer. Of a righteous man—one who is right with God and his brethren in every respect. This kind of prayer, from this kind of person, greatly prevails with God and unleashes tremendous power. Romans 8:26-27.

From these examples some spiritual lessons are found.

1. Omnipotent God can be reached and moved through the prayer of faith. Come boldly to the Throne of Grace.
2. The men who brought response from God were godly men.
3. This leads us to believe that prayer is conditioned by our spiritual state. In backsliding prayer is the first thing to go. “God forbid that I should cease to pray.”

One does not need to be spiritual to preach, that is, to deliver sermons of homiletical perfection and ex-e-get-ical exaltitude.

By a combination of memory—knowledge—personality—plus well lined book shelves—and self-confidence, anyone can preach to tickle the ears of men. These give stones for bread, and serpents for fish.

Brethren, it is only the spiritual believers who can pray in the way that moves the hands of Him who moves the Universe. See John 15. “He who dwelleth in the secret place, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” Psalm 91.

Jesus believed prayer to be a working force, a dynamic, rather than a doctrine, in a believer's life. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint."

In order for prayer to be a working force or a dynamic in one's life there are certain conditions that must be met.

(1) There must be sincerity.

Sincerity is the first requisite of successful prayer. The Lord condemned the Pharisees for their long prayers—ostentation—hypocrisy and insincerity.

Luke 18:9-14 The Pharisee and Publican. God must be approached in spirit and in truth.

John 4:24. Like the Psalmist we must "yearn eagerly" for God, just as the deer pants after the water brook. Inner desire and urgency must characterize us as in the parable of the importunate or persistent friend.

(2) There must be humility.

For our prayers to be answered there must be the complete absence of pride or self-assertion.

James 4:3, "Ye ask and receive not because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your own lusts."

2 Chronicles 7:14 All prayer should be for the glory of God. "If My people who are called by My name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

2 Chronicles 34:27 "Because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, and didst mourn and weep before Him, He heard thy prayer."

The Lord Jesus displayed the perfect attitude of complete abandonment to the will of God, when in the days of His flesh, He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears. “Not My will, but Thine be done.”

(3) There must be forgiveness.

We cannot expect answers from God if we harbor an unforgiving spirit towards others. “When you stand praying, forgive.” Mark 11:27. Luke 11. In His Sermon on the Mount our Lord gave the four-fold exhortation to forgive one another if we expect answers to our prayers. Brethren, we reach the pinnacle of Christlikeness when we forgive. “Father forgive them” etc. In this blessed state of being like Christ claiming His all prevailing name, we have the right to expect answers to our prayers.

(4) There must be faith.

Faith is an unquestioning belief, it is complete trust and confidence. In the context of prayer, it is asking God for something, according to His will, and fully expecting that prayer to be answered. James said, “Let him ask in faith, not wavering—it shall be given him.”

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb 11:6.

All things are possible to him that believes. Mark 9:23.

The Lord also said, “For with God all things are possible. Mark 10:27.

Matt 21:22 “All things—ye ask—believing, ye shall receive.”

So then our prayer of faith takes us to the God with whom all things are possible and from whom we can expect miracles.

Matt 17:20. The Lord mentions “faith as a grain of mustard seed.” This is one of the smallest of seeds. Jesus said, that even if your faith is very small, but is real, you can remove mountains of difficulties, as you draw from the eternal resources of the God of the impossible. If ye have faith and doubt not. Because of your own belief. Brethren, the formula for answered prayer is not great faith in a God but faith in a great God.

(5) Our prayers must be persistent.

This is the whole point of the parable of the friend coming at midnight begging bread. He was persistent. Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8. Ask—Seek—Knock.

When we pray in the Spirit, we must demonstrate Jacob’s spirit when he said, “I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Despite difficulties and apparent failures, even though the heavens are silent, we must pray on in the Spirit. We must wrestle like Jacob.

Pant and yearn like David.

Hope like Elijah.

Persistent like Bartemaeas.

Crying with tears like our Lord.

(6) We must pray in the Spirit.

The Scriptural way to pray is in the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father. The prayers that are answered are those that are inwrought by the Spirit and therefore in accordance with God’s will. We must learn how to pray in the Spirit.

Eph 6:18. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."

Jude 20. "Praying in the Holy Spirit."

"What does praying in the Holy Spirit mean?" Our prayers will be inspired and led by Him. We will be prompted by the Holy Spirit to pray for certain things. To pray in the Spirit means, to consciously place ourselves under the Holy Spirit's influence. It is He who makes our conscience sensitive to sin and inspires prayer. God delights to hear.

The Lord's seasons of prayer.

There is a beautiful paradox here. Our Lord lived in unbroken fellowship with the Father, yet a study of His life shows Him many times in prayer for guidance.

The Lord prayed whenever the need arose. He prayed late at night after others had retired. He prayed before and after important events. It was His custom to steal away and pray where the noises of earth were hushed.

Time does not matter, because God's ear is ever opened to our cry.

David prayed all day. Psalm 55:17.

Daniel prayed at noon. Daniel 6:10.

Paul and Silas prayed at midnight. Acts 16:25.

The Lord sometimes prayed all night. Mark 1:35.

At all times we have access into the presence of God. He is a God who never sleeps.

No matter where we are, God can hear us.

· He heard Hagar in the wilderness.

- He heard Jonah in the belly of the fish in the depths of the ocean.
- He heard Hezekiah on his bed.
- He heard David in a cave.
- He heard Peter on a ship.
- He heard the thief on a cross.

The greatest blessing of Christ's life came as the result of unbroken fellowship with God. Prayer was His life and it brought unmeasured power.

Prayers of the Lord in Luke

Prayer is the portal or door of service.

Luke 3:21-22—Before public service there is prayer.

Luke 5:16—As an escape from popularity. We need to be desecularized and decarnalized. Reputation is formed before men, character is formed in the presence of God.

Luke 6:12, 13:20-28—Prayer and the twelve all night.

Luke 9:28-29—Prayer at transfiguration.

Luke 22:31-32—Prayer for Peter's preservation in the hour of Satanic assault. Greater is He that is in us, etc. If God be for us, etc.

Luke 22:39-46—Agonizing prayer in Gethsemane.

Our weakest point is after victory. Consider Hebrews 4:15-16.

Romans 8—The work of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life. The Spirit is our intercessor on earth. The Lord is in glory. The Father is on the throne.

v. 40—Many were evidently arrested. The multitudes were astonished. The message went home.

v. 41—Others were absolutely convinced that "He was the Christ". See chapter 3.

They saw in Him the promised Messiah, the King, the Son of David.

Some objected—They always thought of Him as a Galilean. They were misinformed.

They knew that the Messiah would be the Son of David, and that he would be born in Bethlehem. In this ignorance they did not know the facts.

The result was that some said He is the Prophet, others said He is the Christ, others objected, others hated and despised Him, and still others would have slain Him.

Some day the question will be forever settled for Jews and Gentiles.

v. 45—These officers had been sent several days before (v. 32) to arrest the Lord. They had watched for a convenient opportunity.

v. 47—The Pharisees were furious. You are deceived. We don't believe on Him, He breaks the law. He heals on the Sabbath day. He is cursed and the people are cursed and you are cursed for believing in Him.

v. 50—To His defense comes Nicodemus in John 3 and John 19:34.

v. 51—He invoked Deuteronomy 1:17, 17:8; 19:15. the law required that every accused person should be granted a hearing and be able to cross-examine the witnesses against Him.

v. 52—They could not answer this but took to ridiculing and sneering. They accused him of being a follower and berated the intelligence of this great teacher.

Christ's Devotion to God as Seen in Luke's Gospel

Luke 2:41-50

Consider the Incarnation as an act of devotion. Heb 10:5
“A body hast Thou prepared.”

The Lord came from the realms of glory,

Was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

Born in a stable, cradled in a manger. Chapter 2:7

At the incarnation God visited our Planet in the form of a helpless Babe. Born in indescribable poverty—in a foul-smelling stable.

The Lord began His life in a manger—feeding trough. He ended His life on a Roman Cross. Between these two points He had no where to lay His head. Luke 9:58. Phil 2. Jesus was unattached to the world.

The Lord's devotion to His Father began in eternity. Proverbs 8:30-31. “Then, I was by Him, as One brought up with Him, I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him. Rejoicing in the habitable part of the earth; and My delights were with the sons of men.”

The Master Plan of redemption was conceived before the world began. 1 Peter 1:18. “Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world.”

The vehicle through which the plan would be worked out was resolved there. The method and the means were determined there.

When the question was asked, “Who will go for us?” The Lord answered, “Here am I send Me.”

At Bethlehem, The Infinite became finite.

- God became incarnate.
- Deity clothed itself in Humanity.
- For the first time God was seen in the flesh.

“Great is the mystery of godliness” etc. 1 Tim 3:16.

Challenge: “As My Father has sent Me; so send I you.”

Virgin Birth

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is without parallel in human history. It was by the virgin birth that God became man. One perfect person, but two natures. One nature being that of Almighty God—the other being that of man—man without sin. The union of the two natures became the God-man, Christ Jesus.

“At Bethlehem, the unfathomable depths of the Divine counsels were moved. The fountains of the great deep were broken up. The healing of the nations was issuing forth. But nothing was seen on the surface of human society, but the slight rippling of the water.”

- Creation - Red Sea.
- Manna - Water.
- Jesus Birth - Ascension.
- Coming of Spirit.

The Lord’s baptism was an expression of His dedication to God’s will. It also expressed His identification and dedication to His forthcoming ministry. It also demonstrated His oneness with His own people.

He identified Himself with God and man. Believer’s baptism.

The shut door. 2 Kings 4—The cruse of oil—The raising of the Shunammite son. The anointing of the Holy Spirit.

1. The birth of Jesus Christ was the most stupendous event in all the decades, centuries, and millenniums of the history of man. Mary's womb became the tabernacle of the Son of God.

2. Think of the pathos of the statements "She brought forth"—She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes—She laid Him in a manger. These are beautiful statements, but oh the pity of it—the tragedy of it—the loneliness of it. At a time like this a woman should be surrounded by tenderest care; but she was alone.

3. The incarnation of the Son of God, was not a diminishing of deity, but rather an acquiring of manhood. His manhood is permanent. Though now exalted He continues to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person forever. The incarnate state was a state of dependence and obedience, sinlessness and impeccability, temptation and moral conflict. In human form He was the visible expression of the invisible God. Men who saw God in all His glory were the men God used to serve Him. The men who had a deep experience with God and because of this acknowledged His Lordship, were the men He chose to serve Him.

Exodus 3—Moses. The burning bush.

Theophany.

He heard God's voice. He sensed the holiness of His presence. Take your shoes off—the ground is holy. He was over-awed by the glory of God. He hid his face, and he was afraid to look upon God.

It was from this point that Moses was commissioned and sent forth by God to deliver Israel from Egypt. Despite his protests God used him. 'I am not eloquent - slow of speech - slow tongue'—God said 'I will be your mouth. I will teach you.'

Joshua 5:13-15. This is another Theophany.

Joshua realized that he was in the presence of the Lord. He was stunned by the glory of the Lord's person.

He fell on his face and worshipped. "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" Was full of the Holy Spirit. Became God's chosen vessel.

Elijah.—1 Kings 19:11-13.

The prophet is in a cave hiding—but God found him. He was despondent. "I only am left and they seek my life."

At this point God revealed Himself.

First there was a strong wind which rent the mountains and rent the rocks. But God was not in the wind.

Then there was an earthquake—but God was not in the earthquake.

Then there was a fire—but God was not in the fire.

Finally, there was a still small voice = a gentle whisper. He realized that this was God speaking and wrapped his face in his coat. First, God asked him what he was doing hiding in the cave. Then He told Him to go and crown two kings and anoint Elisha to be the prophet of God to Israel.

Samuel—1 Samuel 3.

“Speak Lord for thy servant heareth.” Samuel became God’s greatest prophet to Israel.

The Lordship of Christ

Peter says to “Sanctify the Lord in your heart.” 1 Peter 3:15. Set apart—consecrate. This means “Sanctify in your heart Christ as Lord.”

1. Lordship involves my complete submission to His will.
2. The desire to please the Lord becomes the controlling passion of my life. Psalm 27. One thing have I desired of the Lord.
3. I say from my heart, “Lord what will you have me to do?”
4. The Lordship of Christ includes submission to His Word as the sole authority in all matters of doctrine—discipline—and practice, and a complete surrender of my body to God. Rom 6. Rom 12. He becomes our Master—Owner—and Controller.

Note how the above applied to the Lord.

1. “Lo I come to do Thy will, O God.”
2. “I do always those things which please the Father.
3. “Not My will but Thine be done.”
4. “I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.”

To submit to the Lordship of Christ can be costly humanly speaking but rewarding God’s standpoint.

The Lord's early life—Luke 2:49—Devotion

The first recorded words of the Lord Jesus, at the age of twelve, were “Do you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?” Luke 2:49.

Being a Carpenter was part of the Master Plan. Col 1 - Heb 1. For eighteen years He learned and practiced His trade.

Joseph, His foster father is believed to have died during this period, for Jesus is referred to as, the Village Carpenter. Mark 6:3.

These eighteen years of silence and obscurity, teach us the importance of preparation and training. We learn the Lordship of Christ during this time. They warn us of the temptation to jump from spiritual birth into public ministry. John the Baptist - Paul. Verse 52 “Jesus kept on increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

The Baptism of Jesus—Chapter 3:21-23

As Jesus moves into His public ministry, the first recorded incident is His baptism. At this time God made known His approval of the obscure years of the Lords life. His devotion to the Father during this time was impeccable. “I always do the things that please the Father.” Consequently, God universally declared to angels—man—Demons—and the devils, “This is My beloved Son.” etc. First message from heaven in 400 years.

There are two interesting points in Luke’s account of the Lord’s baptism.

1. There is the revelation of the Triune God.

2. Luke alone records that Jesus prayed at His baptism. “When He was praying, the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit came upon Him.” Transfiguration - Moses. This is in accord with the dominant theme of the Gospel of Luke. Miracles are wrought by prayer. See Heb 12:1. Elijah.

- The Lord prayed at the outset of His public ministry. Lover. Luke 3:21.
- The Lord prayed as He approached the peak of His ministry. Prosperity. Luke 5:16.
- The Lord prayed for a whole night, before He chose His disciples. Sincerity. Luke 6:12.
- The Lord prayed prior to Peter unique confession. Identity. Luke 9:18.
- The Lord prayed on the Mount of Transfiguration. Changed. Luke 9:28.
- The Lord prayed in the presence of His disciples. Example. Luke 11:1.
- The Lord prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Strong crying and tears. Luke 22:41-44.

The foregoing is a remarkable testimony of the devotion and dependency of the Lord upon His Father. Even though He was God, He committed every detail of His life to His Father.

God appreciated the Lord’s devotion and three times during His public ministry commended Him for His devotedness. Luke 9:35. John 12 and 20:28. How dependent are we on God?

Note the Spirit's involvement in the Lord's work

He aligned Himself with Christ in His ministry. The Godhead was totally involved in the ministry of Christ.

The Lord was anointed with the Spirit of His baptism. Luke 3:21-23. He was controlled by the Spirit in His ministry. "He cast out demons by the Spirit." Matt 12:28. Luke 4:1 "He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." Luke 4:14 "He returned from the wilderness in the power of the Spirit." Luke 4:18 "Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me.

"He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel" etc.

to heal the broken-hearted.

to preach deliverance to the captives.

to give sight to the blind.

to set at liberty them that are bruised.

To introduce the acceptable year of the Lord.

He stood before this group in Nazareth as the Evangelist filled with the Spirit - Messiah - Healer - and Emancipator. In being subject to the Spirit, Christ demonstrated His total devotion to God.

The Lord's Public Ministry

During the three years of His public ministry the Lord had no visible means of support. Though He owned everything, He had nothing. "He came unto His own." Between the manger and the Cross. "No where to lay His head." A few women of substance took care of Jesus and His disciples. Luke 8:2. "I came not to be ministered unto."

The Lord, as God, knew:

- the hazards of His future life. Shadow of the Cross.
- the bitterness of His suffering and death.
- the triumph of His resurrection and ascension.

The Lord did not relinquish His Deity - He laid aside His glory. Despite His comprehensive knowledge, in total and inimitable obedience, He set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem. He was unyielding and inflexible in His obedience to God. "I came to do Thy will of God" Heb 10:9.

As God He was conversant with every detail of His earthly sojourn. As man He went forward steadfastly, anticipating every stage. When the people asked for a sign to prove the authenticity of His claims, He reminded them of the story of Jonah. Luke 11:29-30. "For as Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the great fish" etc. Matt 12.

The Lord was fully aware of God's purpose for His being on earth, to procure redemption for last mankind.

He was fully aware of what this would cost Him - of His ignominious death - the three days His body would be in the tomb—He knew also that He would rise again the third day. See Luke 9:22 and Luke 18:31-33.

At the outset of His ministry He said, "My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34.

Prior to Gethsemane He said, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." John 17:1-4.

The Lord's Supper—Luke 22:19-20

In these verses the Lord established the unceremonious ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

The Supper is beautiful in its simplicity, majestic in its complexity. For nineteen hundred years believers of various persuasions have celebrated this feast in one form or another, calling to remembrance the Lord's death, resurrection, and coming.

And He took bread and gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, 'This is "My body" which is given for you.'

Likewise, also, He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, 'This is the New Testament in "My blood" which is shed for you.'

Think for a moment of the trauma, the wound, the distress, the hurt, the pain and anguish of the occasion. My Body—My Blood.

Think also of the magnificence of it all. The body had not as yet been given, nor had the blood been shed.

But the Lord speaks as though the work of the Cross was an accomplished fact.

The incident exemplifies the exemplary devotion of the Lord to His Father's will.

The travail and triumph of Gethsemane

The experience of the Lord in Gethsemane would have stood alone in unique and unapproachable wonder, had it not been followed by 15 hrs. of even greater mystery, culminating in the Cross.

The strongest words in the Greek language are used to describe the anguish through which the Savior passed in the dark recesses of Gethsemane. Utterly astounded - distressed - depressed - sorrowful unto death.

Our Lord knew the message and the meaning of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53. He was conversant with the pain—the torment—and the tortuous, dreadful agony of the Cross. Above all He knew the consequences of being made sin, and shrank from it.

The Gethsemane experience drove the Lord into the vortex of insufferable anguish, and caused Him to sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.

Despite this tortuous, dreadful, and distressing experience, His devotion to the Father never faltered.

“Not My will but Thine be done,” He cried, from a distraught but determined heart.

Psalm 40:7-8 “Lo I come—I delight to do Thy will O God.”

The work of Jesus on the earth—Devotion and Example

We cannot separate the Lord’s life work on earth, from His redemptive work on the Cross.

The purpose for which He came to earth was to do the will of God, and redeem mankind.

Jesus Himself said, “I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5:32.

The three years of the Lord’s public ministry was spent pleading with men and woman to return to God.

“He came to seek and to save the lost.” Luke 19:10.

He wept over Jerusalem: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem” etc. Luke 19:41.

As the true Shepherd He searched for lost sheep. Luke 15:3-7.

He searched for the lost in all segments of society. He found fishermen—tax gatherers—sinners of the deepest dye—the out-casts of humanity—He healed the leper—He touched the untouchables.

He found them in the sheets of the city—He found them in the highways and byways of life. He also reached into the upper crust of society.

No one was exempt from His purpose, and mission of redemption. He told the Good News to the rich - the poor - the learned - the unlearned. He preached to the lame - the halt - the blind.

In His effort to reach men He crossed ethnic and cultural boundaries. He preached to Samaritans—and to the Gentiles—as well as to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The great harvest of souls was ever before Him. John 4:35 “Lift up your eyes, and behold the fields white unto harvest.”

Neither opposition nor persecution could divert Him from the purpose for which He came, to seek and to save the lost.

While on earth He called men into His service. Andrew and Peter - James and John. He called them for one purpose; that they should follow Him, and be made into “fishers of men.”

Paul followed the Lord's example of soul-winning

Paul was a preacher of the Gospel and a seeker of souls from his conversion. Paul was an Evangelist, he sought men and women for Christ. Rom 1:1 He was separated unto the Gospel of God. He said, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Rom 1:16.

He also said, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." 1 Cor 9:16. He counted himself under obligation to preach Christ crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again.

He preached to civilized peoples, and to heathen nations. He preached Christ to the cultured, and the uncultured—to the learned, and the simple—to the educated, and uneducated.

Paul was dedicated to preach the Gospel to the fullest extent of his ability. 2 Cor 10:14 and 16. "We stretch ourselves beyond measure to preach His Gospel of Christ to you, and in the regions beyond you."

Each of the disciples were martyred for preaching the Gospel.

Soul winners in each generation since then have preached and died for the Gospel of Christ.

The believer's responsibility: following the Lord's example.

To Andrew, Peter, James, and John, Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will teach you to catch men alive." The Lord said to these men 'I will make you "fishers,"' not teachers.

Note the order of the gifts in Ephesians 4. Evangelists—pastors—teachers. Where are the evangelists among us

today? Where are the men who, being filled with the Holy Spirit, can speak words accompanied by such convicting power that men and women are blasted from quarries of sin, dragged from the cesspool of immorality and homosexuality, from alcoholism and drug addiction, led from the respectable world of the make believe of modern religion.

Maybe the pristine days of the Gospel Crusades are over. Mass evangelism is falling short of earlier predictions.

But there is still a great and effectual door open to all of us as individual. There are lonely and troubled hearts all around us.

The Lord used the method of personal evangelism effectively. Why don't we use it?

When that privileged group left the Upper Room, after receiving the Holy Spirit, each one had a new power. Some were given power for special tasks, but all were given power to witness. And witness they did, sometimes at great cost.

As they witnessed, great numbers were added to the Lord.

- The Word of God increased.
- The message of the Gospel kept spreading.
- The numbers of disciples greatly multiplied.

So great was the movement of the Spirit, that it posed a threat to the authorities, who, in reprisal, let loose severe persecution against the fervent evangelists. Despite this they continued to "preach and teach Jesus Christ in the courts of the Temple and in every house."

The majority of us here, and the movement to which we belong, have become like the French soldiers who stood behind their supposedly impregnable Maginot Line. They became fat and lazy, and in their complacency lost the desire for aggressive warfare, and were crushed by the enemy.

Many of us are like this, we are hiding behind the fortress of the impregnable Word. We pride ourselves in our knowledge of the truth, while at the same time many are delinquent in practicing it.

We gather congenially in our various fellowships where blessings are many and demands are few. We have become lethargic like the French soldiers. We have lost our aggressiveness in the Gospel.

We have lost the Vision for a perishing world. We have lost, to a great extent, the Passion for souls. We have no real Mission for God.

Beloved, life is short—eternity is sure—hell is real.
General Booth.

“Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead”—the death sleep of lethargy and complacency. Eph 5:14.

“As the Father has sent Me, into the world, to save men and women, so send I you.” John 20.

Brothers and sisters in past days have heard the challenge and accepted the call.

Today, in slowly diminishing numbers, some are bearing the torch. Toiling and fighting against formidable forces of evil.

All this, while many of us here in this Chapel sit in complacency and smugness, content to be carried to the

skies in flowery beds of ease, while others fight to win the prize and sail through bloody seas.

Ezekiel 3:17-19. Son of man I have made thee a watchman. Therefore hear the word of My mouth, and give them warning from Me. When I say to the wicked—Thou shalt surely die—and thou givest him not warning—the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity—but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turns not from his wickedness, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

Parable of the Lost Sheep

Luke 15:1-7

If we were selecting some of the great chapters of the Bible, it is certain that Luke 15 would be among them. The chapter describes the activity of the Trinity as it is involved in the redemption of a soul.

The parable is in three sections describing, first of all, the activity of the Son suffering to recover the lost sheep.

Secondly we see the Spirit, through the Church seeking the lost silver.

Thirdly we see the Singing Father as he welcomes home his lost Son. (Note also the joy in the chapter.)

The chapter opens with a crowd around Jesus. Four kinds of people were present. The tax-collector and sinners drew near unto Him. They were the notorious sinners and irreligious people who walked the dirt side of the Broad Road. The Pharisees and scribes who rigidly observed the Law were present; also they walk the clean side of the Broad Road.

The sinners were attracted to the Lord because of their need. The Pharisees and scribes complained indignantly that He welcomed sinners and even ate with them.

Note the difference in attitude to the common people between the Pharisees and the Lord. The Pharisees gathered their garments closely around them so that they might not be defiled by touching the unclean sinner.

On the other hand the Lord mingled freely with the dregs of humanity. Even though they were ceremonially unclean—physically unclean—a promiscuous crowd indeed. Then on occasion he sat down among them and shared their lunch.

The Pharisees' accusation, though spoken derisively, was the Gospel truth in all its simplicity and purity. "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world, to save sinners" 1 Tim 1:15. He saved the chief of sinners—He can save you.

"Sinners Jesus will receive, Sound this word of grace to all."

The parable of the lost sheep and the suffering Savior.

Let me dispose of some of the technicalities of the parable.

1. The sheep that is lost represents the sinner who has wandered away from God.
2. Those whom the Shepherd left in the wilderness—not safe in the fold—are the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. They did not consider themselves lost, so they did not think they needed to be sought and found.

The lost sheep.

A lost sheep cannot find its way back to the fold, the shepherd must bring it.

In the spiritual realm the lost sheep is in a place of alienation from God, in a state of spiritual destitution.

If you are here without Christ you have wandered away from God—you are lost—you are a sinner without God—without Christ—without hope—afar off without strength—ungodly—sinners—enemies. Your iniquities and sins have separated you and your God. Isa 59:2. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Rom 3:23.

To acknowledge that you are a sinner is a bitter pill to swallow (The Prodigal Son), but you will never be saved unless you do this. You must be convinced intellectually and emotionally for the will to be unbroken.

Illustrate this truth by Naaman’s cleansing.

Naaman was a great man—he had great riches—he was a great soldier.

Describe him as Supreme Commander—his bearing—his immaculate uniform. Despite the façade—the prestige—the honor—he was a leper—doomed to a premature death.

Naaman admitted that he was a leper. Rebelled against the simplicity of the cure. Later he repented and obeyed the message of God through His servant. He humbled himself, dipped seven times in the muddy waters of the Jordan and was healed. His flesh became as a little child’s.

It is only those who obey the Word of God and receive Christ as Savior that will be saved. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” “There’s only hope in trusting Jesus.”

A person without Christ, in God’s estimation, is “lost” now. John 3:36. “He that believeth not the Son.” But it is awesome to think of being “lost” for eternity.

In no instance in the New Testament does “being lost” signify cessation of existence. No thought of annihilation. To be lost eternally is to be in a state of conscious suffering forever. Describe Luke 16: Rich man in hell.

Consider Judas in this matter. Judas went out and it was night—Eternal night. The Lord said of him “And none of them is lost except the son of perdition.”

“What shall it profit a man if he gain the world and lose his soul.”

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” Luke 19.

The seeking, suffering Savior

“But none of the ransomed ever knew

How deep were the waters crossed.

Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through

Ere He found the sheep that was lost.”

The deep waters

Psalm 69

Save Me of God, for the waters are come into My soul.

I sink in deep mire where there is no standing.

I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow Me.

The dark night

Now from noon until 3pm there was darkness.

About 3pm Jesus cried with a loud voice “My God, My God why hast Thou forsaken Me?”

Describe the sufferings of Christ.

Jesus my Savior on Calvary’s tree

Paid the great debt and my soul He set free;

Oh it is wonderful—how could it be?

Dying for me, for me.

Crowned with thorns upon the tree,

Silent in thine agony.

Dying, crushed beneath the load,

Of the curse and wrath of God.

The Prodigal Son

The younger brother took his inheritance and went into a far country, where he squandered his wealth on worldly pleasures. Soon he found himself destitute.

"Pleasures are like poppies spread."

In his desperation to survive he became a feeder of pigs. Unclean. He joined himself = He glued himself. He was so hungry that he may have eaten the pig's food. This proud young man is now deserted and destitute.

In this condition he began to think. He remembered his father's house, etc. After much thought he decided to do something about his plight. He decided to go back to his father in repentance, acknowledge his sin, and ask for forgiveness. "I have sinned against God, and against you." The seriousness of sin. To be saved we must repent of our sin. "God be merciful to me" Luke 18:13.

The father saw him a great way off. He was scanning the horizon, and saw him, and ran toward him, embraced him, and planted the kiss of reconciliation and forgiveness on his cheek. Put the best robe on him, and put a ring on his finger, and sandals on his feet. No servant was ever clothed like this. There was great joy in that house that day.

The Seeking Father

Let us now change the scene and consider the seeking and grieving father. Consider his grief—think what he went through. Who suffered most, the son or the father? Mother after P.O.W. experience. "O Donald, O Donald," Brother Archie Clarke.

Listen to the Savior revealing the heart of God. "O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem" etc. Luke 13:34.

In these words Jesus tells us of the yearning that is in the heart of God, not only for Jerusalem, but for you dear sinner friend. Luke 20.

Think what it cost our heavenly Father to redeem lost mankind. The heart breaking cries of the Son—the inability of the Father to help. "Why are you so far from saving Me, so far from the words of My groaning?" "Be not far from Me, come quickly and help 'Me.' Deliver Me! Rescue Me! Save Me! Jesus cried out, "Save Me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul." Psalm 69.

On April 12th 1912 the great liner Titanic left Southampton for New York, on her maiden voyage. She was billed as "the unsinkable ship," 66,000 tons of machinery and magnificence. Five days after leaving Southampton she was at the bottom of the Atlantic. What happened? She struck an iceberg which tore a three hundred foot gash in her side so that the cold waters of the Atlantic rushed in and "the unsinkable ship" sank. What a tragedy!

Two thousand years ago God launched a mighty vessel on the seas of time. In the little town of Bethlehem the Son of God became the Son of man and entered into human life. The seas of sin surged all around Him, He rubbed shoulders with sinners. His brothers and sisters were sinners. They quarreled, told lies, had temper tantrums, they were disobedient to their parents, and self-willed. His closest companions were sinful men. Boasting Peter--doubting Thomas--hot tempered James and John--thieving Judas. Despite the sin that surged

around Him, His storm tossed bark remained impeccably holy, sinless and undefiled.

But at Calvary the Lord struck an iceberg, and the waters came rushing into His soul. The sin of the world surged in--"He was made sin for us." As the horror of this ordeal gripped His soul He cried out to His Father, "Save Me! Save Me!"

For every person that ever lived there is a Savior. But there was no Savior for Him, if there was to be a Savior for us.

To carry this further, Jesus said, "Save Me O God - for I sink in deep mire where there is no standing."

There was a gate in Jerusalem called the dung gate. Below this gate in the valley of Tophet, was the accumulated filth of the city. The worst experience that could befall a person was to slip and fall into that horrible manure heap of human excrement. To the Savior on the cross something far worse happened. All the sin--impurity--pollution--dirtiness--filthiness--foulness of the human race was deluged upon Him in that horrific cesspool and He was sinking beneath it all. Despite His desperate cry, "Save Me! Save Me!" there was no answer. "All Thy waves and billows" etc. Can you imagine how God, the Father felt about all this? God forsook Him. Finally My God etc.

"Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by." What will you do with Jesus?

This morning the seeking Father is looking over the bulwarks of heaven, He sees the Good Shepherd searching for you, the lost sheep. He sees the Spirit

reaching out to you, the lost coin. "Is it nothing to you all ye that pass by." "For none of the ransomed" etc.

"All this I have done for you, what have you done for Me?" Will you take Jesus Christ as your personal Savior this morning? "What will the answer be, what will the answer be."

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:19-31

A look beyond the veil or Life beyond the present.

This story shows us that there is a hell. (to be shunned)

This story shows us that there is a heaven. (to be gained)

While on earth, the Lord spoke of a “broad way” which led to destruction and a “narrow way” which leads to life everlasting. He also said, “Strive or ‘agonize’ to enter in at the narrow gate.”

The portion we have read presents to us: Two men—Two lives—Two hereafters.

- Ch 14: Earth and its hindrances.
- Ch 15: Heaven and its happiness.
- Ch 16: Hell and its horrors.

This story is not a parable. “There was a certain rich man.” Verse 19. “There was a certain beggar named Lazarus.” Verse 20. In no parable is an individual named, as here.

The rich man was “clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” He wore the most expensive, custom made clothes and ate the choicest gourmet foods. He was successful—prestigious—admired—esteemed in the community. Ostentatiously, he displayed his great wealth. He was not guilty of any vulgar sin. He probably was a religious man—but had no real love for God.

Verse 20. There was a certain beggar name Lazarus. This man was in extreme poverty—he had no clothes to wear—he was full of open sores—no one took care of him—his sores were cleaned by the mongrel dogs who roamed the streets. This man was a godly man. “The Lord calleth His own sheep by name.” John 10:3. Verse 27-30.

Verse 22. These men died. The grim reaper. “Lazarus died and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Lazarus was not buried—that sore infested body would be picked up by the garbage collector and thrown indiscriminately and unceremoniously into the flames of the cities garbage dump.

No funeral for Lazarus—but the angels had carried his spirit and soul into heaven, a place of inexpressible bliss—peace—rest.

Death is an ugly fact that cannot be ignored. Death is no respecter of persons. “It is appointed unto man once to die.” This is an appointment that we will all keep. No exceptions. “For we must, all needs die, and are as water spilled upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.” “There is but a step between me and death.”

While death comes to all—death does not end all. Lazarus was transported by the angels into heaven where there is no tears, death, sorrow, crying, nor pain. Revelation 21.

This is the hope of every believer in Christ. “Blessed hope.” “The Spirit and the Bride say come” etc. 1 Thess 4. 1 Cor 15.

The rich man died and was buried—With due care and ceremony. His soul went to Hades or Hell—from there he lifted up his eyes, being in “Torments.” Rom 3:23 “The wages of sin is death.” He saw Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom “a far off.”

Then he spoke to Abraham—He called him Father—he begged for mercy—He asked for a drop of water, on the tip of Lazarus’ finger, to cool his tongue.

In his distress the rich man continued to pray. At this point his prayer was useless. He prayed for his five brothers—send Lazarus to tell them. Not conscious of others around him-ALONE.

If we could listen to the cries of the damned today, we would hear them pray. Tell them to believe and receive Christ as Savior, lest they should come into this dreaded place. Hell is to be shunned—take Christ now as your personal Savior. In this way you will gain heaven. John 3:16.

The importance of evangelism. After death, the rich man suddenly became evangelistic. General Booth’s statement. General Booth’s statement about sending his officers to hell for one week. Sad, sad the bitter wail—Almost, but lost.

We also see here the importance of using this life to prepare for eternity. These men entered into a condition, which they had prepared for themselves. We are choosing now whether we will be carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom, when we die, or will awake in torments in a Christ-less eternity.

This story was told by the tenderest, gentlest, most gracious Man who ever trod this earth. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Heb 10:31.

The rich man died and was buried—with due care and ceremony.

Sheol—Hades—Gehenna—Tartaros.

His soul went to Hades—from there he lifted up his eyes being in tormented “Torments.” In desperation and in agony he prayed. “Have mercy on me.” He was tormented in at least four areas. Mentioned 4 times in the story. Through his eyes—tongue—mind—feelings. He was in great physical pain and mental anguish—agony.

Rev 14:11-12. “Tormented with fire and brimstone—the smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night.” This is the eternal state of the Christ rejecter. The second death.

Hebrews 10:28-31. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that said, Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

This rich man died—Possibly he never expected to die. (The Huntsman. The rich farmer.)

“It is appointed unto men once to die—after this the judgment.”

The prophet said, "I know not the day of my death."

"For we must all needs die, and are as water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again."

James—"My life is like a vapor" etc.

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Proverbs 27:1.

Belshazzar. Proverbs 29:1 "He, that being often reproved."

A cry for mercy—"Father Abraham have mercy on me." This prayer in eternity was never answered. How different in time—Bartimaeus—the tax collector. They prayed and their prayer was answered. You pray the sinner's prayer now "God be merciful to me a sinner."

1. Think of the mental agony and anguish of the lost as they see the redeemed in heaven enjoying the bliss of the Father's house.

2. Think of the dreaded fear that will be theirs as they think of the probability of their loved one following them into eternal agony, where no one dies and the fire is not quenched.

3. Think also of the mind-deranging agonies of thirst—just a drop of cold water to cool the burnings of the tongue.

Despite his earnest prayers, the heavens were as brass—they were so "far away." "Great gulf fixed." This man was alone—he was not conscious of others around him. He was in his own place—like Judas. "Kissed the door of heaven" etc. Even though the Lord has prepared a place for us.

In desperation he prayed again—Send Lazarus to my five brothers. Oh the horror of being turned down forever by God. Oh the sorrow of knowing that they will not believe the Gospel, nor receive Christ, the only Savior.

If we could listen to the cries of anguish and the earnest prayers of the lost, we would hear them say: Tell them to believe the Gospel and receive Christ as Savior, lest they should come to this dreaded place. “Turn ye, oh turn ye for why will ye die.” Hell is to be shunned—take Christ now as your Savior—by doing this you will gain heaven.

Describe the plan of salvation. Man’s ruin—God’s remedy—Man’s responsibility. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

“Almost persuaded,” harvest is past!

“Almost persuaded,” doom comes at last!

“Almost” cannot avail; Almost is but to fail!

Sad, sad, that bitter wail, “Almost”—but lost.

“The harvest is passed—the summer is ended and were not saved.”

The Huntsman

There’s a keen and grim old huntsman

On a horse as white as snow.

Sometimes he is very swift

And sometimes very slow.

But he never is at fault,

For he always hunts on view.

And he rides without a halt

After you.

The huntsman name is Death

His horse's name is Time.

He is coming he is coming

As I sit and write this rhyme;

He is coming he is coming

As you read the rhyme I write;

You can hear his hoofs' low drumming

Day and night.

You can hear the distant drumming

As the clock goes tick-a-tock.

And the chiming of the hours

Is the music of his pack.

You can hardly note their growling

Underneath the noon day sun,

But at night you hear them howling

As they run.

And they never check or falter

For they never miss their kill.

Season change and systems alter,

But the hunt is running still.

Hark! the evening chime is playing:

O'er the long grey dawn it peels,

Don't you hear the death-bound baying

At your heels.

Hebrews 9:27 "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

Christ is the Center and Circumference of the Scriptures

Broadly speaking there are five great divisions in the Scriptures. Christ in many facets of His glory—Each division portrayed. These divisions can be conveniently fixed in the memory by five key words.

Christ Himself is the one theme of the Scriptures.

He Himself attested this truth when He took the Scriptures: And beginning at Moses i.e. the Pentateuch—then going through the writings of the prophets—He expounded—explained—interpreted—unto them, in every part of the Scripture the things concerning Himself. Luke 24:25-27.

On this hallowed occasion Cleopas and his companion had the inestimable privilege of hearing the Incarnate Word—Christ the Risen Lord—expound the Written Word—the Holy Scriptures.

As He expounded the Scriptures to them, He gave them the “great key” to the understanding of them. He Himself is the subject, and that in Him the entire canon of Scripture finds its oneness, harmony and unity. “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us along the way and while He opened to us the Scriptures.” “Lord our Teacher be” 348.

Here are the five key words.

The “Preparation” for Christ is in the Old Testament.

The “Manifestation” is in the Gospels.

The “Propagation” is in the Acts.

The “Explanation” is in the Epistles.

The “Consummation” is in the Revelation.

- In the Old Testament we see God “preparing” for the coming of Christ.
- In the Gospels He is “manifested” to the world.
- In the Acts, through the Gospel, He is “propagated” in the world.
- In the Epistles His Gospel is “explained.”
- In the Revelation all the purposes of God in Christ are “consummated.”

The Scriptures are the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

1. As to His Person, as God manifest in flesh.
2. His sacrificial death.
3. His resurrection.

These truths constitute the Gospel. To this point all preceding Scriptures lead. From this point all following Scriptures proceed.

In the fullness of this divine revelation we see Christ as: Son of God—Son of man—Son of Abraham—Son of David. He is Israel’s king—the desire of all nations.

He is also the seed of the woman. Gen 3:5. As such, He is the ultimate destroyer of Satan and his works.

As the seed of Abraham He is the benefactor of the world. In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.

As the seed of David He is Israel’s king.

At present the Scriptures reveal Him as “Exalted to the right hand of God.” In Ephesians 1 Paul describes for us the greatest display of God’s power as seen in the resurrection and ascension of Christ. It would seem from verse 21 that the hosts of hell were massed to frustrate God’s purposes by keeping Christ in the grave, and to prevent His ascension. God triumphed over every opposition.

Christ was raised by God from the grave of mortality to the throne of eternal God.

From the darkness of the tomb to insufferable and unbearable light.

From this small world to the metropolis of the Universe.

He is exalted above every principality—power—might—dominion—and every name that is named. “He is God over all blessed forever.”

Paul continues with an incredible truth. This blessed One with the nail scarred hands—the marks of the thorns on His brow—the spear wound in His side—God has given Him to the Church to be its glorious Head. Meanwhile the Church looks momentarily for the fulfillment of His special promise. “I will come again and receive you unto Myself.”

Describe the Rapture. 1 Thess 4 and 1 Cor 15.

In Gen 3:18, we see the curse pronounced upon sin, of which the thorns were the emblem. This very emblem the Savior bore upon His brow when He was made a curse for us.

In the Old Testament we see God preparing for the coming of His Son. Coats of skin provided for Adam and

Eve. Animals were slain—their blood shed to provide a covering, so that they were fit for God’s presence.

The blood of Christ, the Anti-type, provides us with the garment of righteousness, making us fit for God’s presence.

Abel’s lamb points forward to the Lamb of God. | For the individual.

Passover Lamb speaks of redemption in Christ. | For the nation.

Behold the Lamb of God, etc. Blood. | For the world.

The Bible almost always speaks of blood as being shed—Blood is the life—blood-shed is death. The death of Christ is our sacrifice. We are made righteous by God.

The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head, and in doing so His heel would be bruised.

Hebrews 2. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man. For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Jesus was the seed of the woman. This is a remarkable statement. In the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, the term used throughout is “begot.” But when we come to verse 16 we read: “And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, Who is called Christ.”

The change of expression is significant. Mary, of whom was born Jesus. Jesus is the seed of the woman. “A man

shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a place of safety from the tempest. Isa 32:2. The Ark is a type of Christ. The Ark was God's plan. It was a place of safety—It bore the storm of judgment—It had to be entered by the door. Pitched within and without. Eternally secure in Christ. John 10.

Jacob's ladder—bridging the gulf between earth and heaven. This is a picture of the Cross of Christ, which has forever bridged the gulf for us.

The Manna is a type of Christ the Living Bread. The smitten rock is a type of Christ from Whom came the Living Water. = The Holy Spirit. "He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out" Psalm 105:41.

The offerings—Burnt—Sin—Trespass—Meal—Peace.

Adam=Headship—Abel=His death—Noah=His work—Melchizedek=Priest—Moses=Prophet.

The types—Isaac—Joseph.

The Tabernacle speaks of Christ.

In Leviticus we see the importance of the blood.

- Redemption through the blood. - 1 Peter 1:18-19.
- Forgiveness through the blood. - Eph 1:7.
- Justification through the blood. - Rom 5:9.
- Peace through the blood. - Col 1:20.
- Cleansing through the blood. - 1 John 1:7.
- Sanctification through the blood. - Heb 13:12.
- Access through the blood. - Heb 10:19.
- Victory through the blood. - Rev 12:11.

Isaiah—prophecies about Christ's birth.

Description of Jehovah's perfect Servant. —Jehovah's suffering Servant.

Manifestation in the Gospels. God manifest in the flesh. Matthew the King—Mark the Servant—Luke the Son of Man—John the Son of God.

Ezekiel's vision. Ch 1:10. The likeness of their faces was as:

- the face of a lion. - Matt-King.
- the face of an ox. - Mark-Servant.
- the face of a man. - Luke-Son of man.
- the face of an eagle. - John-Son of God.

In Matthew the King is worshiped. "The wise men." In Mark the Servant is obedient—and immediately. In Luke the Son of man—the incarnation—His life as a man. In John the Son of God—the I Am's I Am the Bread of life, Light of the world, the door, the good Shepherd, the resurrection and Life, the Way-Truth-and Life, the true vine.

When the Lord used the word "I AM" in the garden they all fell backward. Before Abraham was I AM. John 8:58. There are seven miracles in John, each one proving the Deity of the Lord.

Propagated in the Acts. The disciples were witnesses to His resurrection. They preached this at all times. They spread the glory of His name abroad, beginning at Jerusalem—Judea—Samaria—the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts is the account of the greatest missionary endeavors ever undertaken.

Explanation in the Epistles.

- Romans is the Gospel of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ.
- Galatians we see the Cross of Christ.
- Ephesians we see the Heavens in Christ.
- Philippians we see the Joy in Christ.
- Colossians we see the Christ as our Head.
- 1-2 Thessalonians we see the Christ our Hope.
- Titus we see the Christ our Savior.
- Hebrews we see the Christ our High Priest.
- 1-2-3 John we see the Fellowship with Christ.

Revelation the Consummation. We see Him in this book as Christ the Lamb. The Lamb is all the glory in Emmanuel's land.

- Salvation through the Lamb. - Rev 7:14.
- The new song of eternity, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." - Rev 5:12-13.
- The worship of the Lamb. - Rev 5:8.
- The victory of the Lamb over all His enemies. - "These shall make war with the Lamb; and the Lamb shall overcome them; for He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings." - Rev 17:14.
- The coming again of the Lamb.
- "Behold I come quickly" Amen. "Even so come Lord Jesus." - Rev 22:20.